

Decomposition of Microplastics by *Tenebrio molitor* (Mealworm) Intestinal Facultative Anaerobes Facilitate Wheat Growth

Ji, Yujia (School: No. 2 High School of East China Normal University)

Soil MPs pollution intensifies rapidly, posing large negative impact on agriculture. Previously used MPs decomposing strains such as *Citrobacter* sp. were identified as low in efficiency. This project proposes in-vitro *T.molitor* intestinal facultative anaerobes have higher MPs decomposition efficiency and stronger adaptability, assesses its application feasibility and explores its facilitation on wheat growth under PP-MPs stress. The ability of *T.molitor* intestinal facultative anaerobes decomposing PP-MPs was verified through turbidity measurement and microscopy. Illumina platform was used to analyse species composition. KEGG, Metacyc were used for metabolic pathway analysis. PP-MPs concentration with the greatest negative impact on wheat was explored by concentration gradient test. Facilitation effect was evaluated through 6 physiological indicators. Results showed that in vitro *T.molitor* intestinal facultative anaerobes decomposed PP-MPs at 67.78% decomposition rate comparing with the traditional 35.75% one in 42d. In metabolic pathway analysis, Acidobacteria and Actinobacteria abundance increase after 40 generations cultivation, representing robustness and applicability. In 0.005% PP-MPs environment which had strongest negative impact on wheat growth, wheat seeds' rooting rate was increased by $12.02\% \pm 3.26\%$ after 40h, wheat growth rate was increased by 0.48cm/d after adding *T.molitor* intestinal facultative anaerobes. Meanwhile, Chl a concentration was increased by 77mg/g in 9d; POD activity was reduced with significance thus slowing down lignification. Nitrogen and phosphorous absorption were enhanced by $67.12\% \pm 1.39\%$. This novel bio-decomposition method provides guidance for improving soil ecological health and agricultural productivity.

Awards Won:

Second Award of \$2,000