

**“Afterlife Experiment”: use of MALDI-MS and SIMS  
imaging for the Study of the nitrogen cycle within plants**

SEAMAN, Callie, FLINDERS, Bryn, EIJKEL, Gert, HEEREN, Ron M.A.,  
BRICKLEBANK, Neil <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1614-2260>> and CLENCH,  
Malcolm R. <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0798-831X>>

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# The "Afterlife Experiment" : Use of MALDI-MS and SIMS Imaging for the Study of the Nitrogen Cycle within Plants

Callie Seaman<sup>1</sup>, Bryn Flinders<sup>2</sup>, Gert Eijkel<sup>2</sup>, Ron M.A. Heeren<sup>2</sup>, Neil Bricklebank<sup>1</sup> and Malcolm R Clench<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Biomedical Research Centre, City Campus, Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield, S1 1WB

<sup>2</sup> FOM Institute AMOLF, Science Park 104, 1098 XG Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Callie Seaman [callie.a.seaman@student.shu.ac.uk](mailto:callie.a.seaman@student.shu.ac.uk), Bryn Flinders [b.flinders@amolf.nl](mailto:b.flinders@amolf.nl), Gert Eijkel [g.eijkel@amolf.nl](mailto:g.eijkel@amolf.nl), Ron M.A. Heeren [r.heeren@amolf.nl](mailto:r.heeren@amolf.nl), Neil Bricklebank [n.bricklebank@shu.ac.uk](mailto:n.bricklebank@shu.ac.uk), Malcolm R Clench [m.r.clench@shu.ac.uk](mailto:m.r.clench@shu.ac.uk).

Title Running Head: The "Afterlife Experiment" : Use of MALDI-MS and SIMS Imaging for the Study of the Nitrogen Cycle within Plants

Corresponding author\*: Prof. Malcolm Clench, tel +441142253054, fax +441142253064, email: [m.r.clench@shu.ac.uk](mailto:m.r.clench@shu.ac.uk)

## Abstract

As part of a project to demonstrate the science of decay a series of mass spectrometry imaging experiment were performed. The aim was to demonstrate that decay and decomposition are only a part of the story and to show pictorially that atoms and molecules from dead plants and animals are incorporated into new life. "Caliente" leaf mustard plants (84% *Brassica juncea*, 16% *Sinapsis Alba*) were grown hydroponically using a nutrient system containing <sup>15</sup>N KNO<sub>3</sub> (98% labelled) as the only source of nitrogen. Plants were cropped and left to ferment in water for two weeks to create a mustard "tea". The mustard "tea" was used a source of nitrogen for a second hydroponics experiment where radish (*Raphanus sativus*) plants were grown in an experiment set up in a sealed container within the chimpanzee house of Edinburgh Zoo. After five weeks of growth radish were harvested sent to Sheffield where they were cryosectioned and sections imaged by positive ion MALDI imaging and LDI imaging mass spectrometry. The presence of labelled NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> in the both plants grown using <sup>15</sup>N KNO<sub>3</sub> as nutrient and those grown from the mustard "tea" was readily discernable. Subsequent to the programme uptake of <sup>15</sup>N into a number of identifiable metabolites has been studied by MALDI-MS imaging and SIMS imaging.

**Keywords:** MALDI-MSI, MetA-SIMS, <sup>15</sup>N, choline.

## 1.0. Introduction

36 In May 2011 the MS Imaging group at Sheffield Hallam University was approached by the BBC to take part  
37 in a project to demonstrate the science of decay<sup>1</sup>. Set up in Edinburgh Zoo in summer 2011 a fully equipped  
38 kitchen and garden together with all the detritus from a family barbeque was sealed in a glass box. The  
39 programme a joint venture between the BBC and the Discovery Channel followed the events as maggots,  
40 moulds, bacteria, flies and mushrooms transformed the contents beyond all recognition. As part of the  
41 experiment the programme makers wished to demonstrate that decay and decomposition was only part of the  
42 story with atoms and molecules from dead plants and animals being incorporated into new life.

43

44 The element nitrogen is a ubiquitous component of all living systems and is located, primarily, in amino acids,  
45 proteins, nucleic acids and, in plants, chlorophyll. Nitrogen is one of the principal nutritional requirements of  
46 all plants which acquire it through their root systems, usually in the form of nitrates. In the plant the nitrate is  
47 quickly converted into nitrites and then ammonium ions which can be assimilated into amino acids<sup>2</sup>. The  
48 nitrogen cycle has been extensively documented, research into the nitrogen cycle first started in 19<sup>th</sup> century,  
49 with scientist such as Boussingault shaping modern agrochemistry<sup>3</sup>.

50

51 There have been many studies of the uptake and metabolization of nitrogen by plants and many of these utilise  
52 the isotope <sup>15</sup>N; this is a rare but stable isotope, with a natural abundance of 0.366% (0.00366 mole  
53 fractions)<sup>4,5</sup>. Plant studies utilizing <sup>15</sup>N enriched KNO<sub>3</sub> material as a tracer in isotopic analysis are well  
54 documented, with techniques such as gas chromatography–mass spectrometry (GC-MS)<sup>6</sup>, inductively coupled  
55 plasma-optical emission spectroscopy (ICP-OES)<sup>7</sup>, microwave induced plasma-optical emission spectroscopy  
56 (MIP-OES)<sup>8</sup>, nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR)<sup>9</sup>, , liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC-  
57 MS/MS)<sup>6</sup>, multi-isotope imaging mass spectrometry (MIMS)<sup>10</sup> and secondary ion mass spectrometry (SIMS)<sup>11</sup>  
58 all being employed. Furthermore, it has been used in agricultural research to trace mineral nitrogen  
59 compounds (particularly fertilizers) in the environment and is also a very important tracer for describing the  
60 fate of nitrogenous organic pollutants<sup>12,13</sup>.

61

62 Matrix-assisted laser/desorption ionisation-mass spectrometry imaging (MALDI-MSI) is an emerging  
63 technique within plant biology<sup>14</sup>. In the past MALDI-MSI has been used to illustrate the distribution of  
64 various plant metabolites<sup>15-17</sup>, including carbohydrates<sup>18</sup>, oligosaccharides<sup>19</sup>, proteins<sup>20,21</sup>, lipids<sup>22,23</sup>, peptides<sup>24</sup>,  
65 pesticides<sup>25</sup> and various agrochemicals<sup>26</sup> within plant tissue. Until now the use of this technique to study  
66 nutrient cycles within plants has not been described. The work reported here aimed to demonstrate that mass  
67 spectrometry imaging is a valuable tool in the tracking of the distribution of <sup>15</sup>N labeled NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> and can be used  
68 to show uptake of species from dead organisms by living ones.

