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## Microalgal sensitivity varies between a diuron-resistant strain and two wild strains when exposed to diuron and irgarol, alone and in mixtures

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### Abstract :

A wild strain of *Chaetoceros calcitrans* and wild and diuron-resistant strains of *Tetraselmis suecica*, were exposed to the PSII inhibitor herbicides diuron and irgarol, individually and in mixtures. The effects of three concentrations of diuron and irgarol and four binary mixtures were evaluated on doubling time, relative reactive oxygen species and lipid content by flow cytometry, and on photosynthetic efficiency by pulse amplitude modulated fluorescence.

In both wild strains, significant effects were observed for each molecule at the highest concentration tested: at irgarol 0.5 µg L<sup>-1</sup>, *C. calcitrans* was shown to be more sensitive than *T. suecica* (+52% and +19% in doubling time, respectively), whereas at diuron 5 µg L<sup>-1</sup>, *T. suecica* was more affected (+125% in doubling time) than *C. calcitrans* (+21%). Overall, irgarol had a higher toxicity at a lower concentration than diuron (no effect at diuron 0.5 µg L<sup>-1</sup>) for both wild strains. The strongest mixture (irgarol 0.5 µg L<sup>-1</sup> + diuron 5 µg L<sup>-1</sup>) increased doubling time by 356% for *T. suecica*, thus showing amplified effects when the two compounds were mixed.

Sequencing of the diuron-resistant strain demonstrated a single mutation in the *psbA* gene coding sequence. Although resistance of this strain to diuron was confirmed with no effect at the highest diuron concentration, no resistance to irgarol was shown. In addition, the mutant strain exposed to the strongest mixture showed a 3.5-fold increase in doubling time compared with irgarol alone, thereby supporting the hypothesis of a biochemical interaction between these two compounds.

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## Highlights

► Two microalgal species were exposed to irgarol, diuron, and mixtures of both. ► At  $0.5 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ , irgarol was more toxic than diuron, for both species. ► A mutation was found in the *psbA* gene coding sequence of the diuron-resistant strain. ► The mutation induced no resistance to irgarol in the diuron-resistant strain. ► Mixture (D5+I0.5) induced stronger effects than I0.5 in the diuron-resistant strain.

**Keywords** : Microalgae, Herbicides, Antifouling, Irgarol, Diuron, Diuron resistance

## 40 1. Introduction

41 Irgarol (2-methylthio-4-tertbutylamino-6-cyclopropylamino-s-triazine) and diuron (1-(3,4 dichlorophenyl)-3,3  
42 dimethyl urea) are two biocides commonly used in copper-based antifouling paints to replace TBT (Tributyltin)  
43 (Manzo et al., 2006). Diuron has also been used as an herbicide in agriculture. The use of diuron as a biocide and  
44 herbicide was prohibited in France in 2008 (Directive biocide 98/8/CE and Arrêté du 21/08/2008). However, its  
45 persistence in the environment means that it is still found in rivers and coastal waters. In the Water Framework  
46 Directive (2000/60/EC), diuron, and later irgarol (Directive 2013/39/UE), were included in the list of “48  
47 priority pollutants to be monitored in European waters”, which will lead to their progressive prohibition over the  
48 next 20 years. While diuron is no longer used in most European countries, it is still of great concern in other  
49 countries, such as in Australia where it is known to be harmful to the Great Barrier Reef (Lewis et al., 2009;  
50 Holmes, 2012). In contrast, irgarol is still widely used in antifouling paints all around the world despite reports  
51 of high toxicity in some studies from the U.K. (Thomas et al., 2001; Chesworth et al., 2004), where its use in  
52 antifouling paints has been prohibited. Along the French coasts, average irgarol concentrations from 10 to 40  
53  $\text{ng.L}^{-1}$  were found in Arcachon Bay, while concentrations up to  $0.1 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  were reported in Arcachon port (Auby  
54 and Maurer, 2004). More recently, irgarol concentrations up to  $0.186 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  were reported in Vilaine Bay  
55 (Caquet et al., 2013). In Singaporean coastal waters, irgarol concentrations in the range of 3 to  $4 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  have  
56 been reported (Basheer et al., 2002). As for diuron, concentrations from 11 to  $33 \text{ng.L}^{-1}$  were reported in  
57 Mediterranean coastal waters (Munaron et al., 2012), and  $0.268 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  in Vilaine Bay (Caquet et al., 2013). The  
58 highest concentrations reported in European rivers and ground waters have been  $0.279 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  and  $0.864 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ ,  
59 respectively (Loos et al., 2009, 2010). In addition, diuron and irgarol have been measured at maximal  
60 concentrations of  $2.583$  and  $0.824 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ , respectively, in careening areas of several ports (Cozic and Durand,  
61 2013).

62 Irgarol, a triazine, and diuron, a phenylurea, both act as photosystem II (PSII) inhibitors: their binding action on  
63 the D1 protein in PSII prevents electron transfer between quinones  $Q_A$  and  $Q_B$ , impeding Hill’s reaction (Nimbal  
64 et al., 1996; Jones and Kerswell, 2003). As PSII structure is very well conserved among plants and microalgae,  
65 numerous non-target organisms could suffer deleterious effects if environmental pollution occurs (Readman et  
66 al., 1993).

67 Effects on phytoplankton have been recorded in a number of studies. Koutsaftis and Aoyama (2006) reported 72  
68 h  $IC_{50}$  values of  $1.1 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  and  $36 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  for irgarol and diuron respectively, on the growth of the microalga  
69 *Chaetoceros gracilis*. Nyström et al. (2002) established that irgarol concentrations ranging from 441 to  $647 \text{ng.L}^{-1}$   
70 were responsible for 50% photosynthesis inhibition in Lake Geneva phytoplankton. Larras et al. (2013)  
71 assessed the sensitivity of benthic diatoms to diuron and irgarol under both planktonic and benthic conditions.  
72 They established  $EC_{50}$  values of 4.27 and  $10.07 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  for planktonic conditions and 9.50 and  $0.070 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  for  
73 benthic conditions, for diuron and irgarol, respectively, based on the 96 h growth rate of the population. Devilla  
74 et al. (2005) established  $EC_{50}$  values based on 72 h cell number inhibition of 2.26 and  $0.25 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  for diuron and  
75 irgarol, respectively, on the microalga *E. huxleyi*. For diuron, tropical estuarine microalgae species *Navicula sp.*  
76 and *N. pyriformis* showed  $EC_{50}$  values of 7.8 and  $8 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ , respectively, based on 72 h growth rate (Magnusson  
77 et al., 2008). In another study, Magnusson et al. (2010) found diuron  $IC_{50}$  values of 2.6, 2.01, 2.71 and  $4.4 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$

78 for *Navicula sp.*, *N. pyriformis*, *P. tricornutum* and *C. closterium*, respectively, based on photosynthetic  
79 efficiency.

80 In the environment, organisms are exposed to cocktails of chemicals, it is thus of interest to study the effects  
81 induced by mixtures of contaminants. Fernández-Alba et al. (2002) showed that a mixture of irgarol and diuron  
82 resulted in a synergistic interaction impacting three different organisms, including a microalga. Gatidou and  
83 Thomaidis (2007) showed that the harmful effects of interactions between irgarol and its metabolites were  
84 additive on phytoplankton, while the interaction between diuron and its metabolites was shown to be synergistic.  
85 Recently, Cedergreen (2014) reviewed the main interactions resulting from different types of pollutants: metals,  
86 pesticides and antifouling agents, revealing that synergistic interaction often occurred with antifouling mixtures.

87 Following chronic exposure to many different chemicals, genetic variants resistant to certain types of molecules  
88 might arise in some species. It was demonstrated that PSII inhibitor resistance was mainly due to a mutation in  
89 the gene sequence coding for the D1 protein (Erickson et al., 1989; Oettmeier, 1999). However, according to the  
90 literature available, such mutations were not involved in resistance to irgarol (Eriksson et al., 2009). Cells  
91 resistant to contaminants arise randomly by rare spontaneous pre-selective mutation during replication (Costas et  
92 al., 2001; López-Rodas et al., 2001). In the case of environmental pollution, such mutants would allow a  
93 population to become resistant (López-Rodas et al., 2009; Carrera-Martinez et al., 2011; Romero-Lopez et al.,  
94 2012). In the particular case of diuron resistance, it has been demonstrated that diuron itself was not responsible  
95 for the first appearance of resistant cells (López-Rodas et al., 2001).

96 The microalgae used in this study were the chlorophyte *Tetraselmis suecica* and the diatom *Chaetoceros*  
97 *calcitrans*. In addition to their use in aquaculture, both of these species are encountered in the temperate coastal  
98 waters of the East Atlantic. The testing of species from two different phyla enabled us to cover a broader range  
99 of potential responses to pesticide exposure. Furthermore, two different strains of *T. suecica* were used in this  
100 study: (i) a “wild” strain and (ii) a diuron-resistant strain (Stachowski-Haberkorn et al., 2013).

101 In order to understand to what extent environmental contamination with herbicides can affect microalgal  
102 populations, this study aimed:

103 1. To evaluate the toxicity of diuron and irgarol separately and to explore the effects of binary mixtures,  
104 on four physiological endpoints, using two species of microalgae.

