

Advances in Biological Science Research

A Practical Approach

Edited by
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ACADEMIC PRESS

An imprint of Elsevier

Academic Press is an imprint of Elsevier
125 London Wall, London EC2Y 5AS, United Kingdom
525 B Street, Suite 1650, San Diego, CA 92101, United States
50 Hampshire Street, 5th Floor, Cambridge, MA 02139, United States
The Boulevard, Langford Lane, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 1GB, United Kingdom

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-12-817497-5

For information on all Academic Press publications visit our website at
<https://www.elsevier.com/books-and-journals>

Publisher: Andre G. Wolff
Acquisition Editor: Linda Versteeg-buschman
Editorial Project Manager: Sandra Harron
Production Project Manager: Poulouse Joseph
Cover Designer: Vicky Pearson Esser

Typeset by TNQ Technologies



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Advances in isolation and preservation strategies of ecologically important marine protists, the thraustochytrids

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30.1 Introduction

Thraustochytrids are unicellular eukaryotic organisms belonging to the Kingdom Stramenopila. This kingdom also includes diatoms, brown algae, the oomycetes fungi, and a variety of flagellates. This eukaryotic group of organisms has been included in the SAR domain under the eukaryotic tree of life [1]. SAR domain represents organisms belonging to Stramenopiles, Alveolates and Rhizaria and have been named as ‘SAR’ by Adl et al. [1]. The Alveolates consist of dinoflagellates that are well known for the formation of harmful algal blooms (HABs) and the Rhizaria, comprise the foraminifera that help in palaeoceanography owing to their calcareous tests. The thraustochytrids belong to the Phylum Heterokonta and Class Labyrinthulomycota or Labyrinthulomycetes. The Labyrinthulomycetes was earlier comprised of two distinct phylogenetic groups, the Thraustochytrid Phylogenetic group and the Labyrinthula Phylogenetic group [2], but now it comprises three groups, namely the thraustochytrids, aplanochytrids, and labyrinthulids [3]. The aplanochytrids, earlier called the labyrinthuloids, were placed under Labyrinthula Phylogenetic group, but based on the SSU ribosomal sequences, Leander and Porter [4] showed that the genus *Aplanochytrium* was distinct from the labyrinthulids and thraustochytrids. All the three groups are osmo-heterotrophic in their mode of nutrition.

Members of Labyrinthulomycetes typically reproduce by means of stramenopilan zoospores. The zoospores are characterized by two flagella of unequal length and are called the heterokont flagella. The anterior whiplash