## 69 **2.0. Experimental**

### 70 2.1. Materials

71 Alpha-cyano-4-hydroxycinnamic acid (CHCA), Choline chloride, 99%, 4-Aminobutyric acid, 99+%,  
72 Methanol, acetonitrile, Trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) (AR Grade), were purchased from Fisher Scientific  
73 (Loughborough, UK). Calcium chloride, Calcium sulphate, magnesium sulphate, potassium phosphate and a  
74 trace element mix were all purchased from Hortifeeds (Lincoln, UK). 2, 5-dihydroxybenzoic acid (DHB),  
75 Potassium nitrate-<sup>15</sup>N 98 atom % <sup>15</sup>N (<sup>15</sup>N- KNO<sub>3</sub>), Potassium nitrate *ReagentPlus*<sup>®</sup>, ≥99.0% were purchased  
76 from Sigma-Aldrich (Gillingham, UK).

77

## 78 2.2. Cultivation (Hydroponic Experiment)

79 Two groups of radish seeds (*Raphanus sativus*) were sown in a mix of perlite and vermiculite (4:3) in an  
80 artificially controlled environment.

81

82 The control group utilized a nutrient system containing standard KNO<sub>3</sub>, the second group (<sup>15</sup>N) replaced all of  
83 the KNO<sub>3</sub> with <sup>15</sup>N KNO<sub>3</sub> (98% labelled) as the only source of nitrogen. Plants were cropped, homogenised  
84 and left to ferment in water for two weeks to create a "tea". The "tea" was used a source of nitrogen for a  
85 second hydroponics experiment (Second generation) where radish (*Raphanus sativus*) were grown in an  
86 artificially controlled environment. After five weeks of growth radish plants were harvested. Samples of  
87 leaves, bulbs, and stems from each group (Control, <sup>15</sup>N and Second Generation) were cryosectioned and  
88 sections imaged by positive ion MALDI imaging. (Figure 1)

89

## 90 2.3. Sample Preparation

91 The radishes were harvested and the bulbs separated from the roots and leaves and snap frozen in liquid  
92 nitrogen. The frozen radish bulbs were sectioned at a temperature of -20°C using a Leica Cryostat (Leica,  
93 Wetzlar, Germany) to obtain 12 μm sections, which were thaw mounted onto glass slides and ITO slides.  
94 Leaves were prepared by placing fresh samples between tissue paper and pressing between two glass slides.  
95 The slides were tapped together and placed into a freeze drier at -36°C until they reached a constant mass,  
96 approximately ten days. The dried leaves were mounted onto either aluminium target plates or glass slides  
97 using carbon tape to adhere the sample.

98

### 99 2.3.1. MALDI Matrix Deposition

100 Samples for MALDI were coated with a 5 mg/ml solution of CHCA in 70:30 methanol: water with 0.2% TFA  
101 using the Suncollect<sup>™</sup> automated pneumatic sprayer (Sunchrom GmbH, Friedrichsdorf, Germany) in a series  
102 of 10 layers. The initial seeding layer was performed at 2 μl/minute and subsequent layers were performed at  
103 3 μl/minute. Samples were also coated with a 20 mg/ml solution of DHB in 50:50 acetonitrile: water with  
104 0.2% TFA using the Suncollect<sup>™</sup> automated pneumatic sprayer in a series of 30 layers. The initial seeding

105 layer was performed at 10µl/minute then stepped up to 20 µl/minute and subsequent layers were performed at  
106 30µl/minute.

107

### 108 2.3.2. SIMS Sample Gold Coating

109 Prior to analysis the radish tissue sections were gold-coating using a Quorum Technologies SC7640 sputter  
110 coater (New Haven, USA) equipped with a FT7607 quartz crystal microbalance stage and FT690 film  
111 thickness monitor to deposit a 1 nm thick gold layer

112

## 113 2.4. Instrumentation

### 114 2.4.1. Applied Biosystems Q-Star Pulsar I

115 Initial mass spectrometric analyses were performed using a Applied Biosystems API Q-Star Pulsar i hybrid  
116 quadrupole time-of-flight (QTOF) instrument (Concord, Ontario, Canada) fitted with an orthogonal MALDI  
117 ion source and a 1 kHz Nd:YAG solid-state laser. Images were acquired at a spatial resolution of 150µm x  
118 150µm in “raster image” mode<sup>27</sup>, using ‘oMALDI Server 5.1’ software supplied by MDS Sciex (Concord,  
119 Ontario, Canada) and generated using the freely available Biomap 3.7.5.5 software (Novartis, Basel,  
120 Switzerland). Mass spectra were processed either in Analyst MDS Sciex (Concord, Ontario, Canada) or using  
121 the open source multifunctional mass spectrometry software mMass<sup>28</sup>.

122

123 MALDI MS spectra were obtained in positive ion mode in the mass range between  $m/z$  50 and 1000.  
124 Declustering potential 2 was set at 15 arbitrary units and the focus potential at 10 arbitrary units, with an  
125 accumulation time of 0.999 sec. Average spectra were acquired over a 0.5 cm<sup>2</sup> region on the leaves. The  
126 MALDI MS/MS spectrum of the unknown precursor ions at  $m/z$  104.1 and 105.1 was obtained using argon as  
127 the collision gas; the declustering potential 2 was set at 15 and the focusing potential at 20, and the collision  
128 energy and the collision gas pressure were set at 20 and 5 arbitrary units, respectively.

129

### 130 2.4.2. Waters Synapt G2 HDMS

131 Further MALDI data were acquired using a Waters MALDI SYNAPT™ G2 HDMS mass spectrometer  
132 (Waters Corporation, Manchester, UK) to acquire mass spectra and images. Prior to MALDI-MSI analysis the  
133 samples were optically scanned using a flatbed scanner to produce a digital image for future reference, this  
134 image was then imported into the MALDI imaging pattern creator software (Waters Corporation) to define the  
135 region to be imaged. The instrument was calibrated prior to analysis using a standard mixture of polyethylene  
136 glycol. The instrument was operated in V-mode and positive ion mode, all data was acquired in the mass  
137 range  $m/z$  100 to 500. The data was then converted using MALDI imaging converter software (Waters  
138 Corporation) and visualised using the BioMap 3.7.5.5 software (Novartis, Basel, Switzerland).

### 139 2.4.3. MetA-SIMS imaging

140 SIMS data was acquired using a Physical Electronics TRIFT II TOF-SIMS (Physical Electronics, USA)  
141 equipped with an Au liquid metal gun tuned for 22keV Au<sup>+</sup> primary ions. Images were acquired in mosaic  
142 mode using 64 tiles that each measures 125 μm square and contains 256x256 pixels. The total area scanned  
143 was 1 x 1 mm area with 60 seconds/tile resulting in a total of 4194304 spectra.

144

#### 145 2.5 Data processing

146 Images from the Q-Star instrument were processed using Biomap 3.7.5.5 software. All images were  
147 normalised against the total ion count (TIC). For presentation purposes, the mass spectra from the Analyst QS  
148 1.1 software was exported in the form of a text file and then imported into the mMass software for processing.  
149 MALDI-MSI data from the Waters Synapt instrument was converted into Analyze 7.5 format using MALDI  
150 imaging converter software (Waters Corporation) and visualised using the BioMap 3.7.5.5 software (Novartis,  
151 Basel, Switzerland).