105 2. To identify the mutation responsible for diuron resistance in the mutant strain of *T. suecica*.

106 3. To investigate the effects on the mutant strain of irgarol and of binary mixtures of both herbicides.

107 To answer these questions, the impacts of irgarol and diuron (individually and in mixtures) were assessed on  
108 three strains of two marine phytoplankton species. The genetic basis of the resistance to diuron was investigated  
109 and effects of the herbicides were measured on four parameters. Growth, measured by doubling time ( $T_D$ ), is a  
110 parameter obviously related to the survival process in microalgae. Two other parameters related to the  
111 physiological status of the strains are expected to vary because of photosynthesis inhibition caused by diuron and  
112 irgarol: the photosynthetic efficiency ( $\phi'_M$ ) and the relative reactive oxygen species (ROS;  $FLI_{ROS}$ ) content.  
113 Since the two phytoplankton species are commonly used in aquaculture, the relative lipid content ( $FLI_{Lipids}$ ) was  
114 also measured, as it is related to the nutritive quality of the cells.

115 One major interest of the present study is that, to our knowledge, no ecotoxicological studies have yet  
116 established the effects of herbicide mixtures toward both wild and resistant strains of the same phytoplankton  
117 species.

118

## 119 **2. Materials and methods**

120

### 121 ***2.1. Chemical / toxicant preparation***

122 Irgarol (Irgarol Pestanal<sup>®</sup> ≥ 98.4%) and diuron (> 98%) were purchased from Sigma Aldrich. Stock solutions of  
123 irgarol (500 mg.L<sup>-1</sup>) and diuron (500 mg.L<sup>-1</sup>) were then prepared in pure methanol. These solutions were diluted,  
124 using sterile ultra-pure water to make working solutions of 0.02 mg.L<sup>-1</sup> (0.004% methanol) and 0.06 mg.L<sup>-1</sup>  
125 (0.012% methanol) for irgarol; and 0.1 mg.L<sup>-1</sup> (0.02% methanol) and 1 mg.L<sup>-1</sup> (0.2% methanol) for diuron.

126

### 127 ***2.2. Microalgal cultures***

128 The marine microalgae *Tetraselmis suecica* (CCMP 904) (“wild” strain: *T\_wild*) and *Chaetoceros calcitrans*  
129 (CCMP 1315) (“wild” strain: *C\_wild*) were obtained from the Provasoli–Guillard National Center for Marine  
130 Algae and Microbiota (NCMA). A *Tetraselmis suecica* strain resistant to diuron (diuron-resistant mutant:  
131 *T\_mutant*) was obtained from wild strain CCMP 904 after experiments performed by Stachowski-Haberkorn et  
132 al. (2013).

133 Microalgal cultures were maintained in sterile *f/2* and *f/2*-silica medium (Guillard and Ryther, 1962; Guillard,  
134 1975) at 17 ± 1°C, in a thermostatic chamber ST5+ (POL-EKO-Aparatura<sup>®</sup>, Poland) at 105 μmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup>  
135 (Quantometer Li-Cor Li-250 equipped with a spherical sensor), with a dark:light cycle of 8:16 h. Cultures were  
136 grown in 100 mL round borosilicate sterile glass flasks previously heated to 450°C for 6 h and autoclaved 20  
137 min at 121°C.

138 For exposure experiments, cultures were grown in 60 mL sterile *f/2* medium for *T. suecica* and *f/2*-Si medium  
139 for *C. calcitrans*: cultures were inoculated using stock cultures in exponential growth phase. The initial  
140 concentrations of cells were 20,000 cell.mL<sup>-1</sup> for each species at the beginning of exposure.

141

### 142 ***2.3. Exposure experiments***

143 Six-day exposure experiments were run. Preliminary experiments performed with each biocide separately  
144 showed that above 0.5 μg.L<sup>-1</sup> irgarol or 5 μg.L<sup>-1</sup> diuron, no algal growth was observed for at least one of the  
145 three strains. Each strain was therefore exposed to each biocide singly (irgarol: 0.05 (I0.05), 0.1 (I0.1) and 0.5  
146 (I0.5) μg.L<sup>-1</sup>; diuron: 0.5 (D0.5), 1 (D1) and 5 (D5) μg.L<sup>-1</sup>) and to four binary mixtures of irgarol and diuron:  
147 M(D5+I0.5), M(D5+I0.1), M(D1+I0.5) and M(D1+I0.1). All concentrations are expressed as nominal  
148 concentrations. Only the two highest concentrations of each biocide were tested in the mixtures, as no effects  
149 were expected with the lowest concentrations. Two control treatments were included in the experiments. Control  
150 cultures (C) contained only microalgae and culture medium; solvent-control cultures (C<sub>S</sub>) contained microalgae,  
151 culture medium and the highest methanol concentration corresponding to either M(D5+I0.5) (0.0011%  
152 methanol) or diuron 5 μg.L<sup>-1</sup> (0.001% methanol), which are more than 700 fold lower than the maximum  
153 methanol concentration recommended for algal bioassays (Abou-Waly, 2000). Five independent experiments

154 were run in order to expose the three strains to all the treatments. Cultures were carried out in triplicate (exposed  
155 conditions) or in quadruplicate (control conditions). Every day, 500  $\mu\text{L}$  of each culture were sampled to measure  
156 cell concentrations. On the last day (day 6), when control cultures reached the end of exponential growth, a  
157 further 1400  $\mu\text{L}$  were sampled in each culture to assess the effects of exposures on different physiological  
158 endpoints: photosystem II effective quantum yield (1000  $\mu\text{L}$ ), relative intracellular ROS content (200  $\mu\text{L}$ ) and  
159 relative intracellular lipid content (200  $\mu\text{L}$ ).

160

## 161 **2.4. Microalgal analysis using flow cytometry**

162 Samples were run on an Accuri C6 flow cytometer (Becton Dickinson Accuri™) equipped with a blue (488 nm)  
163 and a red (640 nm) laser. Preliminary experiments made it possible to select the optimal protocol (staining  
164 duration and concentration) for each fluorescent dye and species.

165

### 166 **2.4.1. Doubling time measurement**

167 In order to measure the cell density daily in each culture, 500  $\mu\text{L}$  were sampled and fixed using glutaraldehyde  
168 (final concentration 0.25%). Tubes were mixed and left for 15 minutes at room temperature in the dark before  
169 analysis. Preliminary experiments made it possible to choose the parameters best suited to discriminate the  
170 species: cells of *T. suecica* strains were counted on a FL1 (green fluorescence, 530/30 nm) vs. FL4 (red  
171 fluorescence, 675/25 nm, chlorophyll-related) cytogram. Cells of *C. calcitrans* were counted on a SSC (Side  
172 Scatter) vs. FL3 (red fluorescence, > 670 nm) cytogram.

173 Observation of culture samples by microscopy confirmed that *C. calcitrans* did not produce chains of cells under  
174 these experimental conditions. Counts were available directly in the BD Accuri™ C6 software, including the  
175 analyzed volume.

176 For each culture, growth parameters were calculated as follows: the growth rate ( $\mu$ ,  $\text{hours}^{-1}$ ) was the slope of the  
177 regression line from the plot of  $\text{Ln}(\text{cell.mL}^{-1})$  on time (hours). The doubling time ( $T_D$ , hours) was calculated as:

$$178 T_D = \text{Ln}(2)/\mu.$$

179

### 180 **2.4.2. Reactive oxygen species (ROS)**

181 The fluorescent dye 2',7'-dichlorodihydrofluorescein diacetate ( $\text{H}_2\text{DCFDA}$ ) was used to check for effects of  
182 irgarol, diuron and their mixtures on intracellular ROS production (Molecular probes, Eugene, OR, USA).  
183  $\text{H}_2\text{DCFDA}$  is a non-polar dye which can enter the cells: in presence of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ ,  $\text{ROO}\cdot$  or  $\text{ONOO}^-$ , acetate groups  
184 are cleaved and oxidized by intracellular esterases, resulting in the conversion from non-fluorescent  $\text{H}_2\text{DCFDA}$   
185 to highly fluorescent 2',7'-dichlorofluorescein (DCF). This fluorescent compound can be measured by green  
186 fluorescence (FL1, 530/30 nm). The following protocol was adapted from Stachowski-Haberkorn et al. (2013): a  
187 stock solution of 100 mM  $\text{H}_2\text{DCFDA}$  in dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) was used to make a 2 mM working  
188 solution in phosphate-buffered saline (137 mM NaCl; 2.7 mM KCl, pH 7.4, 2% final DMSO concentration in the  
189 working solution). Preliminary experiments were carried out to determine the optimal  $\text{H}_2\text{DCFDA}$  concentration  
190 and incubation time to use for *T. suecica* and *C. calcitrans* cultures, using cultures exposed to 1 mM or 100  $\mu\text{M}$   
191  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  (final concentration) as a positive control. In the present experiment,  $\text{H}_2\text{DCFDA}$  was used at a final

192 concentration of 80  $\mu\text{M}$  (0.08% DMSO) in fresh 200  $\mu\text{L}$  samples. Samples were incubated in the dark at room  
193 temperature for 30 min before analysis.

