

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCES IN  
PHARMACY, BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY

## Research Article

**Phytochemistry, Antibacterial activity and  
Chromosome number of two species of *Daphne*  
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Abbas University, 19000 Setif, Algeria<sup>2</sup>Clermont Université, ENSCCF, Institut de Chimie de Clermont-Ferrand, BP 10448, F-63000  
Clermont-Ferrand, France.<sup>3</sup>CNRS, UMR 6296, ICCF, F-63171 Aubière, France.<sup>4</sup>LEXVA Analytique, 460 rue du Montant, 63110 Beaumont, France.**ABSTRACT**

The chemical composition of essential oil isolated from *Daphne gnidium* and *D. laureola* by hydrodistillation, was analysed by GC and GC/MS. A total 31 compounds representing 85.2% of the oil were identified in *D. gnidium*, and 47 components representing 91.3% of the total oil in *D. laureola*. The chemical composition of *D. gnidium* and *D. laureola*, is very different, the only common component is palmitic acid. *D. gnidium* is characterized by palmitic acid, Eicosene, linoleic acid and Dodecane. While *D. laureola* contains the major products; palmitic acid, thymol, Dremenin, phytol acetat, tritriacontane and -pinene. The essential oil of *D. gnidium* has low activity against *Escherichia coli* and no effect on *Bacillus cereus*, *Micrococcus luteus*, *Staphylococcus aureus* and the yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. The essential oil of *D. laureola* of the two populations showed low activity against *Micrococcus luteus* and *Escherichia coli*, while *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Bacillus cereus* and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* show significant resistance to this oil. The population of *D. gnidium* and *D. laureola* studied showed a diploid chromosome number  $2n = 2x = 18$ .

**KEY WORDS:** *Daphne gnidium*, *D. laureola*, Essential oil, antibacterial activity, Chromosome, Algeria.**INTRODUCTION**

Several studies of *Daphne* species showed the presence of coumarin<sup>1-4</sup>, flavonoids<sup>5-7</sup>, lignans<sup>1, 2, 8, 9</sup> and daphnane diterpene esters<sup>10-13</sup>. The study of chemical extracts from the leaves of *Daphne gnidium* has shown the presence of flavonoids, tannins, coumarins and polyphenols<sup>14-19</sup>.

The chemical composition of the essential oil of *D. genkwa* of China shows the presence of the -santalene, methyl eugenol, elemicin, -cadinene, -

caryophyllene, -copaene, -santalene and nerolidol<sup>20</sup>. In Turkey the essential oil of *D. oleoides* contains nonacosane, hexadecanoic acid, tetradecanoic acid, heptacosane, phytol and pentacosane<sup>21</sup>. The chemical composition of *D. pontica* showed the presence of major compounds: acetone hexahydrofarnesyl, carvacrol, dihydroedulane II, Geranyl acetone, thymol and nonacosane<sup>21</sup>.

The *Daphne* species exhibit a wide range of biological activity, used as anti-leukemic<sup>22</sup>, Neurotrophic<sup>23, 24</sup>, Anti-hyperglycemic<sup>25</sup>, anticancer<sup>22, 26</sup>. They are used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and of apoplexy<sup>12, 27</sup>, and in the treatment of skin disorders<sup>28, 29</sup>, in the healing of wounds<sup>30</sup>, in malaria and inflammation<sup>31, 32</sup>. They exhibit antiviral activity<sup>33</sup>, and have sterilizing effects<sup>34</sup>, antibacteria<sup>35</sup> and are also considered pesticides<sup>36</sup>. The flower buds are used as a diuretic, expectorant<sup>37</sup> and anti-cholesterol<sup>24</sup>.

The study of chemical extracts from the leaves of *Daphne gnidium* has shown the presence of products responsible for the antioxidant activity<sup>15-17</sup>. *D. gnidium* is used against hepatitis<sup>38</sup>. The extracts from the leaves and bark have antibacterial and antifungal activity<sup>39-41</sup>. The powder of the roots was used as an abortifacient and bark as a diuretic agent and for treating teeth<sup>18</sup>.

The bark and fruits of *D. laureola* are toxic to humans<sup>42</sup>. Based on a survey conducted in the region of Beni aziz and Oued Elberd the local populations, use *D. laureola* as plaster for fractures bones and against sterility.

The study of the antibacterial activity of essential oil of *D. oleifolia* performed by Tayoub *et al*<sup>43</sup>, on several bacterial strains, has shown that *Bacillus* sp is very sensitive while *Klebsiella* sp is more resistant. The essential oil of *D. cneorum* shows strong activity against several microorganisms and low activity against *Proteus mirabilis*<sup>44</sup>. The oil extracted from the roots of *D. mucronata* is effective against *E. coli* and *B. subtilis* while extracts of stems and leaves are inactive against *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*<sup>45</sup>.

