

FORMULATIONS OF PLANT CULTURE MEDIA
AND APPLICATIONS THEREFOR

This invention relates to new formulations of culture media and applications of these for growth of plants and plant cells, tissues and organs.

5 This application has particular but not exclusive application to coniferous plants and to permitting growth and normal development of these plants in tissue culture, and for illustrative purposes reference will be made to such application. However, it is to be understood that this invention could be used in other applications, such as
10 culture media suitable for other plant species.

It has been recognized that plant tissue culture methods may be useful to clonally multiply valuable plants through micropropagation and somatic embryogenesis procedures. Culture of plant cells may be useful in other
15 ways, including generation of genetic diversity through somaclonal variants, regeneration of plants from protoplasts, cells, calli, and intra- or intergenic hybrid forms of these, regeneration of genetically modified plants from any such plant cells or structures, selection for resistance to any
20 imposed or otherwise incurred stress, whether natural or artificial, the production of plants free from pathogens, the rejuvenation of mature tissues, the rescue of embryos from non-viable seeds, or to the culture of plant cells, calli, or organs for production of plant secondary products or other
25 valuable extracts.

In broad terms, tissue culture is conducted in a culture medium which is usually an aqueous nutrient composition. However, it has been found generally that few
30 species and genotypes are adequately responsive to plant tissue-culture procedures for commercial application, and some species are recognized as particularly recalcitrant. The responses of many plant species are confined to specific genotypes. - Coniferous plants are generally difficult, as are many other woody plants, and pine plants are particularly
35 difficult. Where success is reported, this is limited to a fraction of the genotypes desired, with response frequencies



within clonal populations (such as rooting frequency, regeneration frequencies generally) being relatively low with high attrition and/or slow growth characteristics.

It has been determined by the present applicant that a substantial reason for the failure of species and genotypes hitherto considered to be inherently recalcitrant to tissue culture lies in the selection of formulations of the nutrient media employed, it being determined that sub-optimal media and the resulting nutrient stresses imposed on the cultured plants are a primary cause of failure.

The present invention aims to alleviate deficiencies of the prior art culture media and to provide media which are reliable and efficient in use. With the foregoing and other objects in view, this invention in one aspect resides broadly in an aqueous medium for plant tissue culture and including:-

a nutritively effective concentration of reduced nitrogen, wherein said reduced nitrogen includes not more than 1.5 mM NH_4^+ ;

a phosphorus compound at a concentration of at least 2.5 mM measured as phosphate;

a chelating agent, and

an iron compound present in molar excess over the concentration of said chelating agent.

Preferably, the source of reduced nitrogen includes an amino acid, with it being particularly preferred to use arginine as the predominant form of reduced nitrogen. Of course, combinations of amino acids and other forms of reduced nitrogen may be employed. The preferred arginine source of reduced nitrogen is advantageously employed in an amount of from 1.0 to 5.0 mM, with it being especially preferred to utilize an amount resulting in a concentration of about 2.5 mM.

The use of concentrations of ammonium ions of less than 1.5 mM in media for plant growth combined with a supply of reduced nitrogen in the form of arginine has not hitherto been reported as useful in the art of media formulation for organized growth, particularly for use with coniferous plants. Organised growth of embryos has been reported using



media incorporating arginine or other organic forms of nitrogen, but in these media ammonium ions have been supplied at relatively high concentrations of at least 2.0 mM. It has become apparent that media in accordance with the present invention are advantageous since use of elevated ammonium ion concentrations tend to inhibit normal root development and detract from optimal shoot growth.

Preferably, the media in accordance with the present invention include a relatively low level of potassium ions, with it being preferred to utilize a concentration of potassium ions below 14 mM. It has been determined that there is an inhibitory effect of high levels of potassium ions on root development in tissue cultures such as are used in micropropagation of plants for transplantation.

Media in accordance with the present invention include a relatively high total phosphorus content of at least 2.5 mM measured as phosphate, it having been determined that high concentrations in media in accordance with the present invention provides for good root development in tissue culture specimens. Preferably, the phosphorus concentration measured as phosphate is from 2.5 mM to about 5.0 mM.

Preferably, the chelating agent is selected from Ethylene Diamine Tetra-acetic Acid (EDTA) and its derivatives. Where EDTA is selected as the chelating agent, an iron-to-chelate ratio of 1.2 or higher is preferred with it being particularly preferred to utilize an iron to chelate ratio of about 1.5. Of course the optimum ratio of iron to chelate will vary depending on the chelate selected and the concentrations of other transition metal ions present in the medium. In general, it has been determined that a guiding principle may be found in constructing media where the iron-chelate combination is non-stoichiometric in order to manipulate the complex equilibrium which regulates the availability of divalent metals in the medium.

Preferably, the total iron of the medium is between 120 μ M and 180 μ M, with the total EDTA of the medium preferably being in the range of 70 μ M to 130 μ M, within the requirement

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that the iron always be in stoichiometric excess over chelate in the medium.

Preferably, the stoichiometric excess of iron over chelate is at least 20 μM .

5 The media may include any of the additional nutrients and/or additives commonly utilized in growth media, including hormones, amino acids, vitamins, other minerals, pH buffers and the like. However, it is preferred that the sum of the total concentrations of the transition metals Zn, Cu, Ni and
10 Co, not exceed the total level of chelate in the media.

Preferably, the media are selected from compositions in accordance with the following parameters.