194

### 195 **2.4.3. Relative intracellular lipid content**

196 The relative intracellular lipid content was estimated by the use of a green lipophilic fluorochrome: 4,4-difluoro-  
197 1,3,5,7-tetramethyl-4-bora-3a,4a-diaza-s-indacene (BODIPY<sup>505/515</sup> Life Technologies<sup>®</sup>, Carlsbad, CA, USA).  
198 This fluorescent compound is accumulated in the intracellular lipid bodies (which are morphologically diverse)  
199 by a diffusion mechanism and subsequent trapping. This dye easily crosses cell and organelle membranes due to  
200 its high oil/water partition coefficient (Akimoto and Mimuro, 2007; Cooper et al., 2010). BODIPY<sup>505/515</sup> can be  
201 measured by green fluorescence (FL1, 530/30 nm). The following protocol was adapted from Brennan et al.  
202 (2012): a working solution of 12  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  was prepared from a 5000  $\text{mg.L}^{-1}$  stock solution in pure DMSO.  
203 BODIPY was used at 0.075  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  final concentration (0.6% DMSO) for *C. calcitrans* and 0.12  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  final  
204 concentration (1.0% DMSO) for *T. suecica* in fresh 200  $\mu\text{L}$  samples. Before analysis, samples were incubated in  
205 the dark at room temperature for 6 and 5 minutes for *C. calcitrans* and *T. suecica*, respectively.

206

### 207 **2.5. Photosystem II effective quantum yield**

208 Photosystem II effective quantum yield (operational yield =  $\phi'_M$ ) was measured by Pulse Amplitude Modulated  
209 (PAM) fluorescence using an Aquapen-C AP-C 100 fluorometer (Photon system Instruments<sup>®</sup>, Drasov, Czech  
210 Republic). Measurements were made on 2 mL of diluted cultures (1:2 dilution in culture medium) in light  
211 adapted conditions (light intensity of the culture chamber). Three measurements were performed for each culture  
212 and a mean taken of these values.

213

### 214 **2.6. D1 protein mRNA sequencing**

215 Triplicate 50-mL cultures of *T\_wild* and *T\_mutant* were grown in control conditions for six days in order to  
216 extract total RNA. Cells were centrifuged at 4500 g for 10 min, washed in sterile f/2 medium and re-centrifuged  
217 prior to adding 1.5 mL Trizol (Ambion, Life Technologies). Total RNA was extracted according to the Trizol  
218 manufacturer's instructions. RNA concentrations were determined using an ND-1000 spectrophotometer  
219 (Thermo Scientific, Waltham MA, USA) at 260 nm. RNA integrity was assessed on an Agilent bioanalyzer  
220 using RNA 6000 Nano kits (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA, USA), according to the manufacturer's  
221 instructions. Reverse transcription was carried out with the High-Capacity cDNA Reverse Transcription Kit  
222 (Applied Biosystems, Life Technologies), according to manufacturer's instructions, on 2  $\mu\text{g}$  total RNA. Primers  
223 (Table 1) were designed on the *T. suecica* D1 protein complete CDS (Genbank [DQ173249](#)) using Primer-  
224 BLAST NCBI tools. The protein was divided into two regions (A and B) in order to obtain PCR products  
225 between 500 and 600 bp. For each *T. suecica* strain and primer pair, PCR reactions were performed in triplicate  
226 using NEBNext High Fidelity 2X Master mix (New England Biolabs, Ipswich, MA USA) on 3  $\mu\text{L}$  cDNA with  
227 25  $\mu\text{M}$  of primers. The thermal cycler was programmed, according to manufacturer's instructions, as follows:  
228 98°C for 30 seconds for initial denaturation; 15 cycles at 98°C for 10 seconds, 65°C for 30 seconds and 72°C for  
229 30 seconds; then 72°C for 5 min for the final extension. PCR products were purified with USB ExoSAP-IT PCR  
230 Product Cleanup (Affymetryx, Santa Clara, CA, USA) and sequenced in a facility with a Sanger ABI 3730xl

231 (Applied Biosystems, Life Technologies), using the primers in Table 1. Sequences were aligned with Clustal W  
232 implemented in MEGA 6 software (Tamura et al., 2013).

233

## 234 **2.7. Statistical analysis**

235 One-way ANOVAs were performed on each strain/chemical combination to check for significant differences in  
236 growth, yield, relative intracellular ROS level and lipid content between control and exposed cultures. A  $p$ -value  
237  $< 0.05$  was considered statistically significant. When significant differences were observed, a multiple range  
238 Newman–Keuls test was used to compare means. All statistical analyses were performed using Statistica  
239 (StatSoft, Inc., version 10).

240

241

## 242 **3. Results**

243 Neither methanol concentration showed a significant effect on the studied parameters (data not shown) compared  
244 with the control without solvent, whatever the species and strain. The results obtained for each species/strain are  
245 therefore presented without the solvent-controls. In Table 2, results are expressed as mean values ( $\pm$  standard-  
246 error, SE) of raw data. In all the figures, results are shown as the percentage of variation of exposed samples  
247 compared with the control without solvent (C).

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249

### 250 **3.1. *Chaetoceros calcitrans***

251

#### 252 **3.1.1. Toxicity of single herbicides**

253 Among the three concentrations of diuron tested, only the highest (D5) showed significant effects on the four  
254 parameters measured (Table 2), namely: doubling time  $T_D$ , photosynthetic efficiency  $\phi'_M$ , reactive oxygen  
255 species-related relative fluorescence  $FL1_{ROS}$  and lipid-related relative fluorescence  $FL1_{Lipids}$ . In the D5-exposed  
256 cultures, while  $T_D$  increased by  $21 \pm 2.2\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ) compared to the control, the three other parameters  
257 decreased (Figure 1).

258 Like diuron, irgarol showed no significant effect at the two lowest concentrations (Table 2). At  $0.5 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ , a  
259 significant increase of  $T_D$  was demonstrated ( $+52 \pm 3.1\%$ ,  $p = 0.0002$ ); significant decreases were noticed in  $\phi'_M$   
260 and  $FL1_{ROS}$ , although no significant effect was found on  $FL1_{Lipids}$  (Table 2).

261

#### 262 **3.1.2. Toxicity of herbicide mixtures**

263 The four mixtures used in this study significantly affected *C. calcitrans* for at least one parameter out of the four  
264 measured (Table 2, Figure 1). Indeed, while M(D1+I0.1) induced only a single significant decrease in  $FL1_{Lipids}$ ,  
265 the three other mixtures had significant effects on all parameters. M(D5+I0.5) and M(D1+I0.5), induced greater  
266 effects on  $T_D$  and  $\phi'_M$  than M(D5+I0.1):  $T_D$  was increased by  $87 \pm 11\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ) and by  $56 \pm 2.2\%$   
267 ( $p = 0.0003$ ) when the cultures were exposed to M(D5+I0.5) and M(D1+I0.5), respectively. The increase  
268 induced by M(D5+I0.1) was lower ( $+35 \pm 5.9\%$ ,  $p = 0.0021$ ). In the same way, these three mixtures caused



269 significant decreases in  $\phi'_M$  from  $-26 \pm 0.8\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ), to  $-14 \pm 2.9\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ) (Figure 1).  $FL1_{ROS}$  and  
270  $FL1_{Lipids}$  were affected to nearly the same extent by the three mixtures, with decreases around 60% ( $p = 0.0002$   
271 for all concentrations and both parameters).

272

## 273 **3.2. *Tetraselmis suecica***

274

### 275 **3.2.1. Wild strain**

#### 276 **3.2.1.1. Toxicity of single herbicides**

277 Among the three diuron concentrations tested, only the highest (D5) significantly affected all parameters, the  
278 greatest effect being on  $T_D$  ( $+125 \pm 24.3\%$ ,  $p = 0.0003$ ) (Table 2 and Figure 2). At  $1 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ , diuron induced a  
279 significant increase in  $FL1_{ROS}$  by  $10 \pm 4.2\%$  ( $p = 0.019$ ) and a significant decrease in  $FL1_{Lipids}$  by  $16 \pm 3.4\%$   
280 ( $p = 0.028$ ), when no effect was detected on  $T_D$  or  $\phi'_M$ . At  $0.5 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  diuron (Table 2), only a significant decrease  
281 in  $FL1_{Lipids}$  was demonstrated (Figure 2).

282 After exposure to irgarol  $0.5 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ , significant effects were shown on the four parameters (Table 2 and  
283 Figure 2).  $T_D$  and  $FL1_{ROS}$  were increased ( $+19 \pm 2\%$  for  $T_D$ ,  $p = 0.0002$ ), while  $\phi'_M$  and  $FL1_{Lipids}$  were decreased  
284 (Figure 2). With irgarol  $0.05 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ , slight significant effects were noticed on  $\phi'_M$ , which was mildly stimulated,  
285 and  $FL1_{ROS}$ , which was lower than the control.

286

#### 287 **3.2.1.2. Toxicity of herbicide mixtures**

288 Among the four mixtures tested in this study, three induced significant deleterious effects on all parameters  
289 measured (Table 2). The most concentrated mixture, M(D5+I0.5), led to a  $356 \pm 35\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ) increase in  
290  $T_D$ , as well as a  $95 \pm 8\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ) increase in  $FL1_{ROS}$  (Figure 2). The  $\phi'_M$  and  $FL1_{Lipids}$  decreased  
291 significantly by  $29 \pm 1.2\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ) and  $37 \pm 2.6\%$  ( $p = 0.0003$ ), respectively.

