

Glyphosate degradation by Two Plant Growth Promoting Bacteria (PGPB) isolated from rhizosphere of maize

Abstract

This study was aimed at evaluating the possible utilization of glyphosate tolerant plant growth promoting bacteria (*Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Bacillus cereus*) for bioremediation of glyphosate polluted soil. The soil samples were spiked with 3.1mg/ml, 7.2mg/ml and 14.4mg/ml of glyphosate and then inoculated with *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Bacillus cereus*, level of glyphosate pollution before and after inoculation with the bacteria were determined using Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectroscopy (GC-MS) after extraction with acetonitrile. The bacteria showed significant ability to degrade glyphosate. *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Bacillus cereus*, their mixed culture and control recorded percentage degradation of 76.11, 85.8, 75.8 and 49%, respectively at 3.1mg/ml of glyphosate while At the concentration of 7.2mg/ml, the percentage degradation by *P.aeruginosa*, *Bacillus cereus*, mixed culture of the isolates and control was 84.9, 72.7, 66.4% and 39.2%, respectively. The isolates also showed significant rate of degradation at the concentration of 14.4mg/ml. The GC-MS results showed a significant variation in the degradation products obtained when compared with control. This study revealed that substantial amount of glyphosate was degraded by *P.aeruginosa* and *Bacillus cereus*. Hence, they may have great potential in bioremediation of glyphosate polluted soil.

Keywords: Bioremediation, glyphosate, concentrations, PGPB

Introduction

Soil is one of the most important natural resource on which lives of all plants, animals and microorganisms directly or indirectly depend on. In soil, different microorganisms thrive on nutrients therein and through various interactions play a pivotal role in cycling of nutrients and pedogenesis (Ahemad and Khan, 2013). Alteration or disturbance in soil ecosystem by added pollutants leads to substantial changes in functional activities of these important soil microorganisms (Swain and Abhijita, 2013). The excessive use of glyphosate to control weed contributes in altering the natural environment due to the pollution of the environment by this persistent chemical. The mode of action of glyphosate involves the inhibition of the enzyme 5-enolpyruval shikimate-3- phosphate (EPSP) synthase in the shikimic acid pathway which is important in the biosynthesis of aromatic amino acids (Moneke *et al.*, 2010). This pathway exists in higher plant and microorganisms but not in animals (David and Topsy, 2001). By this mechanism, animals are believed not to be directly affected by glyphosate. However, the environmental consequences of the widespread use of the herbicide have been reported (Cox,

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35 2000). Several factors can affect the elimination of glyphosate in the environment, these factors
36 includes size and activity of microbial population, soil structure, its adsorption ability, climate
37 conditions, depth of motility in vertical soil profile etc (Shuskova *et al.*, 2004). The
38 environmental exposure to glyphosate is extensive due to the vast quantities used annually all
39 over the world. Exposure could occur from direct application, accidental release or spray drift
40 (David and Topsy, 2001). Glyphosate alters natural ecosystem by altering different components
41 of soil microbial community (Inna *et al.*,2010), it inhibits the growth and decreases the activities
42 of soil organisms (Carlise and Trevors, 1988).The main way of glyphosate degradation is by
43 degradation by enzyme system of some microorganism(Strange-Hansen *et al.*2004).The
44 utilization of plant growth promoting bacteria for biodegradation of glyphosate will not only
45 reclaim the polluted soil but can as well enhance the fertility of the soil. These organisms
46 enhance plant growth promotion through solubilization of insoluble nutrients in the soil and
47 production of essential plant phytohormones. Plant associated bacteria, such as endophytic
48 bacteria (non-pathogenic bacteria that occur naturally in plants) and rhizospheric bacteria
49 (bacteria that live on and near the roots of plants), have been shown to contribute to
50 biodegradation of toxic organic compounds in contaminated soil (Divya and Deepak, 2011). Less
51 attention has recently been paid to bioremediation of contaminated soils with Plant growth
52 promoting rhizobacteria(PGPR), Promotion of plant growth by bacteria is well documented
53 (Babalola, 2010) and PGPR have been successfully used to reduce plant stress in contaminated
54 soils. Some microbial communities have the ability to sequester some pollutants and therefore
55 may also be useful in bio remediating contaminated soils (Hallberg and Johnson, 2005). Studies
56 have shown that some PGPR can tolerate herbicides; therefore, this study is designed to assess
57 the ability of PGPR to remediate herbicide polluted soil.

58 **Materials and Methods**

59 **Microorganisms and culture condition**

60 Two glyphosate tolerant plant growth promoting bacteria were initially identified as
61 *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* strain ZSL-2 and *Bacillus cereus* strain 20UPMNR .These isolates had
62 been screened and had shown evidence of multiple plant growth promoting abilities. The isolates
63 were maintained on nutrient agar slants at refrigerating temperature of 4°C. Each seed culture was
64 prepared accordingly by inoculating a loop of the stock culture into 50ml of nutrient broth after
65 which the bacteria cells were harvested washed and re suspended in distilled water. To ensure

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66 equal cell population of each of the bacteria strain, their turbidity was adjusted to 0.5 McFarland
67 standards.

