



# Insecticidal Activity of Essential Oils of *Pistacia atlantica* Desf. and *Pistacia lentiscus* L. Against *Tribolium confusum* Dul.

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Since ancient times, the therapeutic virtues of plants have been a part of the traditional pharmacopoeia of several Mediterranean countries, with various uses depending on the country. Among the plants with a great therapeutic potential, *Pistacia lentiscus* L. and *P. atlantica* Desf. (Anacardiaceae), are found in the Mediterranean circum-country. The present study was conducted in order to identify and compare the chemical compositions of the essential oils of *P. atlantica* and *P. lentiscus* as well as to determine their efficiency as a fumigant toxicity for the control of pest insect *Tribolium confusum*.

**Materials and Methods:** In this study, the aerial parts of the plants were hydrodistilled in a Clevenger-type apparatus. The isolated essential oil was analyzed using gas chromatography (GC) and mass spectrometry (GC/MS). The fumigation toxicity of essential oils was evaluated against the adults of *T. confusum*.

**Results:** The essential oils of both plants showed qualitative differences in their chemical compositions. The major compounds identified from *P. lentiscus* were (E)- $\beta$ -caryophyllene (16.3%) and  $\gamma$ -cadinene (15.6%), while from *P. atlantica* was terpinen-4-ol (35.6%). Results of the fumigant tests of the essential oils revealed that the essential oil of *P. lentiscus* was the most toxic. The estimated concentration to kill 50 % of the treated insects (LC<sub>50</sub>) was 7.5  $\mu$ L/L air.

**Conclusions:** The results showed that *P. lentiscus* essential oil presented an interesting fumigant property and that could be proposed as new potential sources of natural bioinsecticides.

**Keywords:** Bioinsecticides, Essential Oils, *Pistacia*, Beetles, Mills

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## Introduction

In Algeria, different pests cause serious damages on agricultural food and stored products. *Tribolium confusum* is a beetle that infests stored products. It is widely spread throughout the world and ravages mills, silos and grain stores, but it also infests pantries and kitchen cabinets.<sup>1</sup> A large number of aromatic and medicinal plants possess very interesting biological properties, which find applications in various fields namely medicine, pharmacy, cosmetic and agriculture. The therapeutic properties of plants have been known empirically since antiquity and it is only around the beginning of the 20th century that scientists have become interested in active principles and their actions.<sup>2</sup> Faced with the harmful effects of pesticides and insecticides, essential oils are a natural alternative and respectful of the environment to repel insects, avoid punctures, or to eliminate parasites. The most studied families were Lamiaceae, followed by Asteraceae, Myrtaceae,

Apiaceae, and Rutaceae.<sup>3</sup> The genus *Pistacia* belongs to the family of Anacardiaceae. In Algeria, the genus *Pistacia* is represented by four species, namely *Pistacia terebinthus*, *Pistacia vera*, *Pistacia atlantica* and *Pistacia lentiscu*.<sup>4</sup> Several studies have reported the insecticidal activity of *Pistacia* genus essential oils. The *P. lentiscus* essential oil from Tunisia has been reported to be effective against pest insects similar to the two moths *Ephestia ceratoniae* and *Ephestia kuehniella*.<sup>5,6</sup> The study of the chemical composition of gum, fruit and leaves essential oils of *P. atlantica* subsp. *kurdica* on the fumigant toxicity against *Tribolium* beetles showed the gum essential oil was more toxic than fruits and leaves.<sup>7</sup> The present study was conducted in order to identify and compare the chemical compositions of the essential oils of *P. atlantica* and *P. lentiscus* as well as their fumigant toxicity for the control of pest insect *Tribolium confusum*.

## Materials and Methods

### Plant Material and Extraction of the Oils

Aerial parts of *P. lentiscus* and *P. atlantica* were collected in May 2017 from the Tiaret region, Algeria. The freshly harvested leaves, were dried in the shade in a dry and ventilated place. The samples were botanically identified by Pr. Noury Benabadi, Laboratory of Ecology and Ecosystem Management Tlemcen (Algeria). Voucher specimens were deposited with the Herbarium of the University of Tlemcen. *P. lentiscus* (P.le.05/2017) and *P. atlantica* (P.al. 05.2017). The oils were isolated by hydrodistillation (400–450 g) for 4 hours using a Clevenger-type apparatus according to the European Pharmacopoeia and yielded 0.19% for *P. atlantica* and 0.12% for *P. lentiscus* w/w of oil. The oils were dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate and were then stored in sealed glass vials at 4°C prior to analysis.