292 While the increase in  $T_D$  was more than two-fold lower for M(D5+I0.1) ( $150 \pm 8.9\%$ ,  $p = 0.0003$ ) and four-fold  
293 lower for M(D1+I0.5) ( $81 \pm 2.2\%$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ), the effects on  $FL1_{Lipids}$  remained at the same level as for  
294 M(D5+I0.5) (around  $-35\%$ ,  $p = 0.0003$  for both) (Figure 2). The toxicity gradient was also observed in  $\phi'_M$  with  
295 a  $23 \pm 0.6\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ) decrease for M(D5+I0.1) and a  $15 \pm 0.5\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ) decrease for M(D1+I0.5),  
296 which was half the decrease observed for M(D5+I0.5).  $FL1_{ROS}$  also showed the same toxicity gradient between  
297 mixtures, with  $79 \pm 5.8\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ) and  $66 \pm 4.4\%$  ( $p = 0.0003$ ) increases for M(D5+I0.1) and M(D1+I0.5),  
298 respectively.

299 Finally, the least toxic mixture, M(D1+I0.1), was only responsible for a slight but significant decrease in  
300  $FL1_{Lipids}$  (Figure 2).

301

### 302 **3.2.2. Diuron-resistant strain**

#### 303 **3.2.2.1. D1 protein mRNA sequencing**

304 The sequence alignment in the resistant strain revealed a mutation from G to A in the quinone binding domain  
305 (amplified with primer pair B) at position 661 of the CDS (Figure 3A). This mutation corresponded to a change

306 in the codons from GTA to ATA, leading to a switch in the amino acid sequence from Valine (V) to Isoleucine  
307 (I) at position 221 of the protein (Figure 3B). No other mutations were observed in the sequenced samples.

308

### 309 **3.2.2.2. Toxicity of single herbicides**

310 Diuron exposure did not show any significant effect on the mutant strain at the three concentrations tested  
311 (Table 2), except a slight decrease of  $\phi'_M$  at 5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  (Figure 4).

312 Irgarol exposure induced significant effects on the mutant strain, in particular at the highest concentration tested  
313 (0.5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ ):  $T_D$  and  $FL1_{ROS}$  increased significantly ( $+19 \pm 3.4\%$  for  $T_D$ ,  $p = 0.0002$ ), whereas  $\phi'_M$  and  $FL1_{Lipids}$   
314 decreased significantly (Figure 4). A slight but significant decrease of  $\phi'_M$  was obtained with the lowest  
315 concentration of irgarol (0.05  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ ).

316

### 317 **3.2.2.3. Toxicity of herbicide mixtures**

318 The four mixtures tested did not impact the mutant strain in the same way. On the one hand, M(D5+I0.5) and  
319 M(D1+I0.5) significantly affected all parameters tested (Table 2). M(D5+I0.5) was the most toxic mixture,  
320 which induced an increase of  $T_D$  and  $FL1_{ROS}$  by  $66 \pm 6.7\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ) and  $70 \pm 7.9\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ),  
321 respectively, while  $\phi'_M$  and  $FL1_{Lipids}$  decreased (Figure 4). In comparison, M(D1+I0.5) exposure resulted in  
322 lower toxicity, with an increase in  $T_D$  by  $28 \pm 2.8\%$  ( $p = 0.0002$ ).  $FL1_{ROS}$  and  $\phi'_M$  also indicated lower effects of  
323 M(D1+I0.5).

324 On the other hand, the two other mixtures did not cause strong deleterious effects on this strain, as the only  
325 significant effect was a slightly lower photosynthetic efficiency with M(D5+I0.1) and M(D1+I0.1) (Figure 4).  
326 No significant effect was detected on growth,  $FL1_{ROS}$  or  $FL1_{Lipids}$  (Table 2) with these two mixtures.

327

328

## 329 **4. Discussion**

330

### 331 ***4.1. Herbicide toxicity towards the two wild strains***

332 The two microalga species were not affected in the same way by the exposure to the herbicides. *Chaetoceros*  
333 *calcitrans*, when exposed to irgarol 0.5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ , showed an increase in  $T_D$  that was 2.5-fold higher than that for  
334 *Tetraselmis suecica*, highlighting a higher sensitivity of the diatom to irgarol. This increase corresponded to a  
335 144 h growth rate inhibition of  $34.3 \pm 1.3\%$  for *C. calcitrans* and  $16.1 \pm 1.4\%$  for *T. suecica* (data not shown),  
336 showing that for both species, 144 h  $EC_{50}$  would be higher than 0.5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ . Exposure to diuron 5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  resulted  
337 in a six-fold higher increase in  $T_D$  for *T. suecica* compared with the diatom, corresponding to 144 h growth rate  
338 inhibition of  $17.5 \pm 1.6\%$  for *C. calcitrans* and  $54.5 \pm 4.8\%$  for *T. suecica*, the latter being close to the  $EC_{50}$ . In  
339 comparison,  $EC_{50}$  based on 72 h growth rate for *Navicula sp* and *N. pyriformis* exposed to diuron were 7.8 and 8  
340  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  (Magnusson et al., 2008). Buma et al. (2009) determined irgarol  $EC_{50}$  (based on 72 h growth rate) from  
341 0.46  $\pm$  0.09 to 2.44  $\pm$  0.68  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  for four marine microalga species. Devilla et al. (2005) reported 72 h  $EC_{50}$  of  
342 0.25  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  irgarol and 2.26  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  diuron on the growth of the microalga *Emiliania huxleyi*, while 96 h  $EC_{50}$  of  
343 0.57  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  irgarol and 5.9  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  diuron were measured on the growth of the diatom *Skeletonema costatum* (Bao  
344 et al., 2011). Our results are thus in agreement with the data available in the literature.

345 Diuron and irgarol both target photosystem II on which microalgae rely for photosynthesis to produce their  
346 organic matter and to divide. Photosynthesis inhibition consequently induces growth inhibition, as shown by  
347 these results. Furthermore, other side effects occur due to the action of such molecules on photosystem II.  
348 Harmful free radicals such as hydrogen peroxide are produced when the photochemical pathway is blocked  
349 (Fuerst and Norman, 1991; Oettmeier, 1992) as it could be by PSII inhibitors. The two molecules tested in the  
350 present study were thus particularly expected to induce oxidative stress in the exposed cells. When looking at  
351 ROS intracellular levels expressed by FL1<sub>ROS</sub> for each wild strain, the response induced on FL1<sub>ROS</sub> by either  
352 diuron or irgarol at the highest concentration (5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  and 0.5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ , respectively) was in the same range: a  
353 decrease of about 60% for the diatom and an increase of about 40% for the chlorophyte. Unlike *T. suecica*, in  
354 which FL1<sub>ROS</sub> was enhanced, indicating an increase of intracellular reactive oxygen species content, the  
355 significant decrease of about 60% observed in FL1<sub>ROS</sub> for the diatom indicates a decrease of intracellular ROS  
356 content. Preliminary experiments made it possible to validate the use of H<sub>2</sub>DCFDA with this species, using  
357 hydrogen peroxide (1 mM and 100  $\mu\text{M}$ ) as a positive control, and showing an increase in FL1<sub>ROS</sub> (data not  
358 shown). Diatoms possess an effective antioxidant system against photo-inhibition and photo-oxidation: it has  
359 been demonstrated that fucoxanthin, which is a major carotenoid pigment in diatoms (Pennington et al., 1988),  
360 has a very effective ROS scavenging activity (Sachindra et al., 2007; Xia et al., 2013). As a consequence, the  
361 decrease of ROS content observed with *C. calcitrans* in the present study could be due to the high ROS  
362 scavenging activity of fucoxanthin. Another hypothesis, which could be related to the last, is that the biocides  
363 trigger a ROS scavenging system involving enzymes such as SOD and CAT through their inhibition of  
364 photosynthesis. Thus, it would be interesting to quantify the fucoxanthin within diatom cells and measure  
365 enzymatic activities of SOD and CAT to test these hypotheses.

366 When herbicide exposure inhibits photosynthesis, ATP production is compromised, impairing biochemical  
367 pathways such as lipid synthesis. BODIPY<sup>505/515</sup> was used to measure the relative lipid content in microalgal  
368 cells. BODIPY<sup>505/515</sup> stains neutral lipids, which correspond to oil droplets that accumulate inside cells over time  
369 (Hu et al., 2008). *T. suecica* was affected at all diuron concentrations tested, even the lowest (0.5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  diuron).  
370 For *C. calcitrans*, FL1<sub>Lipids</sub> decrease was two-fold greater than for the chlorophyte at the highest concentration  
371 (5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  diuron), but no significant effects were observed at lower concentrations. These results indicate that  
372 diuron induced greater effects than irgarol on relative lipid content in both strains. It could be interesting to make  
373 further studies on this lipid decrease, to determine and quantify which lipid classes are impacted. This would  
374 provide information about the effects of such herbicides on the nutritive quality of these species, since they are  
375 commonly used in aquaculture.