Cytologically the family of *Thymelaeaceae* is homogeneous, the genres *Daphne*, *Edgeworthia* and *Wikstoemia*, have a basic chromosome number of  $x = 9$ <sup>46, 47</sup>; *Daphne pontica* and *D. Mezereum* have a diploid chromosome number  $2n = 18$ <sup>48</sup>. The chromosome number  $2n = 18$  was reported for the species *D. gnidium*<sup>47, 49, 50</sup>. The chromosome number of *D. laureola* in Bulgaria is  $2n = 18$ <sup>48, 51-53</sup>. In Spain Löve and Kjellqvist<sup>54</sup> reported a chromosome number of  $2n = 18$  for *D. laureola*.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Plant material

Two species of *Daphne* were collected from natural populations of Setif region, located in the North East of Algeria. Aerial parts were collected in September 2013, of three localities (BeniAziz and Oued Elbared for *D. laureola* and Amouchas for *D. gnidium*) (Figure 1). Voucher specimens were deposited in the herbarium of the Department of Ecology and Biology, Ferhat Abbas University Sétif 1, Algeria.

The genus *Daphne* L. is represented by three species in Algeria, *D. oleoides* Schreb, *D. gnidium* L. and *D. laureola* L., they are found in the scrub of the Algerian Tell<sup>19, 55</sup>.

*Daphne gnidium* commonly named Lazzaz (in Arabic); it is a tree or shrub that grows in the Mediterranean region. The leaves very dense are lanceolate-linear, 5-7 mm wide. The inflorescences are terminal, entirely white-tomentose. The fruit is a berry<sup>55</sup> (Figure 2a).

*Daphne laureola* (Ajiji in Arabic), is a sub-shrub with large leaves (6-12 cm), alternate, spirally arranged, dark and bright green on top and lighter on the underside. The flowers are greenish-yellow (Figure 2b). The fruits are drupes or bluish-black berry, between 8-13 mm in length. *D. laureola* is located in Algeria on high mountains<sup>56</sup>.

### Extraction of the essential oil

The air-dried aerial parts of the three populations were subjected to hydro-distillation for 3 h with the distilled water using a Clevenger-type apparatus. The oil obtained was collected and dried over anhydrous sodium sulphate and stored in screw capped glass vials in a refrigerator at 4-5°C, prior to analysis. Yield based on dried weight of the samples was calculated.

### Essential oil analysis

The essential oils were analysed on a Hewlett-Packard gas chromatograph Model 5890, coupled to a Hewlett-Packard model 5971, equipped with a DB5 MS column (30 m X 0.25 mm; 0.25  $\mu$ m), programming from 50°C (5 min) to 300°C at 5°C/min, with a 5 min hold. Helium was used as the carrier gas (1.0 ml/min); injection in split mode (1:30); injector and detector temperatures, 250 and 280°C, respectively. The mass spectrometer worked in EI mode at 70 eV; electron multiplier, 2500 V; ion source temperature, 180°C; MS data were acquired in the scan mode in the  $m/z$  range 33-450. The identification of the components was based on comparison of their mass spectra with those of NIST mass spectral library<sup>57, 58</sup> and those described by Adams, as well as on comparison of their retention indices either with those of authentic compounds or with literature values<sup>59</sup>.

### Antibacterial and antifungal Activities

The antimicrobial activity of *Daphne gnidium* and *D. laureola* essential oils has been investigated on different bacteria and yeast. The Extract Essential oil was tested against the following bacteria; two gram negative bacteria: *Escherichia coli* ATCC 25922 and *Bacillus cereus* ATCC 10876 and two gram positive bacteria; *Staphylococcus aureus* ATCC 6538 and

*Micrococcus luteus* ATCC 533 and the yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* ATCC 763. The *in vitro* antibacterial and antifungal activity of the examined extract was assessed the determination of the activity by the disk diffusion method, according to recommendations of the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute. The bacterial inocula were prepared from overnight broth culture in physiological saline (0.9 % of NaCl) in order to obtain an optical density ranging from 0.08-0.1 at 625 nm. Muller-Hinton agar (MH agar), and the Sabouraud broth for yeast, were poured in Petri dishes, solidified and surface dried before inoculation. Sterile discs (6 mm ) were placed on inoculated agars, by test bacteria, filled with 10 µl of mother solution. Bacterial growth inhibition was determined as the diameter of the inhibition zones around the discs. All tests were performed in triplicate. Then, Petri dishes were incubated at 37°C during 18 to 24h aerobically (Bacteria). After incubation, inhibition zone diameters were measured and documented.