### Analysis Conditions

The gas chromatography (GC) analyses were carried out using a Perkin Elmer Autosystem XL GC apparatus equipped with a dual flame ionization detection system and fused Rtx-1 silica capillary columns (60 m × 0.22 mm i.d., 0.25 μm film thickness; polydimethylsiloxane). The oven temperature was programmed to increase from 60–230°C at 2°C/min and was then held isothermally at 230°C for 35 minutes. Injector and detector temperatures were maintained at 280°C. The injection volume was 0.1 μL, as previously reported by Benyoucef et al.<sup>8</sup>

### Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry Analysis

Samples were analyzed using a Perkin Elmer Turbo mass detector (quadrupole) coupled to a Perkin Elmer Autosystem XL equipped with Rtx-1 fused silica capillary columns and Rtx-Wax (ion source temperature, 150°C; ionization energy, 70 eV). Ionization energy MS was acquired over a mass range of 35–350 Da (scan time, 1 s). Other GC conditions were the same as described for GC, except the split which was 1/80, as previously reported by Benyoucef et al.<sup>8</sup>

The identification of each compound of the mixtures was carried out by comparison: (i) retention indices calculated respectively on polar and apolar columns with those of standard compounds (laboratory library “Arôme”) or those reported in the literature; (ii) mass spectra (electronic impact) with those of standard compounds (laboratory library) or those present in computerized banks.<sup>9,10</sup> All components were identified by comparing their mass spectra (EI-MS) and retention indices (RIs) with those of mass-spectral library without complementary analysis.

Quantification of constituents was performed using a Flame Ionization Detector by internal standardization of peak areas. This was done using the calculated response factors relative to the tridecane (0.7 g.100 g<sup>-1</sup>) which was used as an internal standard according to the method described by Benyoucef et al.<sup>8</sup> and adapted within the CPN laboratory.

### Fumigation Toxicity of Essential oils Against *Tribolium confusum*

To determine the fumigant toxicity of essential oils,

appropriate concentrations, were applied separately on the filter papers (Whatman No. 1, 2 cm diameter) to achieve the concentrations ranged from 5 to 20 μL/L air without using any solvent, and the filter papers were attached to under the surface of the lids of plastic jars with 50-mL volumes. The control sets received no oil. The lids were screwed tightly on the jars containing 15 insects, each all of the same age. These were kept at a temperature of 25–26°C and 65% relative humidity.<sup>11</sup> The mortality was checked after 24 hours from the commencement of exposure. The mortality of insects was expressed in % and calculated by using the Abbott correction formula.

Corrected Mortality = (Observed mortality in treatment - Observed mortality in control / 100 - Control mortality) × 100  
Percentage Mortality = (Number of dead larvae / Number of introduced larvae) × 100

Tests were carried out in triplicate.

### Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed using the SAS software and means were separated using the least significant difference (LSD) test at  $P \leq 0.05$ . The LC<sub>50</sub> and LC<sub>90</sub> values were calculated using probit analysis. Analysis of each test was performed in triplicate.

## Results

### Chemical Composition of Essential Oils

The essential oil compositions (%) of *P. atlantica* and *P. lentiscus* are listed in Table 1. In *P. lentiscus* essential oil, 34 compounds were identified, accounting for 95.3% of the total oil. The investigated Algerian *P. lentiscus* essential oil consists chiefly of sesquiterpene hydrocarbons (57.2%), accompanied by oxygenated sesquiterpenes (13.7%), monoterpene hydrocarbons (12.5%), and oxygenated monoterpenes (11.5%). The major compounds were (E)-β-caryophyllene (16.3%), γ-cadinene (15.6%), α-terpineol (9.2%), γ-murolene (6.9%), α-humulene (6.3 %), α-murolene (5.9%), caryophyllene oxide (5.8%) and τ-murolol (5.3%) (Table 1).

The essential oil of *P. atlantica* contained 25 compounds, and chiefly consisted of oxygenated monoterpenes (37.1%) and monoterpene hydrocarbons (31.6%). The main components of this oil were terpinen-4-ol (35.6%), followed by bicyclogermacrene (7.8%), α-pinene (6.8%), germacrene-D (6.2%) and Sabinene (5.8%) (Table 1).