376 Considering growth as the most integrative parameter, *C. calcitrans* appeared to be more sensitive to irgarol than  
377 *T. suecica*, which had a higher sensitivity to diuron. However, the concentrations used to assess diuron toxicity  
378 were ten-fold higher than the concentrations used to test irgarol, thus illustrating how irgarol has a higher  
379 absolute toxicity than diuron, whatever the microalgal species. Several studies already reported higher toxicity of  
380 irgarol toward microalgae in comparison with diuron (Devilla et al., 2005; Gatidou and Thomaidis, 2007). The  
381 higher toxicity of irgarol seems likely due to its higher affinity for the Q<sub>B</sub> niche and a higher toxicokinetic  
382 (Chesworth et al., 2004).

383 Regarding the effects on the coastal water microalgae *T. suecica* and the diatom *P. tricornutum*, Huertas et al.  
384 (2010) demonstrated that the chlorophyte *T. suecica* was more tolerant of simazine (a triazine) than the diatom.

385 Another study found the triazine atrazine to be more toxic to the chlorophytes than to diatoms (Seguin et al.,  
386 2001). From the data available in literature, it is still unclear whether diatoms are more sensitive to triazine than  
387 other microalgae, since this sensitivity can vary depending on the herbicide (Suresh Kumar et al., 2014) and the  
388 diatom species (Larras et al., 2014). Moreover, following a study from Weiner et al. (2004), the sensitivity of  
389 microalgae could vary depending on the herbicide uptake, which is itself related to intrinsic properties of the  
390 species, like biovolume or surface area.

391

#### 392 ***4.2. Toxicity of single herbicides vs. mixtures in the two wild strains***

393 The sensitivity of these species to the mixtures followed the same trend as the single molecules. Although  
394 M(D5+I0.5) was the most toxic mixture for both species, the increase in doubling-time was four-fold higher for  
395 *T. suecica* than for *C. calcitrans*. When looking at the increase in doubling-time, it appeared that *T\_wild* was  
396 more sensitive to mixtures containing diuron 5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ . On the contrary, *C. calcitrans* was more affected by  
397 mixtures containing irgarol 0.5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ . These results corroborate the effects obtained with the single molecules.  
398 Impacts on  $\phi'_M$  were within the same range for both species and revealed a similar level of toxicity than  $T_D$  for  
399 M(D5+I0.5), M(D5+I0.1) and M(D1+I0.5). The decrease in  $\text{FL1}_{\text{Lipids}}$  was almost two-fold higher for the diatom.  
400 An interesting pattern was obtained for  $\text{FL1}_{\text{Lipids}}$  in both species, as the same decrease was caused by the three  
401 strongest mixtures (about 60% for the diatom and 35% for the chlorophyte). There might be a threshold beyond  
402 which  $\text{FL1}_{\text{Lipids}}$  cannot decrease further, corresponding to the lowest concentration of oil droplets allowed by the  
403 cell and/or to the background fluorescence value obtained with BODIPY<sup>505/515</sup> for each species. As shown by the  
404 single-herbicide exposures,  $\text{FL1}_{\text{ROS}}$  results were the opposite between the two species: a threshold was shown in  
405 the diatom responses, with the same decrease in  $\text{FL1}_{\text{ROS}}$  for M(D5+I0.5), M(D5+I0.1) and M(D1+I0.5). In  
406 contrast, *T. suecica* showed an increasing gradient in the  $\text{FL1}_{\text{ROS}}$  from M(D1+I0.5) (about 66%) to M(D5+I0.5)  
407 (almost 100%), thus indicating an enhanced ROS production in the exposed cells, which is consistent with the  
408 results observed on  $T_D$  and  $\phi'_M$ .

409 When comparing the toxicity of single herbicides and mixtures, M(D1+I0.5) was significantly more toxic than  
410 irgarol 0.5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  to *T\_wild*. The only difference between these two treatments was the addition of 1  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$   
411 diuron to M(D1+I0.5), which itself was not harmful to the *T. suecica* wild strain. Finally, when M(D5+I0.5)  
412 toxicity was compared with added single-herbicide toxicities, it showed a higher toxicity on  $T_D$  than the two  
413 biocides together, while the impact on  $\phi'_M$ ,  $\text{FL1}_{\text{ROS}}$  and  $\text{FL1}_{\text{Lipids}}$  remained nearly the same as for single-herbicide  
414 exposures. For the diatom *C. calcitrans*, M(D5+I0.5) was as toxic as the added toxicity of the two single  
415 biocides on  $T_D$  and  $\phi'_M$ .

416 When looking at the percentage of variation of doubling time in comparison with the control, the effects of  
417 M(D5+I0.5) and M(D1+I0.5) were stronger than a simple addition on the chlorophyte: the added effect of D5  
418 ( $125 \pm 24.3\%$  increase in  $T_D$ ) and I0.5 ( $19 \pm 2\%$  increase in  $T_D$ ) should be around 144% increase in doubling  
419 time, when M(D5+I0.5) was responsible for a  $356 \pm 35\%$  increase. Similarly, the summed effects of D1 (no  
420 significant effects on  $T_D$ ) and I0.5 ( $19 \pm 2\%$  increase in  $T_D$ ) should be around 19%, while M(D1+I0.5) was  
421 responsible for a  $81 \pm 2.2\%$  increase. These results might thus indicate a possible synergistic interaction between  
422 these two herbicides, as already reported elsewhere (Fernández-Alba et al., 2002; Koutsaftis and Aoyama, 2006).  
423 However, the use of a Concentration Addition (CA) model (Loewe and Muischnek, 1926) is required to prove  
424 the additive or synergistic interaction between the two biocides.

425 Considering the set of parameters, the toxicity of mixtures and single herbicides that induced significant effects  
426 on these two species can be ranked as follows:

427  $C\_wild: M(D5+I0.5) > M(D1+I0.5) \approx I0.5 > M(D5+I0.1) > D5$

428  $T\_wild: M(D5+I0.5) > M(D5+I0.1) \approx D5 \geq M(D1+I0.5) > I0.5$

429 When mixed together at the highest concentrations tested, these two herbicides show a higher toxicity than the  
430 sum of single toxicities for *T. suecica* and it is very likely that other molecules from the same family or with a  
431 similar mode of action would further increase the toxicity of such mixtures (Cedergreen, 2014).

432

### 433 ***4.3.PsbA gene mutation: resistance to diuron and comparison with the wild*** 434 ***strain***

435 The appearance of species or strains resistant or tolerant to xenobiotics is an increasing problem (López-Rodas et  
436 al., 2009; Marvá et al., 2010) and illustrates the selective pressure exerted by pollutants on organisms. For  
437 example, in cases of severe pollution in an aquatic environment, the selection pressure exerted will permit the  
438 survival of resistant variants among the natural phytoplankton community. However, the surviving community  
439 will have a reduced genetic diversity that may not be sufficient to deal with other ecosystem disturbances, such  
440 as those expected with climate change for example. In addition, resistance to a pollutant is usually accompanied  
441 by diminished primary production (Lardans et al., 1998) that could eventually impair the ecosystem productivity.  
442 Some microalga species show resistance to photosynthesis inhibitor herbicides: in the case of PSII inhibitors that  
443 specifically bind to D1 protein, the resistance was shown to be due to mutations in the *psbA* gene coding for this  
444 protein binding site (Galloway and Mets, 1984; Erickson et al., 1985, 1989). In the present study, the mutation  
445 found in the diuron-resistant strain of *T. suecica* was caused by a single nucleotide modification in the *psbA*  
446 sequence, and resulted in a change from V to I, as already reported (Erickson et al., 1985). The additional methyl  
447 group in Isoleucine could prevent the binding of diuron to the D1 protein by steric blockage (Wildner et al.,  
448 1990). This particular mutation was previously shown to confer a resistance to diuron in *Chlamydomonas*  
449 *reinhardtii* (Oettmeier, 1999). Some authors demonstrated that adaptation of microalgae to herbicides might be  
450 the result of pre-selective mutations (López-Rodas et al., 2001; Marvá et al., 2010).

451 In order to assess whether the mutation could affect strain response to another PSII inhibitor, both *T. suecica*  
452 strains were exposed to diuron and irgarol. Unlike *T\_wild*, which was heavily affected by diuron 5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$   
453 exposure (125% increase in  $T_D$ ), *T\_mutant* was not affected by diuron, regardless of the concentration used.  
454 Even though exposure to irgarol 0.5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  induced an increase of 19% of  $T_D$  in both *T\_wild* and *T\_mutant*, the  
455 effects on  $FL1_{ROS}$  and  $FL1_{Lipids}$  in *T\_mutant* were lower compared with *T\_wild*. The lower effects on ROS and  
456 lipids in *T\_mutant* might be a side-effect of the mutation. The triazine irgarol significantly impacted all studied  
457 parameters at the highest concentration in the mutant strain, implying that the mutation did not prevent its toxic  
458 action, i.e. it did not prevent irgarol from binding to the D1 protein. The two herbicides share the same mode of  
459 action, inhibiting electron transfer between  $Q_A$  to  $Q_B$  by reversely-binding on the  $Q_B$  binding site on the D1  
460 protein (Tischer and Strotmann, 1977; Giardi and Pace, 2005). One reason why the mutation prevents diuron but  
461 not irgarol from binding to the D1 protein could be that the two molecules do not necessarily have the same  
462 toxicological behavior (Gramatica et al., 2001; Borgert et al., 2004) because they come from different chemical  
463 families (phenylureas for diuron and triazines for irgarol). Indeed, the two classes of compounds are structurally

464 different, as demonstrated by Gramatica et al. (2001), and their binding niches therefore differ slightly  
465 (Geissbühler et al., 1975; Ohad et al., 1990).