68 **Sample collection:**

69 Soil samples were collected from research farm of the Institute of Agricultural Research and
70 Training Moor plantation Ibadan.

71 **Herbicide**

72 The herbicide commonly known as Forceup manufactured by Zhejiang XinanChem Group
73 Co.Ltd which contains 360g active glyphosate per litre was purchased from JubailiAgrotec
74 Company, Ibadan.

75 **Spiking of Soil with different Concentrations of glyphosate**

76 The soil to be used was weighed, sieved and 5kg of soil were filled in perforated plastic pots, the
77 herbicide (force up) was mixed with water and spiked on the soil samples until it reached the
78 final concentration of 3.1, 7.2 and 14.4mg/ml. All the samples were thoroughly mixed with metal
79 spatula. All treatments were laid in Complete Randomized Design (CRD) with three replicate.

80 **Physicochemical analysis soil sample for screen house and field studies:**

81 The physicochemical analysis such as moisture contents, pH, temperature, cation exchange
82 bases, phosphorus,% total nitrogen, % total carbon, sodium, magnesium, potassium, sulphate,
83 chloride etc were determined

84 **Preparation of bacteria Inoculum**

85 The isolates were inoculated in 50ml conical flask containing 25ml of prepared and sterilized
86 luria broth and incubated at 30°C in an orbital incubator shaker for 24 h. After incubation, the
87 cultures were centrifuged at 4000rpm for 20mins.The cells were harvested and washed with
88 normal cell. In other to ensure equal cell Size, the cells were diluted to 0.5 Mcfarlands Standard
89 to give approximate cell density of 1.5×10^8 cfu/ml.

90 **Collection of soil sample for Analysis of initial and residual glyphosate**

91 Soil samples were collected from each pot immediately after application of herbicides and at the
92 end of the experiment to determine the initial and residual herbicide. Initial and final soil samples
93 were also collected in the field for analyses of initial and residual so as to validate the screen
94 house studies..

95 **Extraction of glyphosate from soil samples**

96 The extraction of glyphosate from the soil samples were carried out by the method described by
97 Frimponget *al.* (2013), with slight modification from the Ghana Standard Authority (GSA)
98 Herbicide Residues Laboratory Protocols. Ten grams (10 g) of the sub-soil samples were
99 weighed and transferred into 250 ml separating flasks. A 10 ml of acetonitrile was added and the
100 corked flasks sonicated (Grant XUB 18UK) for 5 min. An additional 10 ml of acetonitrile was
101 added, and the separating flasks closed tightly. The content of the flasks were placed on a
102 horizontal mechanical shaker (Ika-Werke HS 501 Digital), and was set to shake continuously for
103 30 min at 300 mot/min, and allowed to stand for 10 min to sufficiently separate the phases or
104 layers. The supernatants (organic layers) were carefully transferred into 50 ml centrifuge tubes
105 for centrifugation (Thermo/CR3i Multifunction) at 3000 rpm for 5 min. A 10 ml aliquot of the
106 supernatants (organic phases/top layers) equivalent to 5.0 g soil weight were pipetted and
107 dried/passed over 5 g anhydrous sodium sulphates through a filter paper into 50 ml round-bottom
108 flasks. Then, 5 ml of acetonitrile was used to rinse the salt into the round-bottom flasks. The
109 concentrates were then adjusted to about 2 ml using the rotary film evaporator (BuchiRatovapor
110 R-210, USA) at 35 °C, and made ready for the analysis.

111 **GC-MS Analysis:**

112 GC-MS analysis was carried out on GCMS-QP2010 PLUS SHIMADZU. The column used was
113 Perkin Elmer Elite - 5 capillary column measuring 30m × 0.25mm with a film thickness of
114 0.25mm composed of 95% Dimethyl polysiloxane. The carrier gas used was Helium at a flow
115 rate of 0.5ml/min. 1µl sample injection volume was utilized. The inlet temperature was
116 maintained as 250°C. The oven temperature was programmed initially at 80°C for 4 min, then an
117 increase to 200°C. And then programmed to increase to 280°C at a rate of 20°C ending with a 5
118 min. Total run time was 35 min. The MS transfer line was maintained at a temperature of 200°C.
119 The source temperature was maintained at 180°C. GCMS was analyzed using electron impact
120 ionization at 70eV and data was evaluated using total ion count (TIC) for compound
121 identification and quantification. The spectrums of the components were compared with the
122 database of spectrum of known components stored in the GC-MS library.

123 **Determination of percentage degradation**

124 The percentage degradation of each treatment and control was estimated by considering the
125 products containing the active ingredient present in the herbicide (glyphosate). The percentage
126 degradation was calculated using the method of Adeyemiet *al.*,(2009).

127 **Field Experiment:**

128 The field experiment were carried out in a plot of land at the Institute of Agriculture Research
129 and Training More Plantation Ibadan during 2017 farming seasons, with the experiment laid out
130 in a complete randomized block design with three replicates and plot size of 2x3m. The
131 experimental site is a plot of land with sandy loam soil, located at a latitude 7°22'.701¹N and
132 longitude 3°50.308¹E. It is in the rainforest ecological zone of South west, Nigeria.