### Karyology

For karyotypic analysis, the squashing method is used. The root-tip meristems from germinating seeds were usually used for chromosome preparations. A pre-treatment at room temperature for 1.5 h was usually applied before fixation of the root-tips, in a 0.05% water solution of colchicine. After fixation in a cold mixture of ethanol acetic acid (3:1), the root-tips were stored in 70° ethanol and at a low temperature, until used. The following procedure involved the maceration in 45% acetic acid for 15 min. The following procedure involved the maceration in 45% acetic acid for 15 min. staining of chromosomes was made of emerging root-tips in acetic orcein with heating for one minute. Cutting off the meristems and squashing them in a drop of orcein.

### RESULTS

Essential oils of *Daphne laureola* and *D. gnidium* have a transparent color. The average yield of essential oil is 0.05%. The extraction of essential oils was performed until a sufficient amount is obtained, then analyzed by GC-MS (Figure 3). The chemical components of the essential oils identified for both species are presented according to their appearance in the chromatograms (Table 1).

32 compounds were identified in the essential oil of *D. gnidium*, which corresponds to 87.66% of the total oil. The hexadecanoic acid is the major constituent in the oil of this species with a rate of 20.97%, followed by eicosene (12.49%), decanal (5.03%) and tridecanal (4.55%). In the essential oil of *D. Laureola*, 40 and

35 components were identified, corresponding to a percentage of 87.86% and 96.81% of the two populations of Beni Aziz and Oued Elberd respectively. In the Beni Aziz population the major compounds in *D. laureola* are thymol (31.75%), hexadecanoic acid (6.19%), dodecanal aldehyde (4.08%) and neryl acetone (3.56%), while Oued Elberd population is characterized by thymol (16.73%), drimenin (15.76%) and the hexadecanoic acid (9.47%). The chemical composition of Beni Aziz population differs from Oued Elberd population by the presence of 24 terpene components. 13 compounds are present in the essential oil of both species (*D. gnidium* and *D. laureola*). *D. gnidium* is characterized by the presence of five components (tetradecane, -terpinene, tetracosane, octacosane, and methyl salicylate) are absent in the *D. laureola* oil.

The antibacterial activity of essential oils of *D.gnidium* and *D.laureola* is evaluated by the disc method. The results are expressed by measuring the halos of inhibition diameter, after 24 hours of incubation at 37°C (table 2). The results show that the essential oil of *D. gnidium* has low activity against *Escherichia coli* and no effect on *Bacillus cereus*, *Micrococcus luteus* and *Staphylococcus aureus*, as well as the yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. The essential oil of *D. laureola* of the two stations showed low activity against *Micrococcus luteus* and *Escherichia coli*, while *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Bacillus cereus* and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* have shown a high resistance to *D. laureola* essential oils (Figure 4). The observations of root cells meristematic at metaphase of *Daphne gnidium* and *D. laureola* gave a diploid chromosome number  $2n = 2x = 18$  (Figure 5).

### DISCUSSION

An average yield of 0.05 obtained for *Daphne* species is low compared to other species (0.1-0.35) for *Rosmarinus*<sup>60</sup>. The chemical composition of essential oils of species (*D. laureola* and *D. gnidium*) is very diverse and heterogeneous. The chemical profile differs from those reported in other species of the genus.

The major components in the essential oil of *D. oleoides* of Turkey are identified, the nonacosane, hexadecanoic acid, tetradecanoic acid, phytol and heptacosane<sup>21</sup>. The same authors on the essential oils of *D. pontica* have identified the major components (hexahydrofarnesyl acetone, carvacrol, dihydroedulane II (E), Geranyl acetone, thymol and nonacosane). The furfural, -copaene, -santalene, -caryophyllene, -santalene, -cadinene, methyl eugenol, nerolidol and elemicin are identified as major products of *D. genkwa* essential oil from China<sup>20</sup>.

The essential oils of the species studied have shown a very low antibacterial activity. Studying of Tayoub has shown that strain *Bacillus* sp is very sensitive to the essential oil of *D. oleifolia*<sup>43</sup>, while *Klebsiella* sp is very resistant. The methanol extract of *D. cneorum* exhibits strong activity against *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Escherichia coli*, *Proteus vulgaris*, and low activity against *Proteus mirabilis*<sup>44</sup>. The ethanolic extract of the roots of *Daphne mucronata* showed an antibacterial activity against *Escherichia coli* and *Bacillus subtilis*, while the extract of stems and leaves are inactive against *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*<sup>45</sup>.

On samples of Megres population we counted a chromosome number of  $2n = 18$  for *D. gnidium*, the same results are reported in Spain<sup>47, 50</sup>. *D. laureola* shows a diploid with  $2n = 18$ , these results are consistent with those found in Bulgaria<sup>48</sup> and Spain<sup>54</sup>. This chromosome number  $2n = 18$  is reported for the first time for the Algerian samples and confirms those published by Goldblatt<sup>51-53</sup>. The *Thymelaeaceae* family is a homogeneous group with a basic chromosome number  $x = 9$ <sup>46</sup>, this allows us to say that the basic chromosome number of the genus *Daphne* at least in Algeria is  $x = 9$ .

