
**Water quality — Determination of the
toxic effect of water constituents and
waste water on duckweed (*Lemna
minor*) — Duckweed growth inhibition
test**

*Qualité de l'eau — Détermination de l'effet toxique des constituants de
l'eau et des eaux résiduelles vis-à-vis des lentilles d'eau (*Lemna
minor*) — Essai d'inhibition de la croissance des lentilles d'eau*



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ISO copyright office
Case postale 56 • CH-1211 Geneva 20
Tel. + 41 22 749 01 11
Fax + 41 22 749 09 47
E-mail copyright@iso.org
Web www.iso.org

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 20079 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 147, *Water quality*, Subcommittee SC 5, *Biological methods*.

Introduction

The duckweed species *Lemna minor* is used as model organism for higher water plants. Duckweeds are monocotyledonous, free-floating angiosperms and belong to the *Arales* within the subclass of *Aridae*. Duckweeds are fast growing higher plants, spreading from the tropic to the arctic zone. As primary producers they are a food source for waterfowl, fish and small animals and serve as physical support for a variety of small invertebrates.

Duckweed can be damaged by water constituents and effluents (see Annex B). The subsequent inhibition of growth is calculated from the observation parameters (frond number, frond area, chlorophyll, dry weight) by a number of defined calculation methods.

EC values are determined to allow for an assessment of toxic effects of water constituents (e.g. chemicals, plant protection products). The evaluation for at least two observation parameters is based on the average specific growth-rates.

The test is designed for measurement of response of substances dissolved in water. This includes the definition of a fixed dilution step, or a concentration of the test sample at which a parameter of observation (endpoint) is inhibited relative to a control for a defined percentage.

Water quality — Determination of the toxic effect of water constituents and waste water on duckweed (*Lemna minor*) — Duckweed growth inhibition test

WARNING — Persons using this International Standard should be familiar with normal laboratory practice. This standard does not purport to address all of the safety problems, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user to establish appropriate safety and health practices and to ensure compliance with any national regulatory conditions.

IMPORTANT — It is absolutely essential that tests conducted according to this International Standard be carried out by suitably trained staff.

1 Scope

This International Standard specifies a method for the determination of the growth-inhibiting response of duckweed (*Lemna minor*) to substances and mixtures contained in water, treated municipal wastewater and industrial effluents.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 5667-16, *Water quality — Sampling — Part 16: Guidance on biotesting of samples*

ISO 10260, *Water quality — Measurement of biochemical parameters — Spectrometric determination of the chlorophyll-a concentration*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1

axenic cultures

monocultures of organisms from a single species, free from fungi, algae and other macrophyte species

3.2

calculation parameters

parameters for the estimation of toxicity derived from any parameters of observation by different methods of calculation

EXAMPLE Growth-rates derived from frond number, frond area, chlorophyll and dry weight are calculation parameters in this International Standard.

3.3

chlorosis

loss of pigment (yellowing of frond tissue)

3.4

colony

aggregate of mother and daughter fronds, attached to each other, sometimes referred to as a plant

3.5

control batch

control medium, including organisms used for testing

3.6

control medium

combination of dilution water and/or nutrient medium used in the test

3.7

dilution water

water added to the test sample to prepare a series of defined dilutions

3.8

doubling time

quotient of natural logarithm of 2 ($\ln 2$) divided by average specific growth-rate

3.9

effective concentration

concentration of the test sample (EC_x) at which an effect of x % is measured, if compared to the control

NOTE To unambiguously denote an EC value deriving from growth-rate, it is proposed to use the symbol "EC(r)", followed by the observation parameter used, e.g. EC(r) (frond number).

3.10

frond

individual leaf-like structure on a duckweed colony; the smallest unit (i.e. individual), capable of reproducing

3.11

frond area

total area of all fronds visible from vertically above

3.12

frond number

all fronds protruding from a mother frond which are directly visible from above without magnification

3.13

growth

increase in biomass over time as the result of proliferation of new tissues

NOTE In this test it refers to any parameter of observation.

3.14

growth-rate

calculation parameter defined as quotient of the difference of the natural logarithms of a parameter of observation and the respective time period

NOTE If the time period comprises the total duration of the test, the term is referred to as average specific growth-rate. If the period between two measurements within the test period is used, the term is named segmented growth-rate (see 12.1.2).

3.15**inoculum**

number of fronds (colonies) added to the test batch at the beginning of the test

3.16**necrosis**

localised dead frond tissue (i.e. brown or white)

3.17**nutrient medium**

solution of nutrients and micronutrients in water which are essential for the growth of duckweed

3.18**observation parameters**

observed or measured biomass parameters like frond number, frond area, chlorophyll, dry weight, which are measured or counted once or repeatedly by observation or measurement

NOTE These parameters are relevant for the assessment of growth and vitality of the test organisms (e.g. frond number, frond area or chlorophyll content, dry weight).

3.19**pre-culture**

culture of duckweed used for acclimatisation of test plants to the test conditions and for the growing of the plants to be used in the inoculum

3.20**root**

that part of the *Lemna* plant that assumes a root-like structure

3.21**stock culture**

culture of a single species of duckweed to conserve the original defined *Lemna* species in the laboratory and to provide inoculum for the pre-culture

NOTE It is necessary to use defined and verified strains, because of possible insecurities in species taxonomy. An address list of suppliers is given in Annex C.

3.22**test batch**

test medium including organisms used for testing

3.23**test medium**

combination of test sample, dilution water and/or nutrient medium used in the test

3.24**test sample**

discrete portion of a sample (taken from i.e. receiving water, waste water, dissolved chemical substances or mixtures, products and compounds) pretreated according to the needs of this test (e.g. dissolution, filtering, neutralisation)

4 Principle

Plants of the species *Lemna minor* are allowed to grow as monocultures in different concentrations of the test sample over a period of seven days. The objective of the test is to quantify substance-related effects on vegetative growth over this period based on assessments of frond number, and also on assessments on biomass (total frond area, dry weight or chlorophyll). To quantify substance-related effects, the growth-rate in the test solutions is compared with that of the controls and the concentration resulting in a specified % inhibition of growth-rate is determined and expressed as the $EC(r)_x$.