152 SIMS data were analysed and visualized using WinCadence software version 4.4.0.17 (Physical Electronics).

153

### 154 **Results and Discussion**

155 Previous work has demonstrated that plants quickly metabolise nitrogen in to amino acids after assimilation  
156 via the roots<sup>2</sup>. Initially glutamine and glutamate were investigated, as these are the primary amino acids  
157 formed from nitrogen uptake. Other amino acids were also investigated with particular attention to arginine  
158 ( $m/z$  175) as previous work using MALDI-MSI had demonstrated its distribution within plants<sup>16</sup>. The focus on  
159 these particular amino acids was intended to demonstrate the incorporation of nitrogen from the now dead  
160 radish plants into protein synthesis for the new living plants, however unambiguous identification of these  
161 amino acids proved difficult owing to the complex overlapping isotope peaks present in this region of the  
162 positive ion mass spectrum.

163 However the B-complex vitamin Choline, ( $C_5H_{14}NO$ ),  $m/z$  104.1, was found to have incorporated the labelled  
164 <sup>15</sup>N, producing an ion with  $m/z$  105.1. These data are presented as Figure 2 and 3. Further identification of  
165 these peaks as arising from Choline is supported by the MALDI MS/MS data presented in Figure S1. Figure  
166 S1 confirms the identification of the  $m/z$  104 and  $m/z$  105 ions as choline and <sup>15</sup>N labelled choline  
167 respectively, clearly showing the appropriate product ions. The spectrum produced matched that generated  
168 data by the Scripps Centre for Metabolomics. The product ions from of the <sup>15</sup>N radish bulb and leaves have all  
169 increased in mass to charge by one, Figure S1b, which further confirms the identification.

170

171 The main distribution of the choline within the bulbs was found to be near to the skin, but not actually within  
172 the skin. It was also widely distributed though the bulb (Figure 2). This is supported by the distribution of  
173 pelargonidin ( $[M+H]^+$   $m/z$  271). This is a natural food colouring found in radish skin, when overlaid with the  
174 Choline, it can be clearly seen that these species exist in two distinct and separate areas. (Data not show)

175

176 The MALDI-MS images in figure 2 show the full extent of distribution of the labelled and the unlabelled  
177 choline. The MALDI-MS spectra of the three leaves in figure 3, also reveals the difference in the intensity of  
178 the labelled ( $m/z$  105) and unlabelled ( $m/z$  104) choline. Figure 3a shows a higher intensity of the unlabelled  
179 choline ( $m/z$  104), whereas 3b shows a higher intensity of labelled Choline ( $m/z$  105), confirming that the  $^{15}\text{N}$   
180 was metabolised by the plant and incorporated in to its structure. Figure 3c demonstrates that the  $^{15}\text{N}$  was then  
181 passed from the first generation to the second generation radish that was grown with plant material that had  
182 been feed exclusively  $^{15}\text{N}$  nitrogen. The even intensity and distribution of labelled and unlabelled choline can  
183 be clearly seen in figures 2 and 3c.

184

185 The MALDI-MS spectrum (Figure 3c) shows that approximately 50% of the material from the first  
186 generation radishes has successfully been transferred and assimilated into the formation of the  
187 second generation radish. This is also visually reflected in the MALDI-MS images shown in Figures  
188 2 and 4, which shows the same distribution with equal intensity for the labelled and un-labelled  
189 choline and phosphocholine.

190

191 The MALDI-MS images displayed in Figure 4 show the distribution of labelled and un-labelled species in the  
192 second generation radish section, following normalization against the total ion current (TIC). The species at  
193  $m/z$  271 (Figure 4a) appears to be exclusively localized within the skin of the radish tissue section. This has  
194 been tentatively identified as the anthocyanidin pelargonidin which is the natural food colour in the radish  
195 skin<sup>29</sup>. In order to confirm this assignment MS/MS was performed and the resulting spectrum Figure S2  
196 matched that of the reference MS/MS data independently generated by the Scripps Center for Metabolomics.  
197 The distributions of the un-labelled and labelled choline at  $m/z$  104 and 105 (Figures 4b and 4c respectively)  
198 are predominantly in the centre of the radish tissue. This is also observed with un-labelled and labelled  
199 phosphocholine at  $m/z$  184 and 185 (Figures 4d and 4e respectively). The distributions of labelled choline and  
200 phosphocholine at  $m/z$  105 and 185 were overlaid with the distribution of pelargonidin at  $m/z$  271, which is  
201 shown in Figures 4f and 4g. These images demonstrate that there is a clear distinction between the two regions  
202 and that the labelled species are only present in the centre of the radish.

203

204

205 The metal assisted-secondary ion mass spectrometry (MetA-SIMS) images of the control radish are displayed  
206 in Figure 5. The optical image (Figure 5a) shows a magnified view of the centre portion of the radish, which  
207 looks like that of the first generation radish. The TIC image is shown in Figure 5b. The MetA-SIMS images of  
208 the control radish show the distribution of un-labelled choline at  $m/z$  104 (Figure 5c) and the isotope of this  
209 peak at  $m/z$  105 (Figure 5d). The mass spectrum (Figure 5e) shows a strong peak at  $m/z$  104 which has been

210 tentatively assigned to the un-labelled choline. This is expected to be the abundant form as this radish was  
211 grown exclusively with an un-labelled compound.

212 The isotopic ratio ( $m/z$  104/  $m/z$  105) for the control radish is 2.5322.

213

214 The MetA-SIMS images displayed in Figure 6 shows the distribution of labelled and un-labeled choline in the  
215 first generation radish section. The optical image (Figure 6a) shows a magnified view of the centre portion of  
216 the radish, the TIC image is shown in Figure 6b. The MetA-SIMS images of un-labelled choline at  $m/z$  104  
217 and  $^{15}\text{N}$  labelled choline at  $m/z$  105 (Figures 6c and 6d respectively) show both species are widely distributed  
218 in the string like network observed in the optical image. The related spectrum (Figure 6e) shows a strong peak  
219 at  $m/z$  105 which could be  $^{15}\text{N}$  labelled choline, which is expected as this radish was grown exclusively with a  
220  $^{15}\text{N}$  labelled compound. The isotopic ratio for the first generation radish was calculated from the SIMS data to  
221 be 0.1963.