133 **Land preparation and application of herbicides for field studies**

134 The land were cleared and tilled prior to application of glyphosate(force up). Six hundred
135 (600ml)of the water containing 3.1, 7.2 and 14.4mg/ml of glyphosate corresponding to half, field
136 application rate and twice the field application rate were spiked on each of the 2x3m plot.

137 The method of Frimponget *al.*,(2013) and GC MS were used for extraction and analysis of
138 residual herbicides as earlier stated. Initial and final soil samples were also collected in the field
139 for analyses of initial and residual glyphosate so as to validate the screen house studies. The
140 residual herbicides were determined using GC MS after extraction. The percentage degradation
141 was evaluated as earlier stated.

142 **Data Analysis**

143 Data were subjected to descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and significant
144 means were separated using Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) at 5% level of probability.

145 **RESULTS**

146 **Physicochemical parameters of the soil**

147 The result of the physicochemical analysis of the soil sample from the field is presented on Table
148 32. The results showed range of parameters before and after planting as between: pH-5.91-6.19,
149 Ca(cmo/kg)-1.73-2.54, Mg(cmo/kg)-0.76-1.49, K(cmo/kg)-0.14-0.22, % total carbon-0.67-1.01,
150 % total nitrogen-0.04-0.07, %Organic matter-2.42, particle size-clay-13.4, sand-70.76 and silt-
151 15.84(Table 1).

152

153 **Biodegradation of glyphosate on the soil**

154 The ability of the two isolates to degrade glyphosate at different concentration was tested. The
155 percentage of glyphosate degraded in the soil by the isolates and their Chromatogram from GC-
156 MS analysis at different concentrations are presented in fig.1 and 2.

157 Figure 1 shows the percentage degradation of 3.1mg/ml glyphosate by the isolate. The result
158 showed that *P.aeruginosa*, *Bacillus cereus*, mixed culture of the isolates and control recorded
159 percentage degradation of 76.11, 85.8, 75.8 and 49%, respectively. The GC-MS results showed a
160 significant variation in the degradation products obtained when compared with control(Table2).

161 At the concentration of 7.2mg/ml, the percentage degradation by *P.aeruginosa*, *Bacillus cereus*,
162 mixed culture of the isolates and control was 84.9, 72.7, 66.4% and 39.2%, respectively (Figure
163 2), whereas the percentage degradation by *P.aeruginosa*, *Bacillus cereus*, mixed culture of the
164 isolates and control at the concentration of 14.4mg/ml was 47.15, 57.26, 55.7 and 27.4%,
165 respectively. The result of degradation at 14.4mg/ml is presented in fig 3. The rate of degradation
166 by the isolates decreased with increase in concentration of glyphosate except *P.aeruginosa* that
167 showed higher rate of degradation at 7.2mg/ml when compared to 3.1mg/ml. There was also a a
168 significant variation in the degradation products obtained when compared with control.The
169 results of degradation products also showed transformation or total breakdown of some of the
170 product found in the initial samples when compared with products recovered at the end of the
171 experiment.

172 **Discussion**

173 Two glyphosate tolerant plant growth promoting rhizo bacteria namely, *P.aeruginosa* and
174 *B.cereus*were used singly and combined to bio remediate glyphosate polluted soil. These isolate
175 exhibited high ability to degrade glyphosate at different concentration. *B. cereus* recorded
176 highest ability at the concentration of 3.1mg/ml and 14.4mg/ml while *P.aeruginosa* showed
177 highest ability at the concentration of 7.2mg/ml, the least % degradation was recorded by the
178 control in all the concentration. The rate of degradation was lower when the isolates are mixed
179 than when used singly. This might be as a result of antagonistic interaction between the two
180 isolates which may have interfered with their metabolic activities. The ability of the isolates to

181 degrade glyphosate may be connected with its ability to utilize glyphosate as C and P source
182 since the degradation of glyphosate involves the lysis of C-P bond. The two pathways for
183 glyphosate degradation involves cleavage AMPA and glyoxylate by the presence of glyphosate
184 oxidoreductase where as in the other pathway, degradation is catalyzed by C-P lyase with the
185 formation of sarcosine which eventually forms formaldehyde and glycine (Sviridovet *al.*,2011).
186 The findings of this research is line with Haoyuet *al.*,(2015) who reported the degradation of
187 glyphosate by *Pseudomonas sp.*, Jacob *et al.*,(1988) isolated a *Pseudomonas* strain which
188 completely metabolized 3.21g/l glyphosate with a degrading efficiency of about 2gGp/g dry
189 biomass. Two bacteria strains of bacteria were reported to be efficient degraders of glyphosate,
190 these isolates are *Ochrobacteriumanthropic*(Sviridovet *al.*, 2011) and *Bacillus cereus* CB4(Fan *et*
191 *al.*2012). These two isolates were reported to degrade glyphosate through the two pathways
192 mentioned earlier.