Macroelements (mM)	Range.
K	5-14
15 Mg	0.5-1.5
Ca	2-4.5
Na	0.25-0.75
NH ₄	0.5-1.5
NO ₃	8-16
20 PO ₄	2.5-5
SO ₄	1.5-3.5
Cl	0.025-2.5
Arginine	2.0-3.5

Microelements (μM)	
25 Fe	120-180
EDTA	80-130
Zn	10-40
Mn	5-100
Cu	1-8
30 Ni	0-0.3
Co	0-0.3
H ₃ BO ₃	30-100
MoO ₄	0.05-0.2
I	0.5-6.0

35 Vitamins and Carbohydrates (mg/l)	
Inositol	50-1000
Nicotinic Acid	0.3-0.8

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Pyridoxine	0.05-0.3
Thiamine	0.3-0.8
Sucrose	25000-55000

The invention will be further described with
 5 reference to the following Example.

EXAMPLE

Macroelements (mM)

	K	9
	Mg	1
10	Ca	3
	Na	0.5
	NH ₄	1.0
	NO ₃	11
	PO ₄	4
15	SO ₄	2.5
	Cl	0.1
	Arginine	3.0

Microelements (μM)

	Fe	150
20	EDTA	100
	Zn	20
	Mn	10
	Cu	5
	Ni	0.1
25	Co	0.1
	H ₃ BO ₃	60
	MoO ₄	0.1
	I	2.0

Vitamins and Carbohydrates (mg/l)

30	Inositol	100
	Nicotinic Acid	0.50
	Pyridoxine	0.1
	Thiamine	0.5
	Sucrose	30000

35 A composition in accordance with the above embodiment

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is suitable for use as a general purpose culture medium for P. radiata culture processes, the medium proving efficacious for a wide range of genotypes. These processes include cell culture, callus culture, protoplast culture, shoot culture, root culture, meristem culture, micropropagation, embryo rescue, somatic embryogenesis, organogenesis, regeneration, transformation procedures, and any related methods.

The present medium was assessed through measurement of growth of P. radiata embryos in vitro compared with known benchmark media, namely, GD (Greshoff and Doy, 1972), LP Modified (von Arnold and Eriksson, 1981), and the LP Modified-like formulation MS (Murashige and Skoog, 1962). Embryo growth after 28 days of culture at 25°C yielded the following comparative results:-

<u>Formulation</u>	<u>Growth index (by wt.)</u>
Present formulation	1.0
GD	0.32
LP Modified	0.48
MS	0.48

Upon dissection of the embryos, it was determined as an average that the improvement in growth was primarily directed to root development, which accounted for about 75% of relative weight gain.

The described embodiment is a single medium formulation which provides the appropriate nutrient conditions for a wide range of responses. This medium will allow optimal or near optimal growth of both shoot and root apices, and will support growth of disorganised callus or



cell cultures, to a moderate mass, at near-maximum rates. It is therefore particularly useful for use in supporting healthy developmental growth such as in shoot development, root development, and embryogenesis, provided appropriate hormones, as well as appropriate physical conditions and choice of tissue explant, are employed in conjunction with the nutrient medium. The composition is useful for avoiding stress-induced developmental aberrations, and stress-induced genetic variation.

10 The composition also has use as a base which can be modified in physiological and other studies of nutrient requirements where responses to specific nutrients can be obtained without incurring other growth-limiting nutrient conditions.

15 The medium is very suitable for most species of coniferous plants, but its use with any plant species is considered to be within the scope of the present invention.

20 It will of course be realised that while the above medium formulation has been given by way of example of this invention, all such and other modifications and variations thereto as would be apparent to persons skilled in the art are deemed to fall within the broad scope and ambit of this invention as defined in the claims appended hereto.

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CLAIMS

1. An aqueous medium for plant tissue culture and including:-
 - a nutritively effective concentration of reduced nitrogen, wherein said reduced nitrogen includes not more than 1.5 mM NH_4^+ ;
 - a phosphorus compound at a concentration of at least 2.5 mM measured as phosphate;
 - a chelating agent, and
 - an iron compound present in molar excess over the concentration of said chelating agent.
2. An aqueous medium according to Claim 1, wherein said source of reduced nitrogen includes an amino acid.
3. An aqueous medium according to Claim 2, wherein said amino acid is arginine employed in an amount of from 1.0 to 5.0 mM.
4. An aqueous medium according to any one of the preceding Claims, wherein the concentration of potassium ions is below 14 mM.
5. An aqueous medium according to any one of the preceding Claims, wherein said chelating agent is selected from Ethylene Diamine Tetra-acetic Acid (EDTA) and its derivatives.

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6. An aqueous medium according to Claim 5, wherein an iron-to-chelate stoichiometric ratio of at least 1.2 is employed.

7. An aqueous medium according to Claim 6, wherein the total iron of the medium is between 120 μM and 180 μM , with the total EDTA of the medium being in the range of 70 μM to 130 μM , and wherein the stoichiometric excess of iron over chelate is at least 20 μM .

8. An aqueous medium for plant tissue culture and including:-

Macroelements (mM)	Range
K	5-14
Mg	0.5-1.5
Ca	2-4.5
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NH ₄	0.5-1.5
NO ₃	8-16
PO ₄	2.5-5
SO ₄	1.5-3.5
Cl	0.025-2.5
Arginine	2.0-3.5

Microelements (μM)

Fe	120-180
EDTA	80-130
Zn	10-40

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Mn	5-100
Cu	1-8
Ni	0-0.3
Co	0-0.3
H ₃ BO ₃	30-100
MoO ₄	0.05-0.2
I	0.5-6.0

Vitamins and Carbohydrates (mg/l)

Inositol	50-1000
Nicotinic Acid	0.3-0.8
Pyridoxine	0.05-0.3
Thiamine	0.3-0.8
Sucrose	25000-55000

9. Aqueous media for plant tissue culture substantially as hereinbefore defined with reference to the Example.

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