222

223 The MetA-SIMS images of the second generation radish displayed in Figure 7 shows the distribution of  
224 labelled and un-labelled choline. The optical image (Figure 7a) shows a magnified view of the centre portion  
225 of the radish, which looks more homogenous than the first generation radish. The TIC image is shown in  
226 Figure 7b. The MetA-SIMS images of un-labelled choline at  $m/z$  104 (Figure 7d) and  $^{15}\text{N}$  labelled choline at  
227  $m/z$  105 (Figures 7c) show both species are evenly distributed through the imaged area. The related spectrum  
228 (Figure 7e) again shows a peak at  $m/z$  105 which could be  $^{15}\text{N}$  labelled choline, however neither the images  
229 nor the spectrum reflect the same pattern previously observed in the MALDI-MS data of the second  
230 generation radish. The isotopic ratio calculated for the second generation radish is 0.4689. This variation  
231 could be due to the presence of an unidentified peak at  $m/z$  105, which is often observed during TOF-  
232 SIMS analysis of gold coated samples. The labelled choline at  $m/z$  105 is shadowed due to this strong  
233 ion presence. This peak was also observed in the spectrum from the control radish, in this spectrum  
234 the peak appears to be half the intensity of the un-labelled choline at  $m/z$  104 and therefore is not an  
235 isotope.

236

237 Whilst previous studies using isotopes such as  $^{14}\text{C}$ ,  $^{15}\text{N}$  and  $^{31}\text{P}$  have demonstrated the cycle of these key  
238 nutrients for plant<sup>5-8,12,13</sup>, the techniques used *i.e.* s inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (ICP-  
239 MS)<sup>10,30</sup>, GC-MS<sup>6</sup>, ICP-OES<sup>7</sup>, MIP-OES<sup>8</sup>, NMR<sup>9</sup> and LC-MS/MS<sup>6</sup> were employed to show a general  
240 distribution of the nitrogen within the tissue, as all of these methods require the tissue to be destroyed either  
241 by a digestion or extraction method prior to analysis. Imaging techniques have been used to study plants  
242 extensively including laser ablation-inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS)<sup>15,31-33</sup>, X-  
243 ray absorption spectroscopy (XAS)<sup>31,33</sup>, X-ray fluorescence (XRF)<sup>31,33</sup>, SIMS<sup>10,15,31,33</sup> and MALDI-MS<sup>14-</sup>



244 <sup>17,20,22,23</sup> but the data presented here is the first use of mass spectrometry imaging to demonstrate  
245 unambiguously that atoms and molecules move from dead plant material into new living material.

246

247 This is also the first demonstration of the use of MALDI-MS and SIMS imaging to show the distribution,  
248 translocation and metabolism of nitrogen in plants. MALDI-MS imaging of plant material is a relatively new  
249 technique, with only a small number of researchers performing it. Compounds such as nicosulfuron<sup>25</sup> and  
250 other agrochemicals compounds<sup>26</sup> have previously been monitored using this technique, but no demonstration  
251 of the cycle of this compound was performed. Other naturally occurring compounds in plants to be monitored  
252 and mapped using MALDI-MS imaging include amino acids<sup>14,16,34,35</sup>, oligosaccharides<sup>19</sup>, carbohydrate<sup>18</sup>,  
253 Proteins<sup>20</sup>, Peptides<sup>24</sup>, Lipids<sup>22,23</sup> and other plant metabolites<sup>15-17</sup>. The technique has also been proven to be  
254 useful in the monitoring of metabolites of nitrogen fixing bacteria known as rhizobia<sup>36</sup>. MS imaging, of stable  
255 isotope labelled compounds will therefore clearly be a useful tool in the future for monitoring the distribution  
256 of other species with in plants, since this technique could to be used to monitor the uptake and distribution of  
257 herbicides, pesticides and plant growth regulator (PGR) not only within the primary plant they were applied  
258 but also in second generation plant. It could also be used to monitor bioremediation and show if plants have  
259 been grown on contaminated land. It also has the potential to help optimize plant nutrition, nutrient delivery  
260 and schedules.

261

## 262 **Conclusion**

263 The data presented here have demonstrated that atoms and molecules move from dead plant material into new  
264 living material and that MALDI-MS and TOF-SIMS imaging are useful tools for monitoring the distribution  
265 of compounds with in plants and that the use of stable isotope labelled compounds in MS imaging  
266 experiments can yield useful information about uptake and fate in metabolomics based experiments.

267 Mass spectrometry imaging has been used to demonstrate the uptake of labeled nitrogen species from  
268 composted radish leaves into growing radish plants. The "cycle" of life has been successfully demonstrated.

269

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272 on hydroponic systems for plant growth.

273

274

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325 **Figure legends**

326 **Figure 1:** Experimental workflow used in this study.

327

328 **Figure 2:** MALDI-MS images showing the distribution of unlabelled and  $^{15}\text{N}$  labelled choline at m/z 104 and  
329 105 respectively within (a) the bulbs and (b) the leaves of the control, first generation labelled  $^{15}\text{N}$  radish and a  
330 second generation radish grown using a tea created from the first generation plants. (Normalized against the  
331 TIC).

332

333 **Figure 3:** MALDI-MS spectra obtained from the leaves of the a) control, b)  $^{15}\text{N}$  radish and c) second  
334 generation  $^{15}\text{N}$  plant.

335

336 **Figure 4:** MALDI-MSI images showing the distribution of A) a species identified as the anthocyanidin  
337 pelargonadin at m/z 271, B) choline at m/z 104, C)  $^{15}\text{N}$  labelled choline at m/z 105, D) phosphocholine at m/z  
338 184, E)  $^{15}\text{N}$  labelled phosphocholine at m/z 185, F)  $^{15}\text{N}$  labelled choline at m/z 105 overlaid onto the unknown  
339 species at m/z 271 and G)  $^{15}\text{N}$  labelled phosphocholine at m/z 185 overlaid onto pelargonadin species at m/z  
340 271.

341

342 **Figure 5:** A) Optical image of the control radish section and TOF-SIMS images showing B) the total ion  
343 current, the distribution of C) choline at m/z 104 and D)  $\text{C}13$  isotope of choline at m/z 105 and E) TOF-SIMS  
344 spectrum obtained from the radish tissue section.

345

346 **Figure 6:** A) Optical image of the first generation radish section and TOF-SIMS images showing B) the total  
347 ion current, the distribution of C) choline at m/z 104 and D)  $^{15}\text{N}$  labeled choline at m/z 105 and E) TOF-SIMS  
348 spectrum obtained from the radish tissue section.