193 Luftiet *al.*,(2017) reported glyphosate degradation by two plant growth promoting bacteria
194 *Enterobacter sp* and *Pseudomonas fluoresces*. The isolates used in this study have two functions
195 as plant growth promoting bacteria and degradation of glyphosate herbicide. These
196 characteristics are quite beneficial to humans where bacteria can help to reduce levels of
197 glyphosate that has high persistence and poisonous to plant and beside has plant growth
198 promoting properties that can increase crop yield (Luftet *al.*, 2017). Glyphosate degradation also
199 depends on the adaptation of bacteria to herbicides, phosphate status in bacteria cell and bacteria
200 culture growth phase(Kryuchkova *et al.*,2014). Travagliaet *al.*,(2015) reported that *Pseudomonas*
201 and *Azospirillum* are capable of detoxifying glyphosate because the undergo longer stationary
202 phase and delayed phase of death. The report of our findings is also in line with the findings of
203 Inna *et al.*,(2010) who reported that high degradation of glyphosate using degraders belonging
204 mostly to the genera *Pseudomonas*, *Arthrobacter* and *Alcaligenes* isolated from different source
205 including soil. The report of the percentage degradation by the mixed culture of the isolates
206 agreed with findings of Romeo and Hendawi (2014) who reported higher efficiency in herbicide
207 degradation by *A. lipoferum* when used singly(48.3%) than when combined with *B.polymyxa*
208 (46.8%). Yu *et al.*,(2015) reported 17.65-66.97% degradation of glyphosate in sterile soil and
209 19.01-71.57% in unsterilized soil using *Bacillus subtilis*. The effectiveness of *Bacillus sp.*,
210 *Citrobacter* and *P. flourescens* to degrade glyphosate up to 50mg/l concentration were also
211 reported (Abubackeret *al.*,2016). The initial and final GC-MS analysis of the polluted soil

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212 showed transformation or total breakdown of the components of the herbicides. Most of the
213 products of the initial samples were not found at the end of the experiment where as some new
214 compound were seen at the end of the experiment were not in the initial sample. This is also in
215 line with the findings of Abubacker *et al.*, (2016) who reported the transformation of the
216 components of glyphosate during its degradation at the end of his experiment. The
217 transformation may be as a result of microbial action or plant enzymes. The simultaneous
218 cleanup of herbicides using chemical and thermal methods are both technically difficult and
219 expensive, these methods also destroys the biotic components of the soil. The utilization of plant
220 growth promoting bacteria will enhance the biodegradation as well restore soil and biotic
221 components (Abdel megeed, 2013). These PGPB can be useful in the process of soil clean up
222 after glyphosate application to prevent accumulation of glyphosate in the soil and the reduction
223 of its toxicity. The results of this work has revealed the ability of the two isolates to effectively
224 degrade glyphosate without accumulation of amino methyl phosphonic acid (AMPA) as a
225 metabolic product. Hence this isolates can be employed in bioremediation of glyphosate polluted
226 soil.

227 **Conflict of interest:** NA

228 **Ethical standard:** NA

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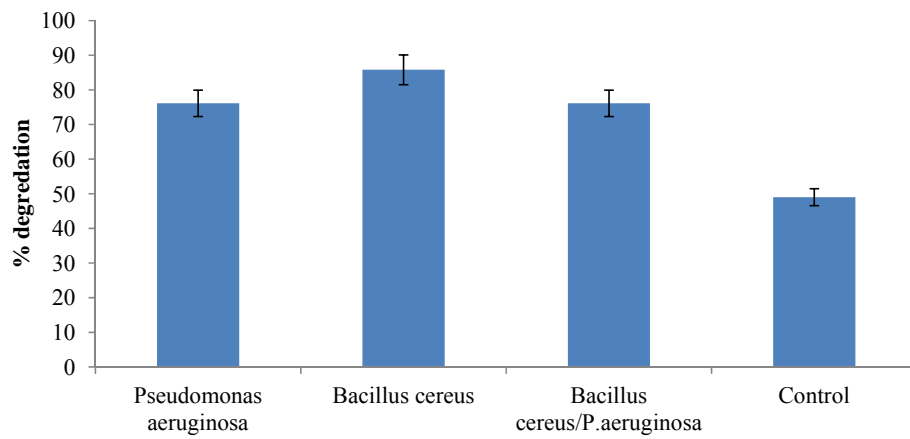
302 Table 1: Physicochemical parameters of the soil before and after planting

303

Parameters	Value
PH	5.93
Ca (cmo/kg)	1.73
Mg(cmo/kg)	0.96
K(cmo/kg)	0.97
Na(cmo/kg)	0.28
H ⁺	0.11
Electrical conductivity (μs)	62.37
P(ppm)	13.24
%Total carbon	1.41
% Total nitrogen	0.14
% Organic matter	2.42
Copper(PPM)	1.89
Fe(PPM)	129.56

317

318	Mn(PPM)	75.03
319	Sulphur(PPM)	10.32
320	Boron(PPM)	0.10
321	Zinc(PPM)	3.03
322	CEE(Cmo/kg)	4.06
323	% Base saturation	97.20
324	Particle size-Sand	70.76
325	Silt	15.84
326	Clay	13.4