### Insecticidal Activity

The results of the fumigation toxicity of the essential oils of *P. lentiscus* and *P. atlantica* against *T. confusum* insect are summarized in Figure 1. The efficacy of essential oils varied with their concentrations. The values of insects mortality expressed as percentage (%) caused by the both essential oils were significantly different compared to the control ( $P \leq 0.05$ ). The essential oil of *P. lentiscus* showed a better toxicity than *P. atlantica* essential oil. At 20 μL/L air, the essential oil of *P. lentiscus* caused a mortality of 100%, while, the essential oil of *P. atlantica* of *P. atlantica* with the same concentration caused a mortality of 90% after 24 hours of exposure

**Table 1.** Chemical Composition of Essential Oils of the Aerial Parts of the *P. lentiscus* and *P. atlantica*

| N <sup>a</sup>             | Compounds            | IRIa <sup>b</sup> | Ria <sup>c</sup> | Rip <sup>d</sup> | <i>P. lentiscus</i> | <i>P. atlantica</i> | Identification <sup>e</sup> |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 01                         | α-Thujene            | 921               | 923              | 1023             | -                   | 0.5                 | RI, MS                      |
| 02                         | α-Pinene             | 931               | 931              | 1022             | 2.3                 | 6.8                 | RI, MS                      |
| 03                         | Camphene             | 943               | 943              | 1066             | 0.8                 | 0.9                 | RI, MS                      |
| 04                         | Sabinene             | 964               | 965              | 1120             | 0.1                 | 5.8                 | RI, MS                      |
| 05                         | β-Pinene             | 970               | 971              | 1110             | 0.3                 | 3.4                 | RI, MS                      |
| 06                         | Myrcene              | 977               | 979              | 1159             | 0.1                 | 1.3                 | RI, MS                      |
| 07                         | α-Phellandrene       | 997               | 980              | 1164             | 0.3                 | 0.3                 | RI, MS                      |
| 08                         | α-Terpinene          | 1008              | 1007             | 1178             | -                   | 2.2                 | RI, MS                      |
| 09                         | β-Phellandrene       | 1020              | 1027             | 1208             | -                   | 1.9                 | RI, MS                      |
| 10                         | p-Cymene             | 1012              | 1020             | 1254             | 2.2                 | 1.6                 | RI, MS                      |
| 11                         | Limonene             | 1023              | 1020             | 1199             | 2.6                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 12                         | (E)-β-Ocimene        | 1034              | 1030             | 1245             | 0.4                 | 0.4                 | RI, MS                      |
| 13                         | γ-Terpinene          | 1048              | 1056             | 1241             | 1.5                 | 4.9                 | RI, MS                      |
| 14                         | (E)-Sabinene hydrate | 1053              | 1053             | 1454             | -                   | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 15                         | Terpinolene          | 1078              | 1086             | 1282             | 1.4                 | 1.6                 | RI, MS                      |
| 16                         | cis-Sabinene hydrate | 1083              | 1080             | 1541             | 0.5                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 17                         | Linalol              | 1082              | 1090             | 1576             | 0.2                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 18                         | Terpinen-4-ol        | 1161              | 1161             | 1602             | 0.2                 | 35.6                | RI, MS                      |
| 19                         | α-Terpineol          | 1179              | 1176             | 1600             | 9.2                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 20                         | Bornyl acetate       | 1269              | 1278             | 1579             | 1.9                 | 1.5                 | RI, MS                      |
| 21                         | Undecan-2-one        | 1270              | 1278             | 1604             | 0.4                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 22                         | α-Copaene            | 1379              | 1385             | 1515             | 2.1                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 23                         | β-Elementene         | 1389              | 1392             | 1553             | 0.9                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 24                         | (E)-β-Caryophyllene  | 1421              | 1428             | 1590             | 16.3                | 1.5                 | RI, MS                      |
| 25                         | α-Humulene           | 1456              | 1454             | 1668             | 6.3                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 26                         | Allooomadendrene     | 1462              | 1456             | 1640             | 1.5                 | 0.6                 | RI, MS                      |
| 27                         | α-Muurolene          | 1494              | 1507             | 1685             | 5.9                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 28                         | γ-Muurolene          | 1515              | 1512             | 1750             | 6.9                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 29                         | Germacrene-D         | 1480              | 1488             | 1705             | -                   | 6.2                 | RI, MS                      |
| 30                         | Bicyclogermacrene    | 1494              | 1504             | 1722             | 0.4                 | 7.8                 | RI, MS                      |
| 31                         | γ-Cadinene           | 1507              | 1513             | 1750             | 15.6                | 0.2                 | RI, MS                      |
| 32                         | δ-Cadinene           | 1516              | 1524             | 1754             | 1.3                 | 1.2                 | RI, MS                      |
| 33                         | Spathulenol          | 1557              | 1570             | 2120             | 0.8                 | 3.1                 | RI, MS                      |
| 34                         | Caryophyllen oxide   | 1576              | 1583             | 1982             | 5.8                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 35                         | Globulol             | 1589              | 1590             | 2068             | 0.4                 | 1.8                 | RI, MS                      |
| 36                         | Viridiflorol         | 1591              | 1589             | 2085             | 0.2                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 37                         | τ-Cadinol            | 1632              | 1635             | 2134             | 0.9                 | 1.2                 | RI, MS                      |
| 38                         | τ-Muurolol           | 1634              | 1638             | 2145             | 5.3                 | -                   | RI, MS                      |
| 39                         | α-Cadinol            | 1645              | 1650             | 2227             | 0.3                 | 1.6                 | RI, MS                      |
| <b>% Identification</b>    |                      |                   |                  |                  | <b>95.3</b>         | <b>93.9</b>         |                             |
| Monoterpene hydrocarbons   |                      |                   |                  |                  | 12.5                | 31.6                |                             |
| Oxygenated monoterpenes    |                      |                   |                  |                  | 11.5                | 37.1                |                             |
| Sesquiterpene hydrocarbons |                      |                   |                  |                  | 57.2                | 17.5                |                             |
| Oxygenated sesquiterpenes  |                      |                   |                  |                  | 13.7                | 7.7                 |                             |
| Non-terpenic compounds     |                      |                   |                  |                  | 0.4                 | -                   |                             |