349

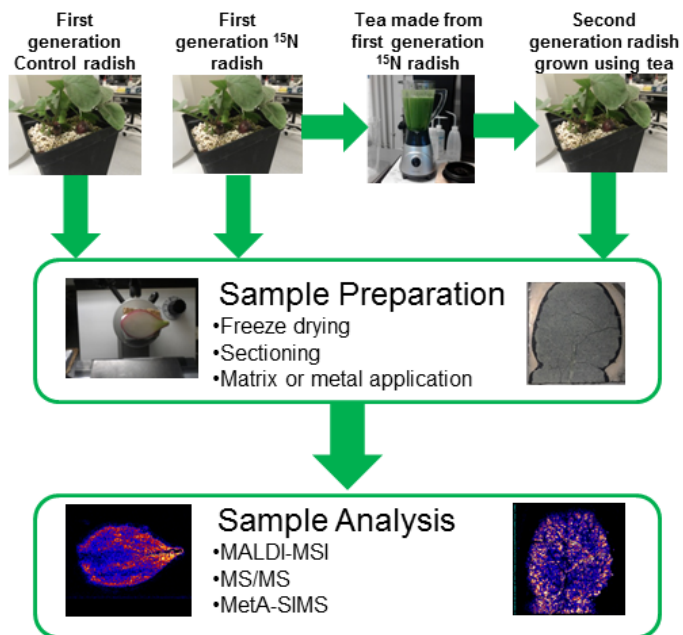
350 **Figure 7:** A) Optical image of the second generation radish section and TOF-SIMS images showing B) the  
351 total ion current, the distribution of C)  $^{15}\text{N}$  labelled choline at m/z 105 and D) choline at m/z 104 and E) TOF-  
352 SIMS spectrum obtained from the radish tissue section.

353

354 **Figure S1:** MALDI-MS/MS spectrum showing the product ions derived from a) choline at m/z 104 and b)  $^{15}\text{N}$   
355 labelled choline at m/z 105.

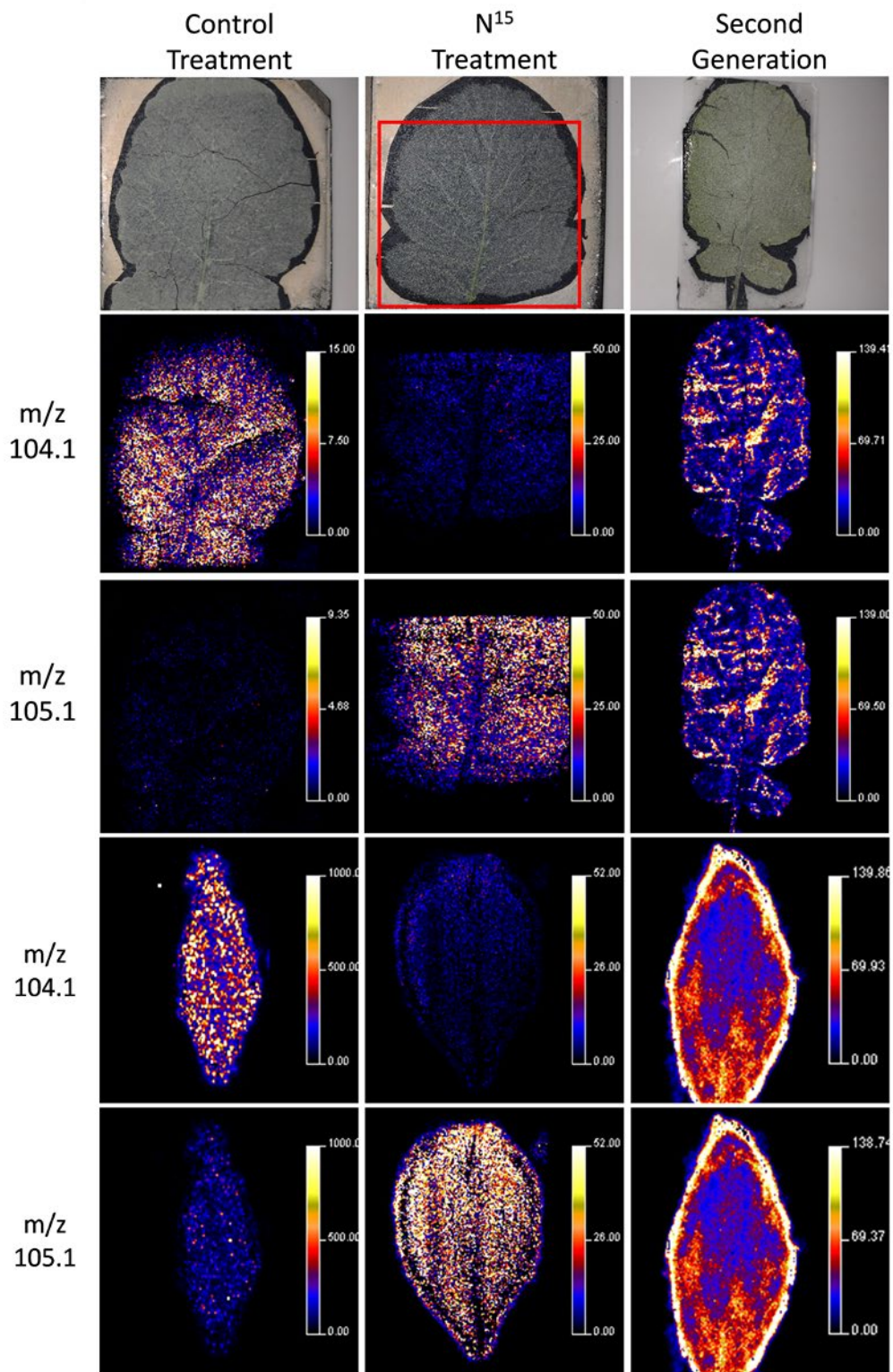
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357 **Figure S2:** MALDI-MS/MS spectrum showing the product ions, derived from the precursor ion of  
358 Pelargonidin at m/z 271.12.