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331 **Fig 1:Percentage degradation of glyphosate by the isolates at concentration of 3.1mg/g**

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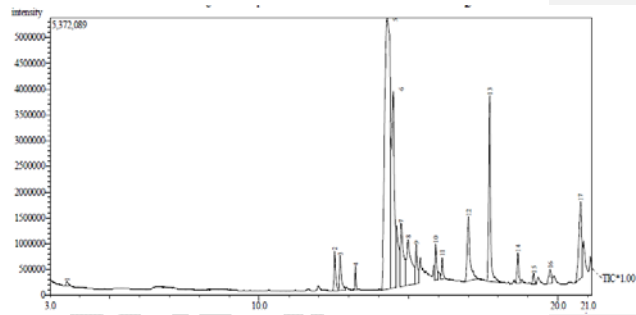
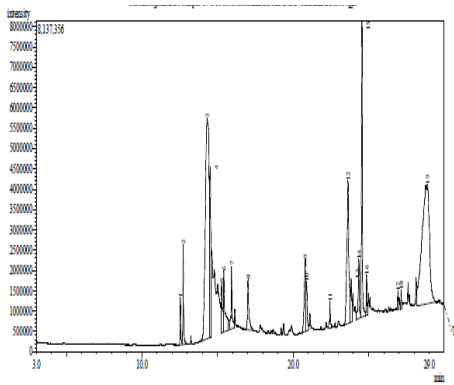
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336 A-Initial sample

B-Innoculated with *P.aeruginosa*

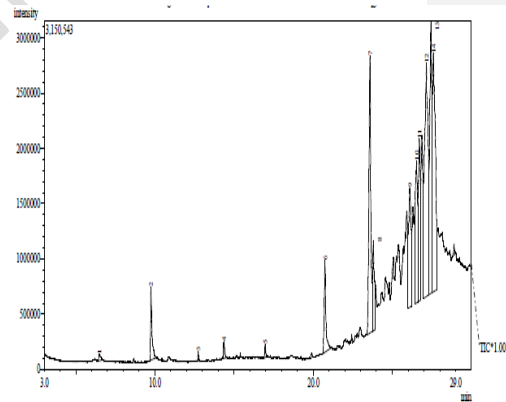
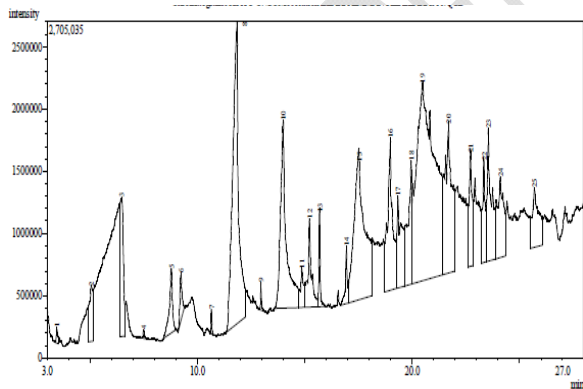


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338 C-Innoculated with *B.cereus*

D-Innoculated with mixed culture

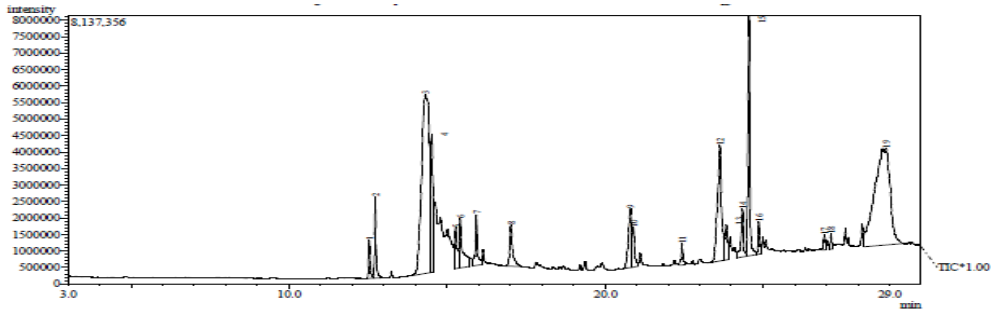
339 culture



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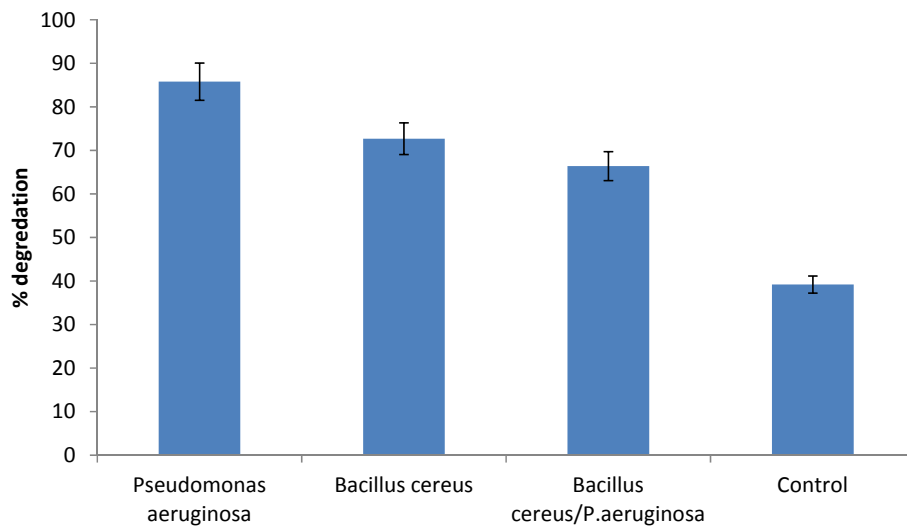
E-Control