466 Recently, tolerance to irgarol in marine periphyton was found to be based not on amino acid substitution, but  
467 rather on increased D1 degradation (Eriksson et al., 2009). This latter mechanism seems to be linked to the non-  
468 conserved amino acid region (PEST region) involved in regulating D1 protein degradation. In any case, in the  
469 present study, this region did not show any differences between the two *T. suecica* strains.

470 The effects of mixtures were also investigated to further examine the toxicity pattern obtained with the single  
471 molecules. As expected, the wild strain was a lot more sensitive to the mixtures M(D5+I0.5) and M(D5+I0.1)  
472 than the mutant strain. Regarding the wild strain, M(D5+I0.5) induced an increase in  $T_D$  that was nearly six-fold  
473 the increase observed in the mutant strain. Although M(D5+I0.1) induced no significant effect on *T\_mutant*, it  
474 was responsible for a 150% increase of doubling-time in the wild strain. Similar impacts were expected on the  
475 mutant strain after irgarol  $0.5 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ , M(D5+I0.5) and M(D1+I0.5) exposures, because they all contained the  
476 same concentration of irgarol. In fact, after M(D5+I0.5) exposure, the increase in  $T_D$  of *T\_mutant* was three-fold  
477 higher than with irgarol  $0.5 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  alone. As observed to a higher extent in the wild strain, the strongest mixture  
478 resulted in amplified effects in the mutant strain as compared to single molecules. This implies that even if  
479 diuron alone was not toxic to the mutant strain, at  $5 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  it seemed to somehow increase the toxicity of irgarol  
480  $0.5 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ . This might be the result of a synergistic effect between these two compounds, but further  
481 investigations would be needed to prove this, using a wider range of concentrations in order to apply the CA  
482 model. As reviewed by Cedergreen (2014), binary mixtures of PSII inhibitor antifouling agents were mostly  
483 responsible for additive or synergistic effects on autotrophic organisms. The present results indicate such  
484 synergy also probably occurs with resistant variants, confirming the existence of some interactions between these  
485 compounds that are not limited to the known mode of action. From the mutation revealed by sequencing, it is  
486 assumed that diuron cannot bind efficiently to the  $Q_B$  niche of the mutant strain. There could be chemical  
487 interactions between the two molecules: diuron might facilitate the binding of irgarol with its target. The  
488 mechanisms explaining such interactions between these PSII inhibitors remain to be demonstrated (Cedergreen,  
489 2014).

490 To our knowledge, no other such experiments involving wild and mutant strains exposed to single herbicides and  
491 mixtures have yet been performed elsewhere.

492 On the one hand, the wild strain was obviously more sensitive to the mixtures containing  $5 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  diuron:  
493 M(D5+I0.5) and M(D5+I0.1). On the other hand, due to its resistance to diuron, the mutant strain was more  
494 sensitive to mixtures containing  $0.5 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  irgarol. Effects of mixtures and single herbicides can be ranked from  
495 the most toxic to the least toxic for the two strains as follows:

496 *T\_wild*:  $M(D5+I0.5) > M(D5+I0.1) \approx D5 \geq M(D1+I0.5) > I0.5$

497 *T\_mutant*:  $M(D5+I0.5) > M(D1+I0.5) \geq I0.5$

498 This study demonstrates the great interest of comparing the responses of sensitive and resistant strains exposed  
499 to mixtures, in order to figure out what biochemical interactions could lead to an increased toxicity when  
500 substances are mixed, especially for resistant strains.

501

## 502 **5. Conclusions**

503 Significant effects were induced by exposure of two marine microalgal species to diuron 5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  and  
504 irgarol 0.5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ , showing the higher toxicity of irgarol, which was harmful at a tenth the concentration of  
505 diuron. Wild strains of *C. calcitrans* and *T. suecica* did not have the same sensitivity towards the molecules  
506 (alone or in mixtures), the first being more sensitive to irgarol 0.5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  and the second being more sensitive to  
507 diuron 5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ .

508 The mutation identified as a single nucleotide change in the *psbA* sequence of a *T. suecica* strain that was  
509 resistant to diuron was effective against diuron alone, but failed to confer resistance against irgarol exposure.  
510 Thus, unlike the wild strain, the mutant strain was more sensitive to irgarol. In addition, the exposure of the  
511 mutant strain to the mixture containing irgarol 0.5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$  and diuron 5  $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ , induced stronger effects on growth  
512 than irgarol alone. This study, involving a comparison between a wild and a mutant strain of the species *T.*  
513 *suecica* exposed to two PSII inhibitors, highlighted the fact that: i) a particular mutation was not effective to  
514 induce resistance to two molecules from different chemical families; ii) a mutant strain, despite its resistance to  
515 one of the molecules tested, could also be subjected to probable additive/synergistic effects; iii) biochemical  
516 interactions took place inside the cells between the two molecules, which were, at least for diuron, not directly  
517 linked to its binding to  $Q_B$  niche.

518 This study provides new insights into understanding how pollution in aquatic environment can affect unicellular  
519 primary producers, by comparing effects of single-herbicide and mixture exposure towards different species,  
520 including a mutant strain resistant to diuron. In addition to the identification of the mutation, further  
521 investigations on exposure of this mutant strain to pollutants (gene expression and, epigenetic mechanisms)  
522 would help us to improve understanding of the mechanisms of microalgal adaptation to chronic contamination.

523

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531

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Table 1 – Primers used for D1 protein coding sequence amplification end sequencing.

	<b>Sequence (5'-&gt;3')</b>	<b>Product length (bp)</b>
<b>D1 A Fw</b>	GCTAACTCAATGTGGGCTCG	498
<b>D1 A Rv</b>	ACCTAAAGGCATACCATCAGAGA	
<b>D1 B Fw</b>	ACCCAATCGGTCAAGGTTCA	578
<b>D1 B Rv</b>	AGCGTTTACAGATGGAGCTTCT	

Table 2 – Effects of diuron and irgarol, singly and in mixtures, on *C. calcitrans* and *T. suecica* after six-day exposures.