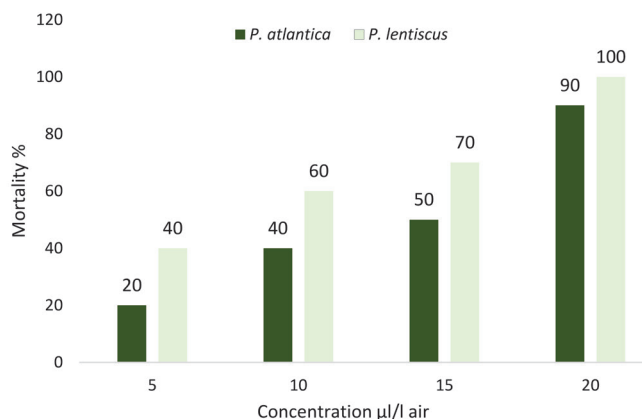
<sup>a</sup> Order of elution is given on apolar column (Rtx-1). <sup>b</sup> Retention indices of literature on the apolar column (IRIa). <sup>c</sup> Retention indices on the apolar Rtx-1 column (RIa).

<sup>d</sup> Retention indices on the polar Rtx-Wax column (Rlp). <sup>e</sup> RI: Retention Indices; MS: Mass Spectra in electronic impact mode.

(Figure 1). After probit analysis, the LC<sub>50</sub> and LC<sub>90</sub> values of the *P. lentiscus* essential oil against *T. confusum* were 7.5 and 15 µL/L air, respectively, while those for *P. atlantica* essential oil were 15 and 20 µL/L air, respectively. Based on LC<sub>50</sub> values, the *P. lentiscus* essential oil was 2-fold more toxic compared to *P. atlantica* essential oils (Table 2).

### Corrected Mortality Rates

The corrected mortality after 24 hours is listed in Table 3. The fumigation toxicity of *P. lentiscus* essential oil was higher than that of the *P. atlantica* essential oil, with significant differences. At the dose of 10 µL/L air, the corrected mortality of *P. lentiscus* (60%) was almost 2-fold more toxic of *P. atlantica* (30.33%).



**Figure 1.** Fumigant Toxicity of Different Concentrations of the Essential Oils of *P. atlantica* and *P. lentiscus* Against *T. confusum* for 24 Hours at 25±1°C ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

**Table 2.** LC<sub>50</sub> and LC<sub>90</sub> of Essential Oils of *P. atlantica* and *P. lentiscus* against *T. confusum* for 24 Hours at 25±1°C

| Insect (N=15)       | 24-LC <sub>50</sub> | Slope ± SE  | df | Chi-square | 24-LC <sub>90</sub> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|----|------------|---------------------|
| <i>P. atlantica</i> | 15 ± 1.1            | 1.21 ± 0.26 | 2  | 1.9*       | 20 ± 1.5            |
| <i>P. lentiscus</i> | 7.5 ± 0.8           | 1.36 ± 0.24 | 2  | 0.89*      | 18.5 ± 1.2          |

The fumigant toxicity is expressed as the concentration (µL/L air) to kill 50% (LC<sub>50</sub>) and 90% (LC<sub>90</sub>) of insects treated.