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343 Fig 2: Chromatogram of GCMS analysis of soil spiked with 3.1 mg/ml

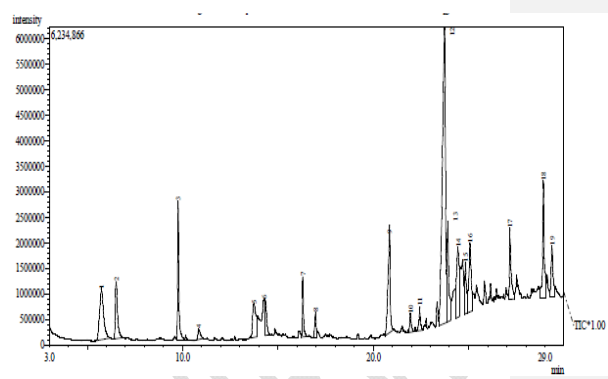
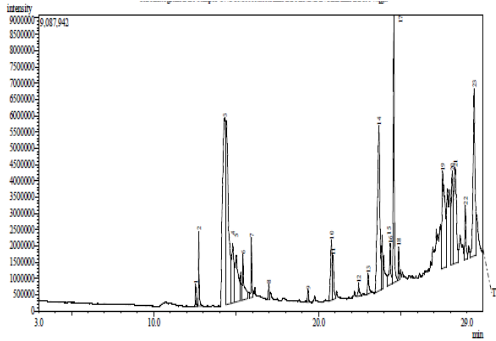
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346 Fig 3: Percentage degradation of glyphosate by the isolates at concentration of 7.2 mg/g

347 A-Initial sample B-Innoculated with *P.aeruginosa*



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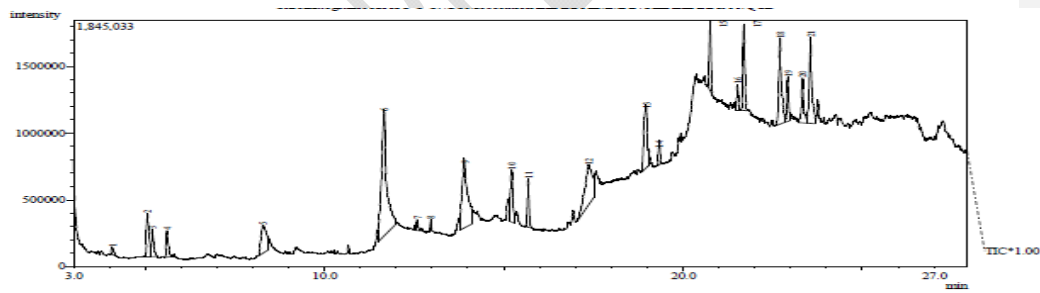
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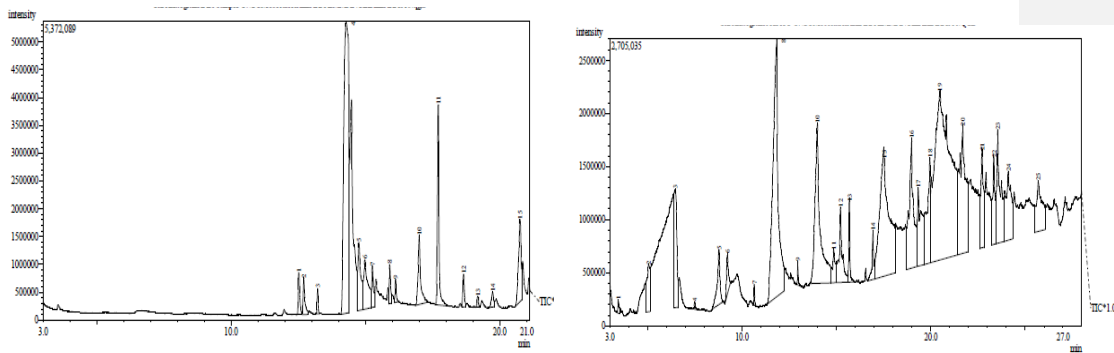
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354 C-Innoculated with *B.cereus*