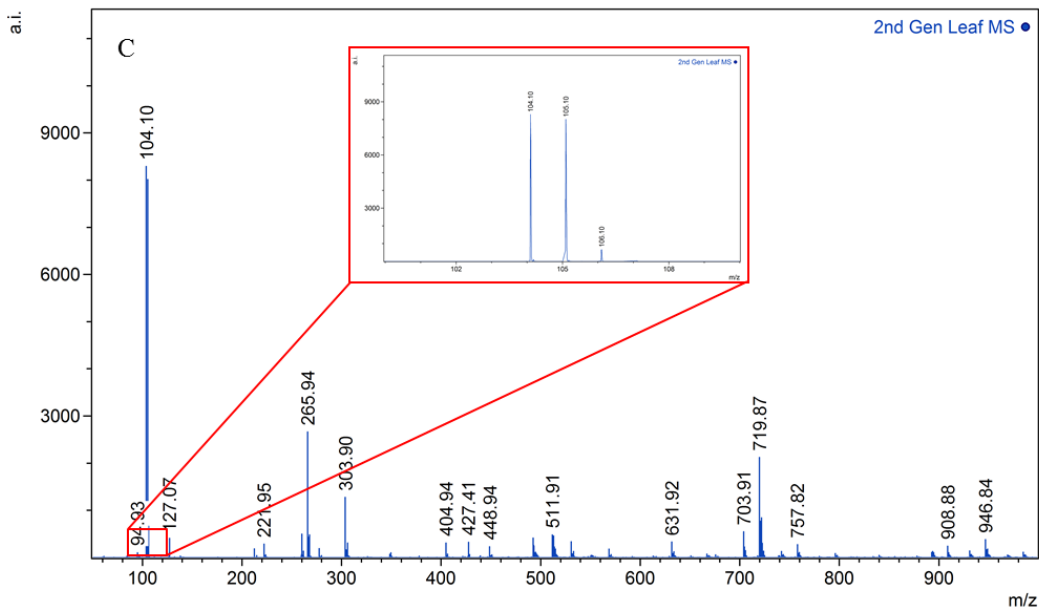
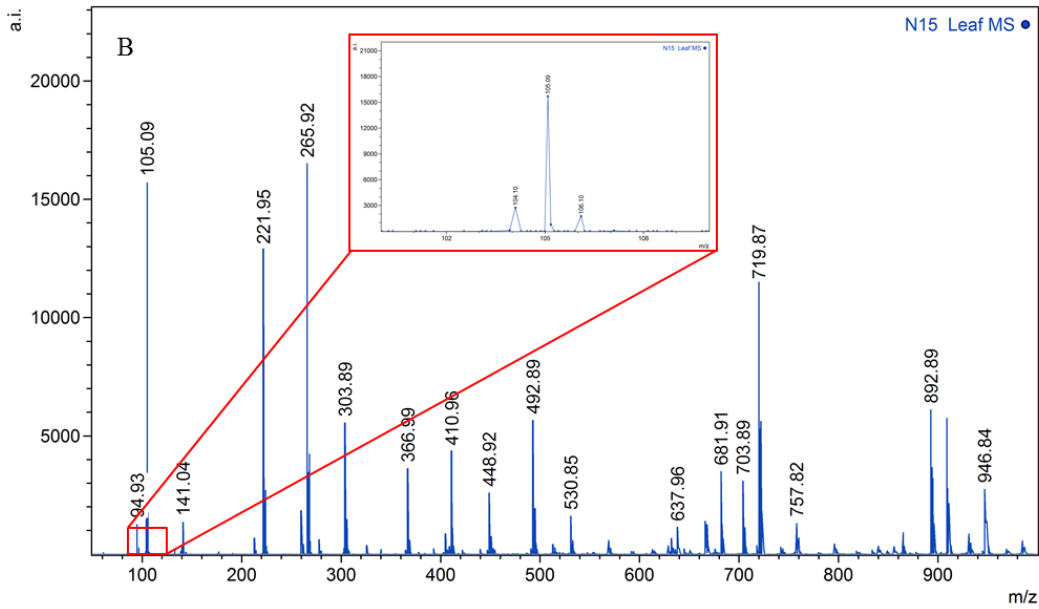
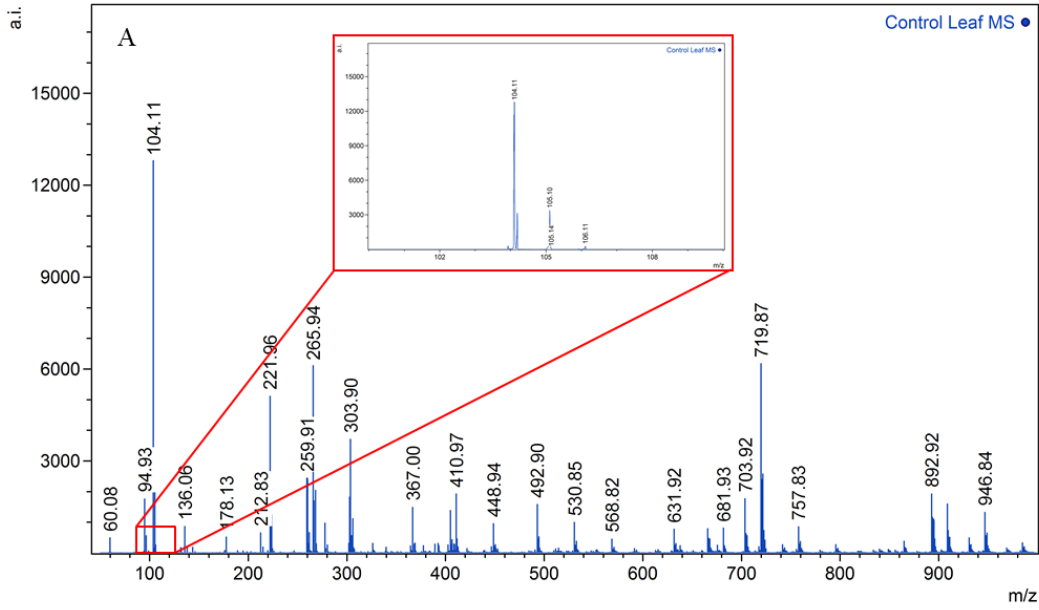
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