

Dynamic chemical defense reactions of algae: mechanisms and function (continuation)

Initiative: Lichtenberg - Professuren

Bewilligung: 26.02.2012

Laufzeit: 3 Jahre

The extraction/bioassay-approach of chemical ecology has resulted in the elucidation of several defense metabolites from algae but this approach does not allow to unravel the entire metabolic potential of these organisms. Of special interest is the chemical defense and communication of unicellular algae in the dilute pelagic environment and its impact on the community structure in the open ocean. Combining the direct analysis of plankton samples - thereby defining a metabolome of the entire phytoplankton community - with the development of ecological tools to monitor defensive reactions and population dynamics will allow to identify new ecosystem-shaping roles of infochemicals in this environment. In addition, tools to monitor defensive genes will be used and directly applied in the field. The unprecedented induced and wound activated defense mechanisms of macroalgae will be another central topic. Key questions are i) how can chemical defense be targeted efficiently in the plankton, ii) how does chemical defense and chemical communication influence plankton community structures, iii) how are chemical defense reactions in algae hormonally regulated, iv) what are the processes involved in wound sealing of siphonous macroalgae, and v) how can these mechanisms be exploited to develop new biopolymers?

Projektbeteiligte

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