N: Number of tested insects.

\*Since Chi square goodness of fit test is not significant ( $P > 0.15$ ), no heterogeneity factor is used in the calculation of fiducial limits.

**Table 3.** Determination of Corrected Mortality of Essential Oils of *P. atlantica* and *P. lentiscus* Against *T. confusum*

| Concentrations (µL/L air) | <i>P. atlantica</i> | <i>P. lentiscus</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 10                        | 30.33 ± 0.86        | 60 ± 1.56           |
| 15                        | 44.44 ± 1.12        | 70 ± 1.33           |
| 20                        | 88.88 ± 2.18        | 90 ± 2.43           |

However, at higher concentrations, the corrected mortality of *P. atlantica* and *P. lentiscus* essential oils were 88.88% and 90%, respectively.

## Discussion

Due to the tremendous toxicity of synthetic insecticides to humans and/or animals, plants have gained tremendous power and importance as bioinsecticides in recent years. Many essential oils from various plants have been studied for their repellent properties. Generally, the bioactivity of essential oils is influenced by their chemical composition and are therefore considered as an important aspect to consider before recommending in a pest control program.<sup>12,13</sup> In the present investigation, a total of 34 compounds comprising 95.3% of the oil were identified from the essential oil of *P. lentiscus*, (E)-β-caryophyllene, γ-cadinene and α-terpineol being the major components, comprising 41.1% of the essential oil. This study agrees with the findings of Lo Presti et al<sup>14</sup> and Mecherara-Idjeri et al,<sup>15</sup> who reported β-caryophyllene and γ-cadinene to be the major components of *P. lentiscus* essential oil. A comparison between the composition of *P. atlantica* aerial

part essential oil from Algeria with those reported in the literature<sup>16,17</sup> reveals the existence of significant similarities for the main component percentages. Based on the results of the present study, *P. lentiscus* essential oil was found to be effective against *T. confusum* insect pests, as 100% mortality was achieved at a concentration of 20 µL/L air. Results demonstrated that *P. lentiscus* essential oil was characterized by the presence of (E)-β-caryophyllene, γ-cadinene, α-terpineol as major compounds. The action of this essential oil could be attributed to its major compounds. Indeed, (E)-β-caryophyllene is an active and volatile molecule that would act by contact on the seed coat of insects.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, in the previous studies, α-terpineol have been found to possess strong fumigant toxicity against *T. confusum*,<sup>19</sup> while δ-Cadinene have been found to possess strong fumigant toxicity against *Anopheles stephensi*, *Aedes aegypti* and *Culex quinquefasciatus*.<sup>20</sup> In the present study, *P. atlantica* essential oil also demonstrated fumigant toxicity against *T. confusum*. By comparing both essential oils based on LC<sub>50</sub>, it was clear that the *P. atlantica* oil was twice less toxic and 50% of the treated pests could be killed with 15 µL/L air by fumigation. However, the results, the insecticide activity of the essential oil may be in agreement with the concentration of Terpinene-4-ol.<sup>21</sup> Many of the minor compounds of *P. lentiscus* and *P. atlantica*, such as limonene, cymene, α-pinene, and β-pinene, are also well known for their toxicity to insects.<sup>7,22,23</sup>

## Conclusions

In the current study, the chemical composition of the essential oils of *P. lentiscus* and *P. atlantica* from Algeria was investigated. The chemical composition of *P. lentiscus* essential oil has been characterized by a significant amount of sesquiterpene hydrocarbons, while, *P. atlantica* essential oil has been characterized by a mixture of monoterpene hydrocarbons and oxygenated monoterpenes compounds. The results of the insecticidal activity showed that the essential oils presented a good insecticide activity. This activity may be partly due to major components or to the effect caused by the interaction of all constituents present in the oils. The present data confirm the usefulness of these essential oils as an insecticide activity. However, further large-scale investigations are required to evaluate its efficacy in the food system.

## Authors' Contributions

TL prepared the samples, results interpretation and analyzed the chemical composition; MAD wrote the manuscript; TB performed the antioxidant activities test; JC and AM supervised the project.

## Conflict of Interest Disclosures

The authors declare they have no conflicts of interest.

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