	Diuron ( $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ )				Irgarol ( $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ )				Mixtures						
	$T_D$ ( $\text{h}^{-1}$ )	$\phi'_M$	FL1 <sub>ROS</sub> ( $10^3$ a.u.)	FL1 <sub>Lipids</sub> ( $10^3$ a.u.)	$T_D$ ( $\text{h}^{-1}$ )	$\phi'_M$	FL1 <sub>ROS</sub> ( $10^3$ a.u.)	FL1 <sub>Lipids</sub> ( $10^3$ a.u.)	$T_D$ ( $\text{h}^{-1}$ )	$\phi'_M$	FL1 <sub>ROS</sub> ( $10^3$ a.u.)	FL1 <sub>Lipids</sub> ( $10^3$ a.u.)			
<i>C_wild</i>	C	18.2 ± 0.1 a	0.74 ± 0.002 a	1.61 ± 0.05 a	371 ± 20 a	C	16.7 ± 0.1 a	0.74 ± 0.003 a	1.89 ± 0.17 a	420 ± 46 a	C	18.2 ± 0.1 a	0.74 ± 0.002 a	1.61 ± 0.05 a	371 ± 20 a
	D0.5	18.3 ± 0.1 a	0.73 ± 0.013 a	1.63 ± 0.22 a	381 ± 103 a	I0.05	16.9 ± 0.3 a	0.73 ± 0.004 a	1.36 ± 0.29 ab	376 ± 38 a	M(D5+I0.5)	34.0 ± 2.0 b	0.55 ± 0.006 d	0.62 ± 0.01 b	142 ± 16 b
	D1	18.1 ± 0.1 a	0.73 ± 0.009 a	1.79 ± 0.23 a	468 ± 70 a	I0.1	17.1 ± 0.2 a	0.73 ± 0.001 a	1.50 ± 0.31 ab	322 ± 3 a	M(D5+I0.1)	24.5 ± 1.1 d	0.64 ± 0.02 b	0.64 ± 0.02 b	142 ± 9 b
	D5	22.1 ± 0.4 b	0.68 ± 0.003 b	0.71 ± 0.02 b	133 ± 21 b	I0.5	25.5 ± 0.5 b	0.6 ± 0.004 b	0.66 ± 0.01 b	328 ± 20 a	M(D1+I0.5)	28.5 ± 0.4 c	0.59 ± 0.004 c	0.64 ± 0.00 b	134 ± 12 b
											M(D1+I0.1)	18.6 ± 0.2 a	0.74 ± 0.002 a	1.66 ± 0.21 a	193 ± 24 b
<i>T_wild</i>	C	24.4 ± 0.1 a	0.75 ± 0.004 a	16.60 ± 0.34 a	791 ± 24 a	C	27.3 ± 0.5 a	0.76 ± 0.004 a	17.70 ± 0.10 a	749 ± 32 a	C	27.3 ± 0.5 a	0.76 ± 0.004 a	17.70 ± 0.10 a	749 ± 32 a
	D0.5	25.4 ± 0.4 a	0.73 ± 0.01 a	16.50 ± 0.12 a	687 ± 43 b	I0.05	27.3 ± 0.2 a	0.78 ± 0.002 b	15.80 ± 0.42 b	726 ± 11 a	M(D5+I0.5)	124.2 ± 9.5 d	0.54 ± 0.009 d	34.50 ± 1.40 c	475 ± 19 c
	D1	26.2 ± 0.5 a	0.72 ± 0.008 a	18.30 ± 0.70 b	662 ± 27 b	I0.1	26.2 ± 0.2 a	0.77 ± 0.001 ab	16.60 ± 0.53 ab	763 ± 23 a	M(D5+I0.1)	68.1 ± 2.4 c	0.58 ± 0.004 c	31.70 ± 1.00 bc	479 ± 25 c
	D5	54.8 ± 5.9 b	0.56 ± 0.013 b	23.70 ± 0.30 c	493 ± 15 c	I0.5	32.5 ± 0.5 b	0.75 ± 0.005 c	25.60 ± 0.82 c	594 ± 10 b	M(D1+I0.5)	49.3 ± 0.6 b	0.65 ± 0.004 b	29.40 ± 0.77 b	489 ± 6 c
											M(D1+I0.1)	28.8 ± 0.8 a	0.75 ± 0.003 a	19.60 ± 2.40 a	622 ± 40 b
<i>T_mutant</i>	C	29.2 ± 0.3 a	0.76 ± 0.003 a	14.10 ± 0.53 a	885 ± 20 a	C	29.2 ± 0.3 a	0.76 ± 0.003 a	14.10 ± 0.53 a	885 ± 20 a	C	29.2 ± 0.3 a	0.76 ± 0.003 a	14.10 ± 0.53 a	885 ± 20 a
	D0.5	29.2 ± 0.3 a	0.75 ± 0.004 ab	14.50 ± 0.56 a	901 ± 17 a	I0.05	28.8 ± 0.4 a	0.74 ± 0.005 b	14.60 ± 0.27 a	851 ± 26 a	M(D5+I0.5)	48.3 ± 2.0 c	0.65 ± 0.005 d	24.00 ± 1.10 c	738 ± 17 b
	D1	28.7 ± 1.0 a	0.75 ± 0.003 ab	14.20 ± 0.29 a	928 ± 9 a	I0.1	28.4 ± 0.3 a	0.75 ± 0.004 a	14.80 ± 0.26 a	873 ± 15 a	M(D5+I0.1)	29.1 ± 0.5 a	0.73 ± 0.007 b	15.40 ± 0.17 a	931 ± 23 a
	D5	28.6 ± 0.1 a	0.74 ± 0.002 b	15.30 ± 0.41 a	884 ± 12 a	I0.5	34.6 ± 1.0 b	0.70 ± 0.005 c	17.00 ± 0.71 b	751 ± 25 b	M(D1+I0.5)	37.4 ± 0.8 b	0.70 ± 0.004 c	18.80 ± 0.34 b	786 ± 41 b
											M(D1+I0.1)	28.6 ± 0.2 a	0.74 ± 0.002 b	14.60 ± 0.34 a	897 ± 10 a

All values are mean values ( $\pm$  standard-error, SE) of raw data

a, b, c, d indicate significant differences between treatments (ANOVA,  $p < 0.05$  followed by Newman-Keuls post-hoc test,  $p < 0.05$ )

$T_D$ : doubling time

$\phi^2_M$ : photosystem II effective quantum yield

FL1<sub>ROS</sub>: intracellular ROS relative content

FL1<sub>Lipids</sub>: intracellular lipid relative content

*C\_wild*: *C. calcitrans* wild strain

*T\_wild*: *T. suecica* wild strain

*T\_mutant*: *T. suecica* mutant strain

C: Control treatment without solvent

Fig. 1 – Percentage variation of exposed samples of *C. calcitrans* (*C\_wild*) compared with the control treatment without solvent (C) for: doubling time ( $T_D$ ), photosynthetic efficiency ( $\phi'_M$ ), relative ROS content (FL1<sub>ROS</sub>) and relative lipid content (FL1<sub>LIPIDS</sub>); after exposure to diuron (D) and irgarol (I), alone and in mixtures (means  $\pm$  SE). Only significant effects are shown (ANOVA,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Fig. 2 – Percentage variation of exposed samples of *T. suecica* (*T\_wild*) compared with the control treatment without solvent (C) for: doubling time ( $T_D$ ), photosynthetic efficiency ( $\phi'_M$ ), relative ROS content (FL1<sub>ROS</sub>) and relative lipid content (FL1<sub>LIPIDS</sub>); after exposure to diuron (D) and irgarol (I), alone and in mixtures (means  $\pm$  SE). Only significant effects are shown (ANOVA,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Fig. 3 – Sequence alignments of the mRNA coding for the D1 protein in *T. suecica* wild and diuron-resistant strains. A: nucleotide sequences; B: translated protein sequences. Dots represent identities, dashes represent unidentified amino acids.