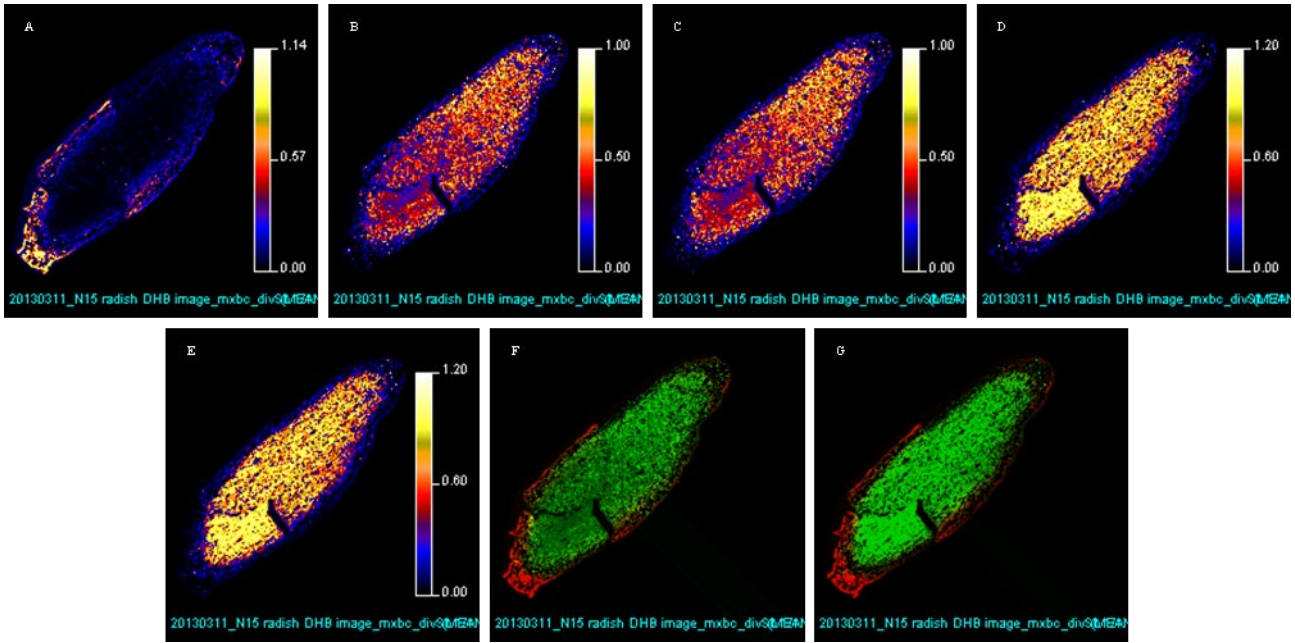
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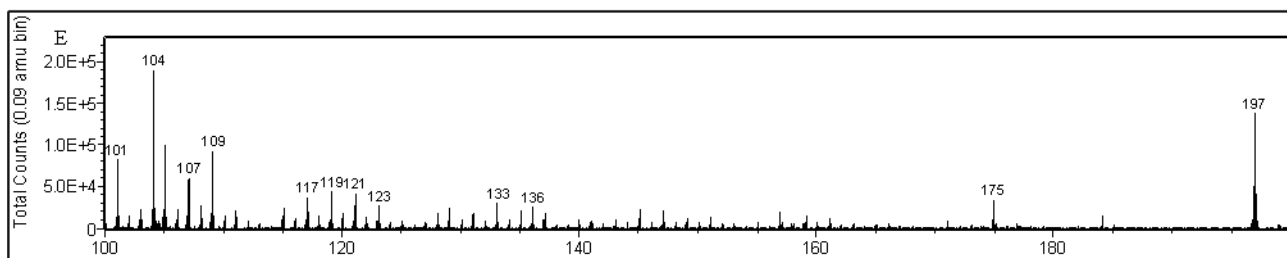
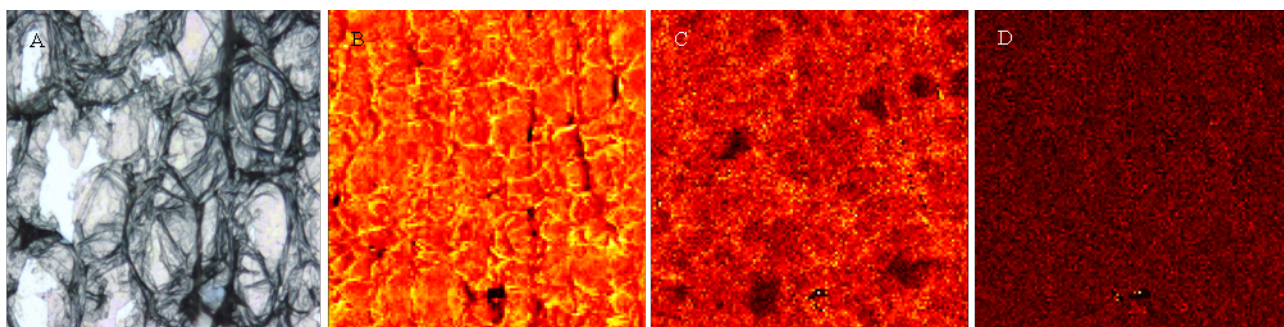