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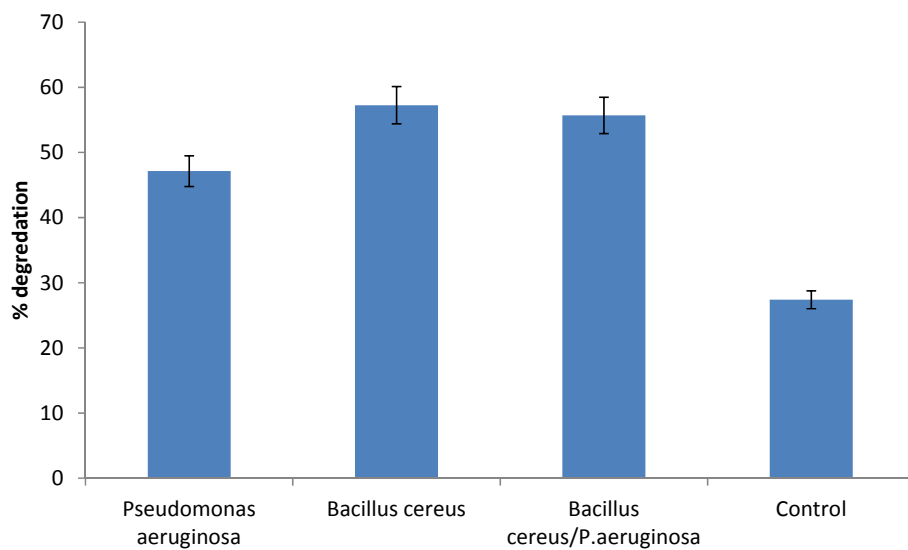
357 D-Innoculated with mixed culture

E-Control

358 Fig 4: Chromatogram of GCMS analysis of soil spiked with 7.2mg/ml

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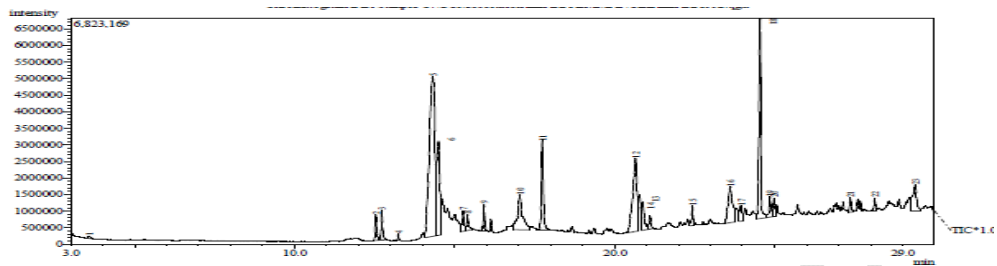


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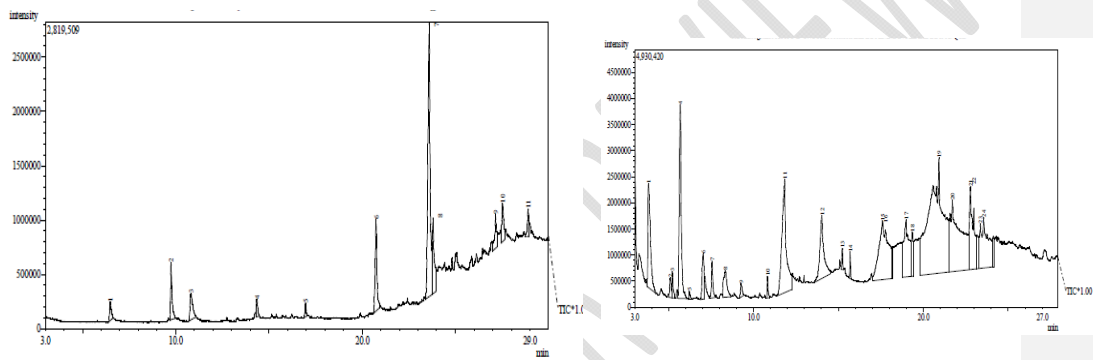
362 Fig 5: Percentage degradation of glyphosate by the isolates at concentration of 14.4mg/g