Fig. 4 – Percentage variation of exposed samples of *T. suecica* (*T\_mutant*) compared with the control treatment without solvent (C) for: doubling time ( $T_D$ ), photosynthetic efficiency ( $\phi'_M$ ), relative ROS content (FL1<sub>ROS</sub>) and relative lipid content (FL1<sub>LIPIDS</sub>); after exposure to diuron (D) and irgarol (I), alone and in mixtures (means  $\pm$  SE). Only significant effects are shown (ANOVA,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Figure  
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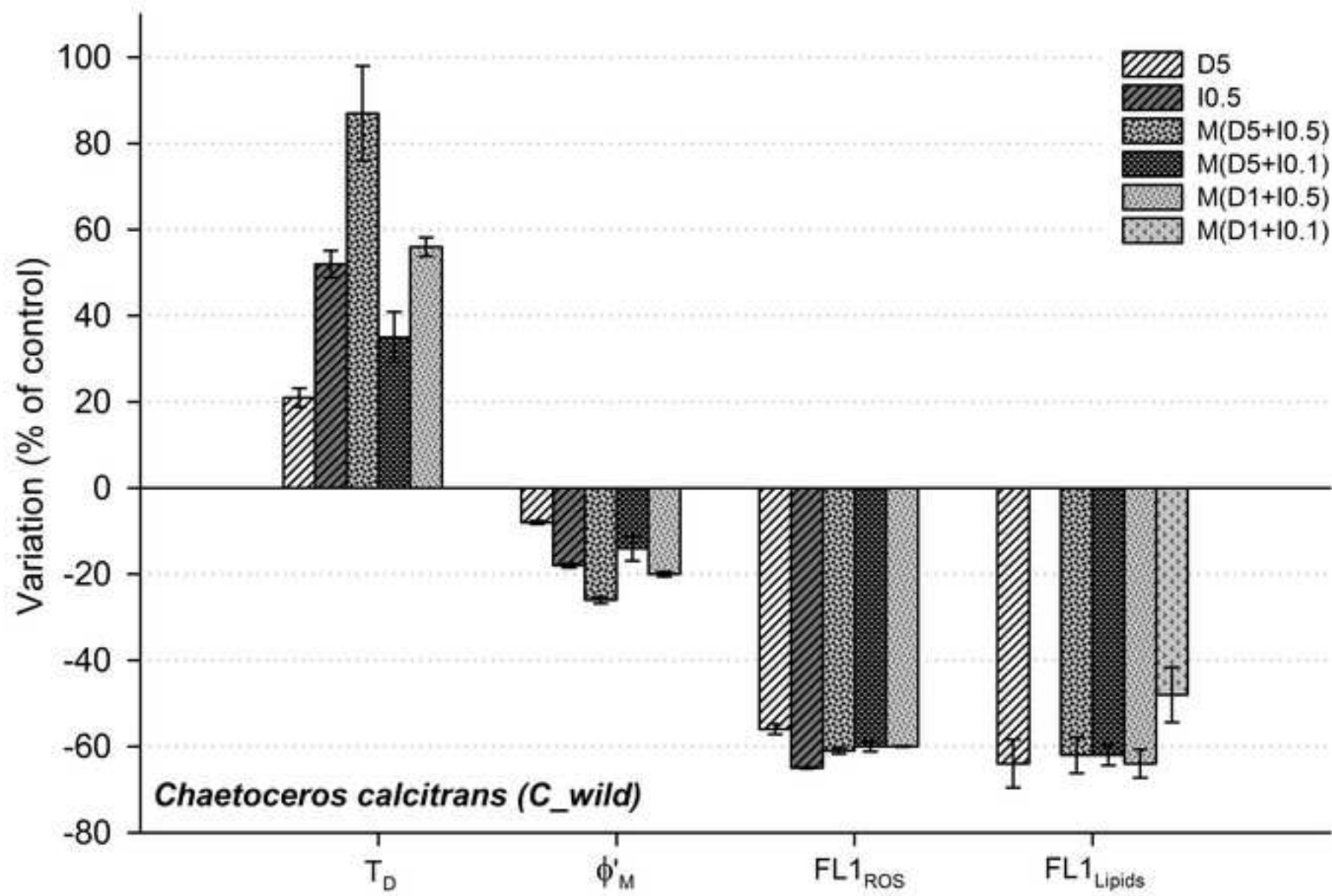
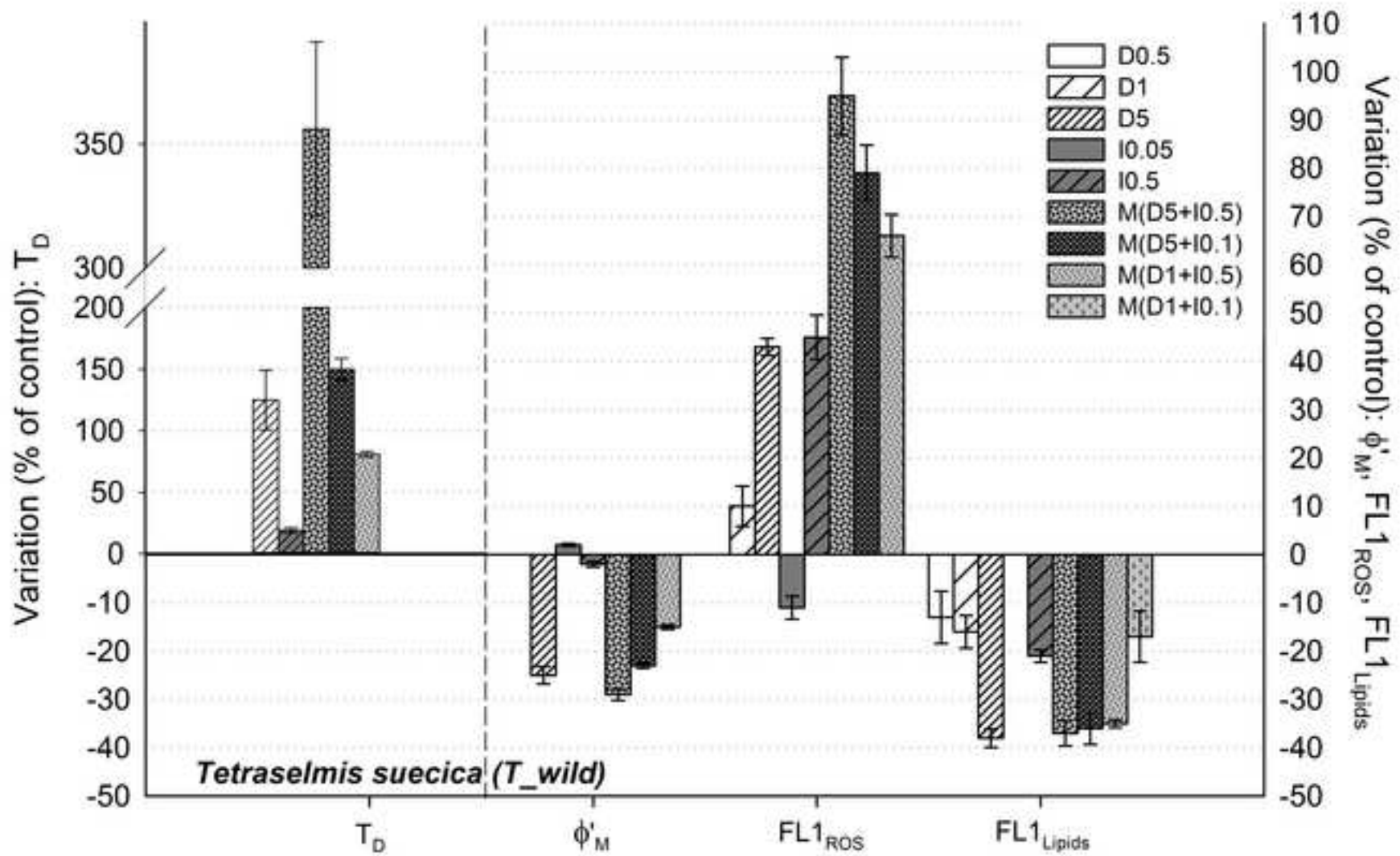




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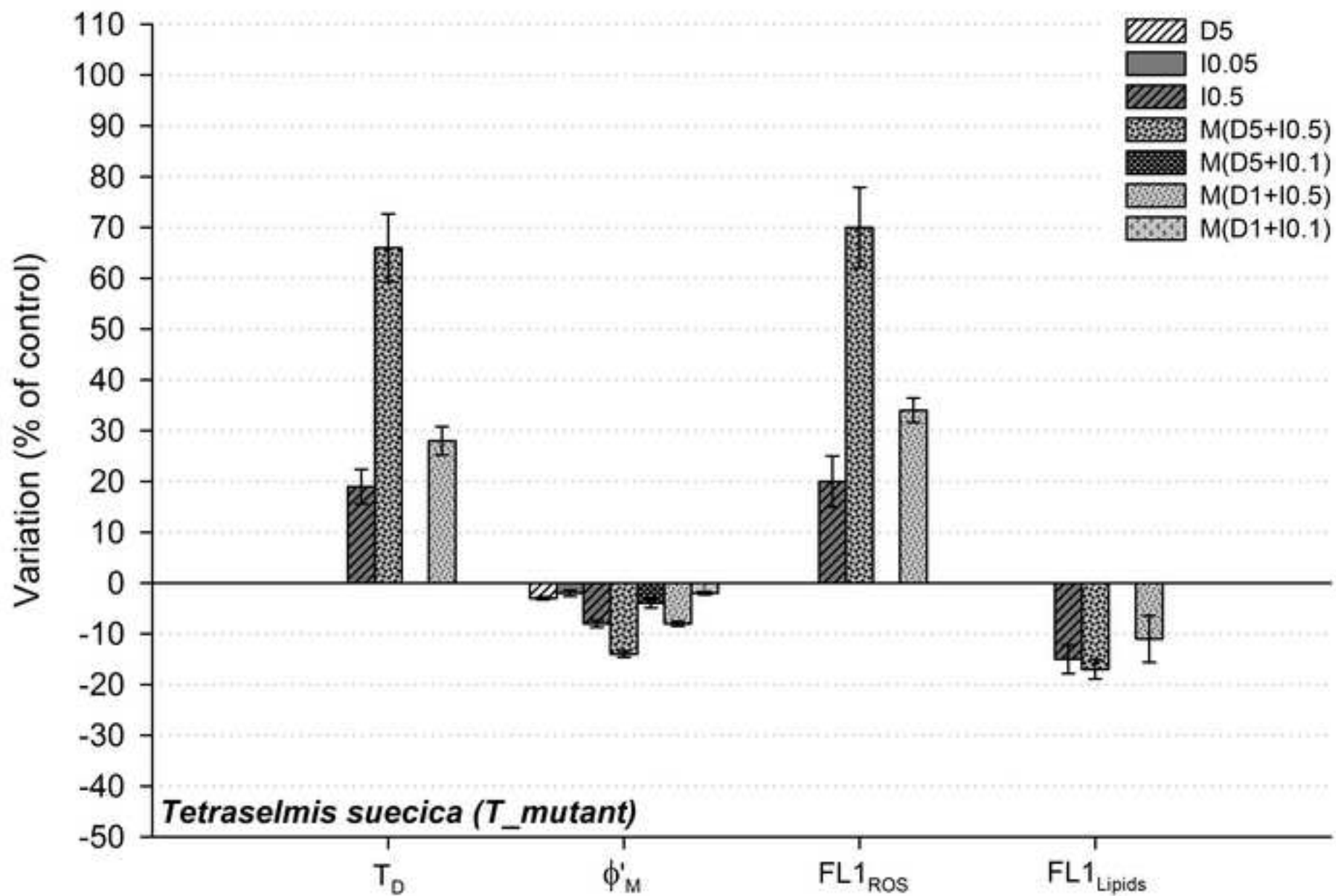
**A**

DQ173249	cds	603	AGGTGTTGCTGGTGTATTTGGTGGTTCATTATTCTCAGCTATGCACGGTTCATTAGTAAC	662
T_wild		57	.....	116
T_wild		52	.....	111
T_wild		59	.....	118
T_wild		120	.....	179
T_wild		120	.....	179
T_wild		79	.....	138
T_mutant		57	.....A....	116
T_mutant		55	.....A....	114
T_mutant		64	.....A....	123
T_mutant		119	.....A....	178
T_mutant		120	.....A....	179
T_mutant		120	.....A....	179

**B**

DQ173249	cds	186	VFQAEHNILMHPFHMLGVAGVFGGSLFSAMHGSLVTSSLIRETTENESANAGYKFGQEEE	245
T_wild		3	.....	61
T_wild		25	.....	84
T_wild		1	.....	57
T_wild		25	.....	84
T_wild		3	.....	62
T_wild		11	.....	70
T_mutant		2	.....I.....	61
T_mutant		24	.....I.....	83
T_mutant		2	.....I.....	61
T_mutant		25	.....I.....	84
T_mutant		3	.....I.....	62
T_mutant		25	.....I.....	84

Figure 4  
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