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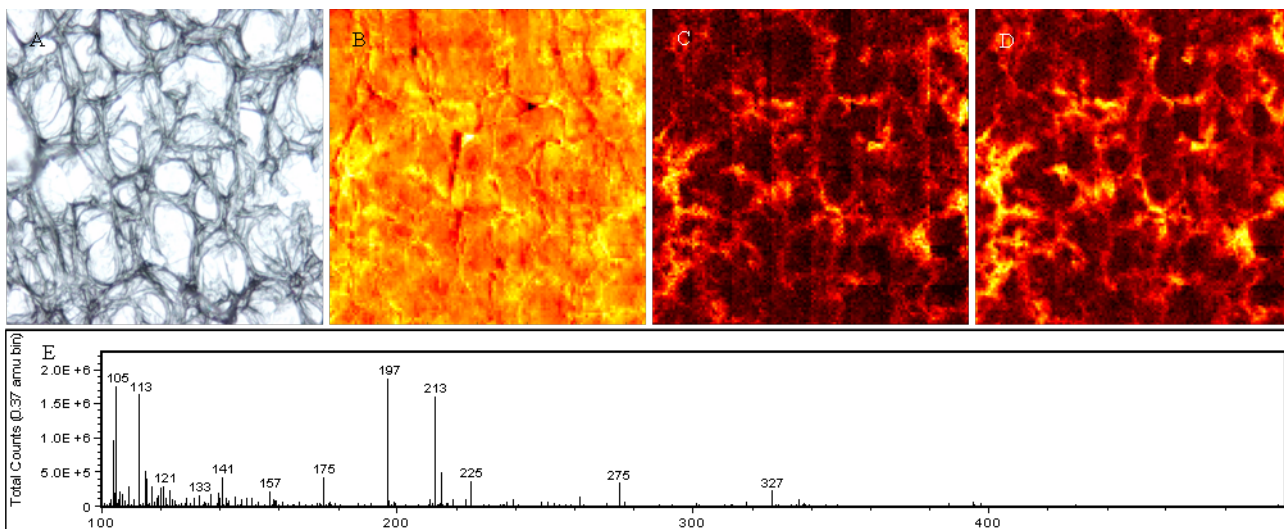
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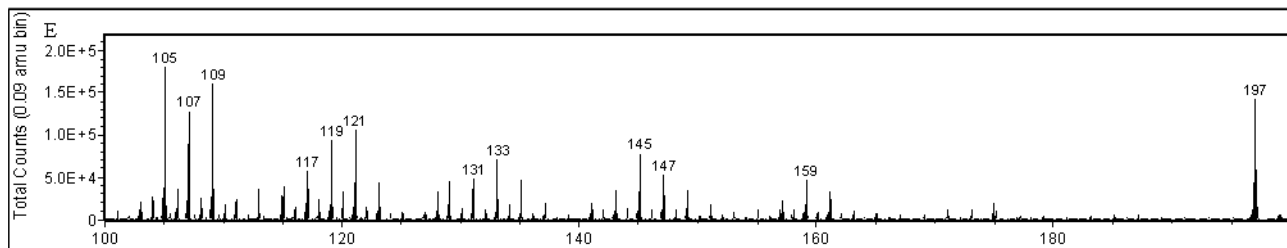
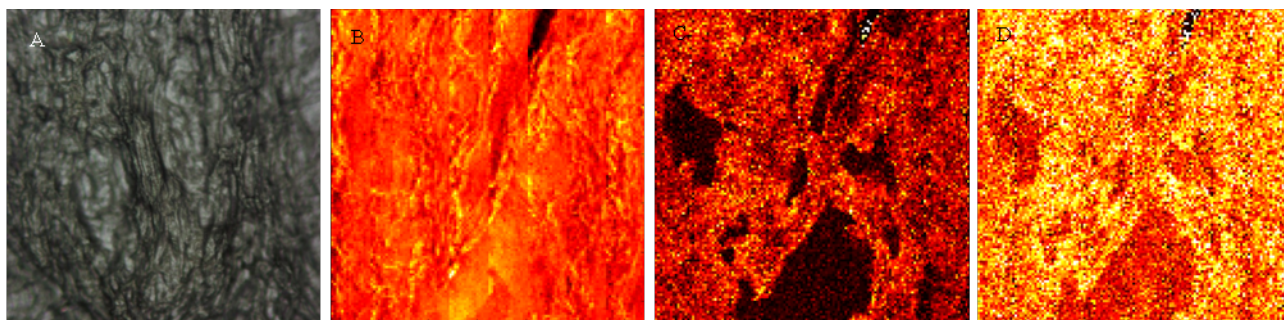
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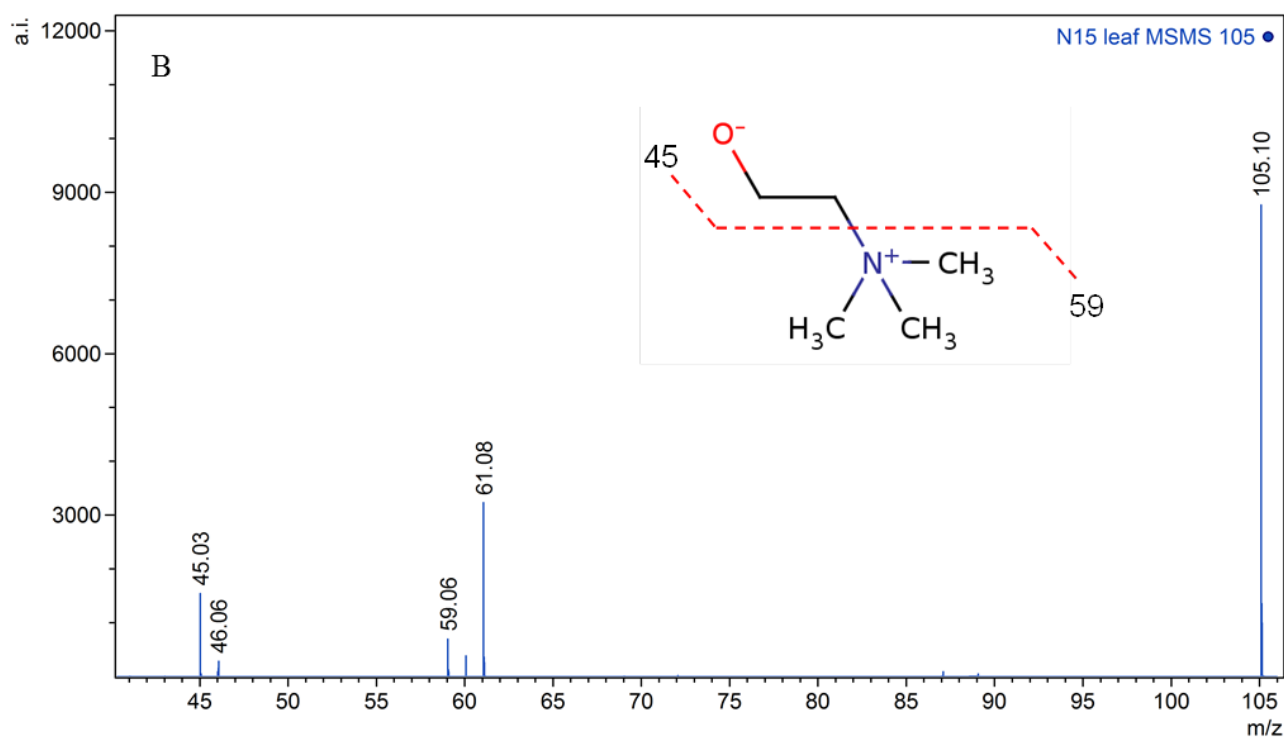
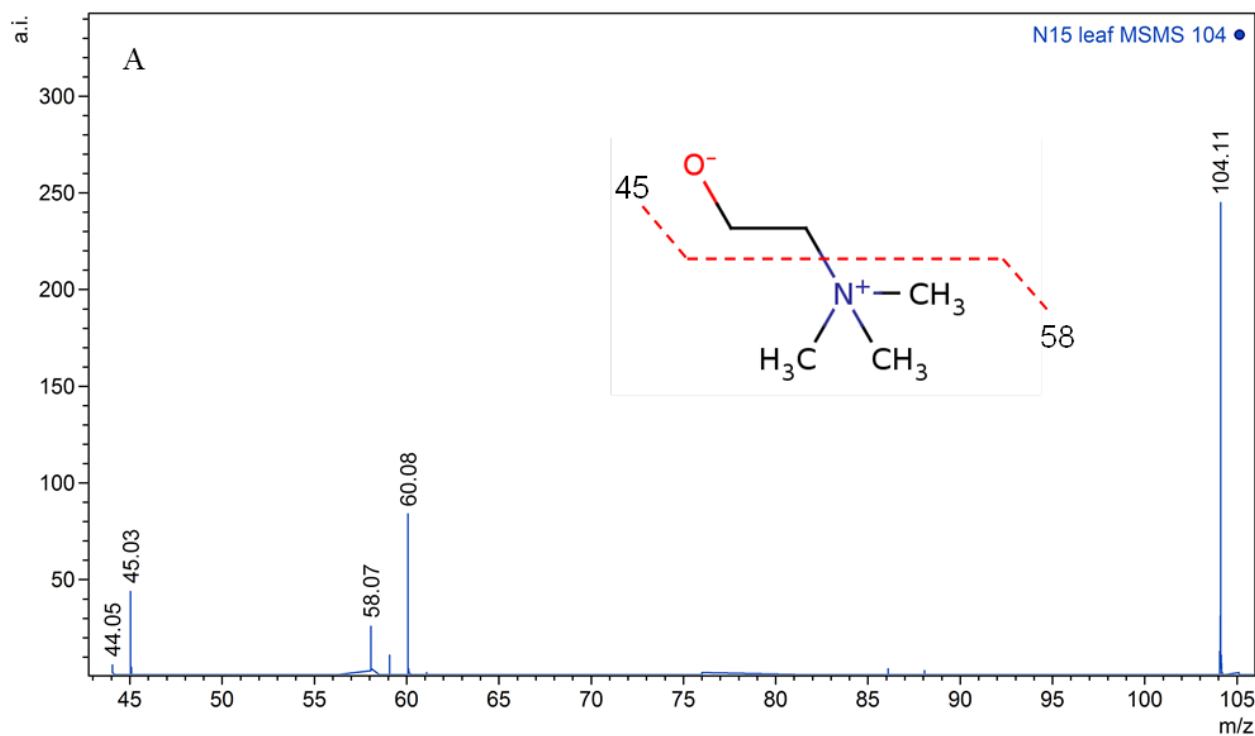
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