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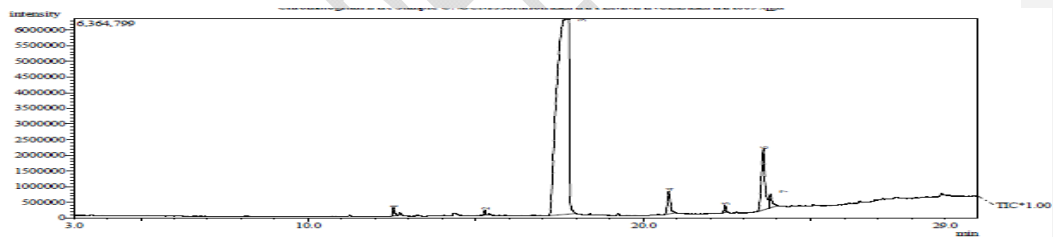
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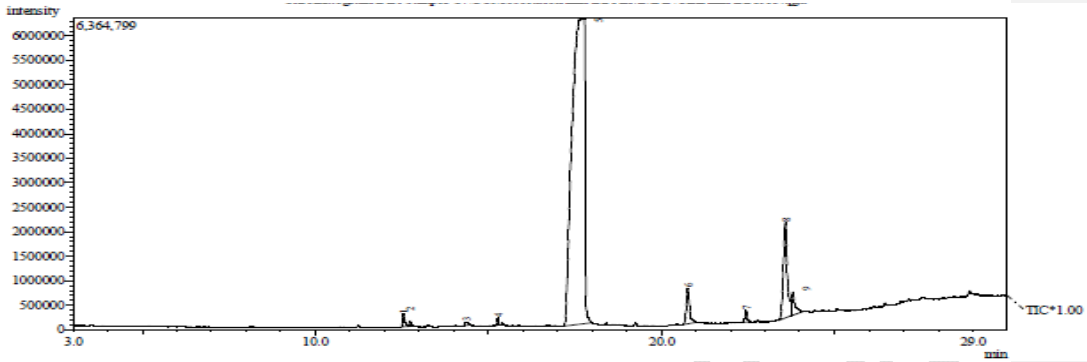
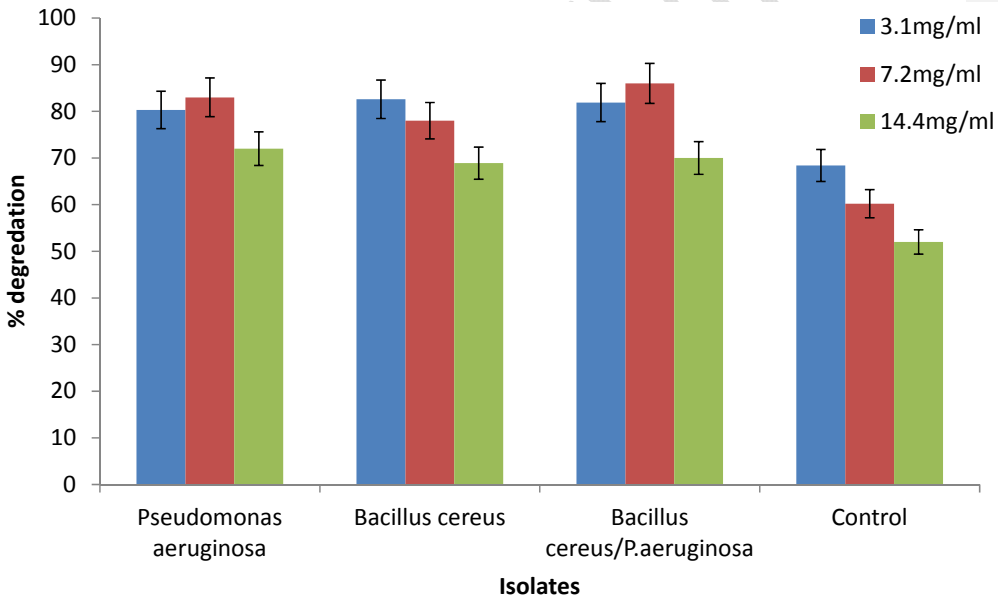


Fig 6: Chromatogram of GCMS analysis of soil spiked with 14.4mg/ml of glyphosate



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371 Fig.7: Percentage degradation of glyphosate by the isolates at different concentration
372 of glyphosate in the field

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378 **Table 2: Initial and degradative product of glyphosate in the soil**

Before degradation	Mol. weight	Formular	After degradation	Mol. weight	Formular
pyridine	93	C ₆ H ₇ N	2-Butylene Himidazole	122	C ₇ H ₁₀ N ₂
6methyl -picolinic acid	137	C ₇ H ₂ NO ₂	4-pentyl-2- tuylamine	123	C ₈ H ₁₃ N
N N-isophthaloylbis	404	C ₂₂ HN ₂₀₆	2-Propanamine N-methyl ethylidene	99	C ₆ H ₁₃ N
Dodecane(1- chlorodecylchloride)	176	C ₁₀ H ₂₁ Cl	Pyrolidine	157	C ₈ H ₁₅ NO ₂
1-chlorononyl chloride	176	C ₉ H ₁₉ Cl	2-Propanomine	99	C ₆ H ₁₃ N
Dodecanol	186	C ₁₂ H ₂₆ O	3-Azonia 5- hexene-1-ol	173	C ₈ H ₁₇ N ₂₀₂
Dodecene	168	C ₁₂ H ₂₄	4-piperidinone	155	C ₉ H ₁₇ NO
Tridecene	154	C ₁₃ H ₂₆	2-pentanamine	129	C ₈ H ₁₉ N
Hexanoic acid	158	C ₉ H ₁₈ O ₂	2,2,5,5 tetrmethyl ethyl imidazole	172 4	C ₉ H ₂ ON ₂ O
Heptanoic acid	144	C ₈ H ₁₆ O ₂	Pyrolidinone	99	C ₅ H ₉ NO
Bipyrene	156	C ₁₀ H ₈ N ₂	Pyridazine	204	C ₉ H ₁₂ N ₆
NN-Isopropyl guanidine	N-4-butyl 240	C ₁₃ H ₂₈ N ₄	Silane	144	C ₂₂ H ₄₅ Cl ₃ SI
			2H Pyrol-2-one	97	C ₅ H ₇ NO

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