

The characterisation of cellulose-degrading bacteria on waterlogged archaeological wood

Waterlogged archaeological wood is a record of human history that has been submerged in water for 100 years or more. From prehistory to the Modern Age of Sail, wood has been integral in the advancement of society. But this record is starting to disappear. It is being attacked by microbes that feed on cellulose, a component of wood. These bacteria were sampled, cultured, and identified. It was found that over 50 % of the bacterial microbiome had the potential to be cellulolytic with most of the cultures belonging to the family Bacillaceae. These results suggest that this family of bacteria should be regarded as the most serious threat outside of fungal attack which was not studied.

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