#### CONCLUSION

Analysis of the chemical composition of essential oils by GC-GC / MS allowed the identification of 32

components in the essential oil of *Daphne gnidium*, with hexadecanoic acid the major compound. 40 and 35 terpene components are identified in the essential oils of two populations of *Daphne laureola*, Beni Aziz and Oued Elberd. The major component in these oils is thymol.

The antibacterial activity of the species studied showed that the essential oil of *Daphne laureola* has a very low activity on *Escherichia coli* and *Bacillus cereus* and no effect on *Micrococcus luteus* and *Staphylococcus aureus*, as well as the yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. The essential oil of *D. gnidium* shows low activity against *Escherichia coli*, and no activity against *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Bacillus cereus*, *Micrococcus luteus* and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*.

The chromosome counts were focused on meristematic cells of *D. gnidium* and *D. laureola*. Our results have allowed us to determine the diploid chromosome number  $2n = 2x = 18$  in both species with a basic chromosome number  $x = 9$ .

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

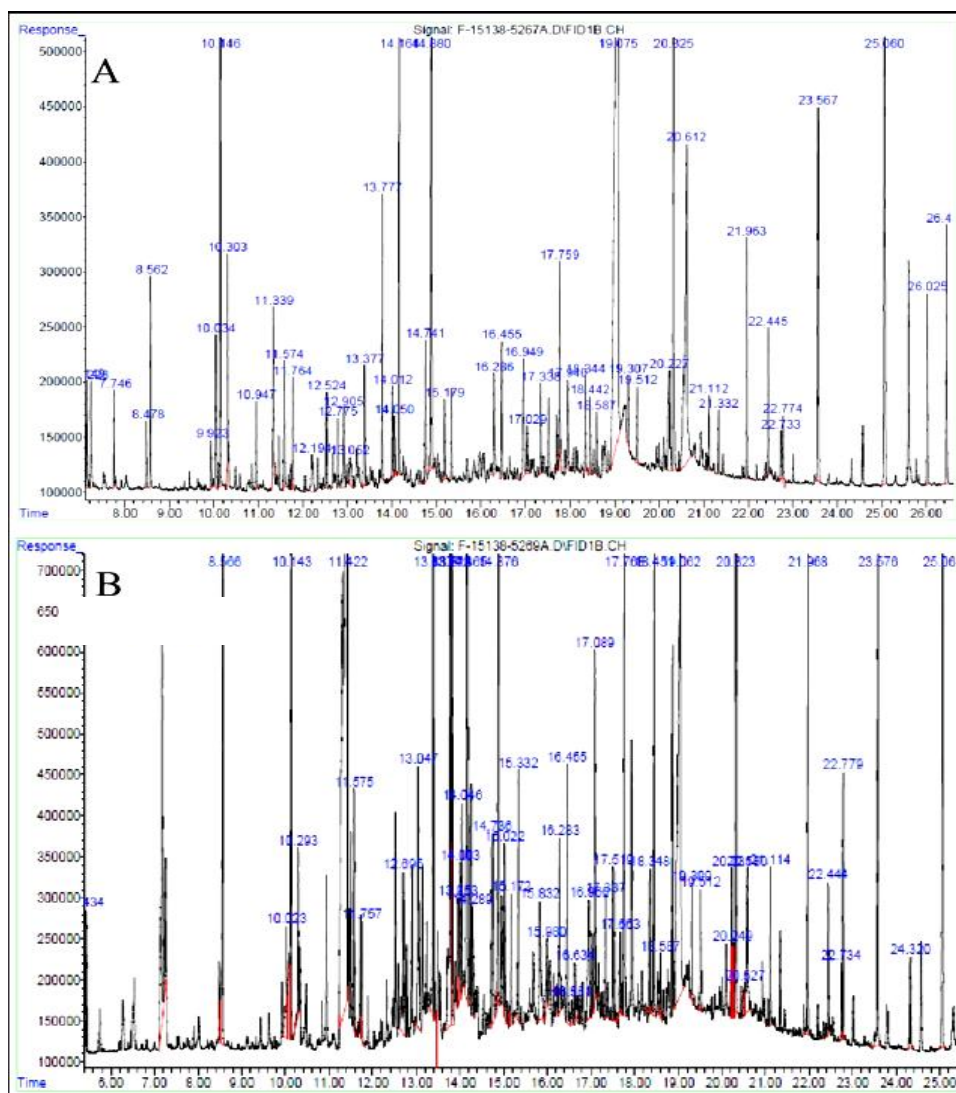
The work was supported by VRBN laboratory, Ferhat Abbas University (Sétif 1) and Chemical Laboratory of carbohydrates Heterocyclic of Clermont Ferrant, France.



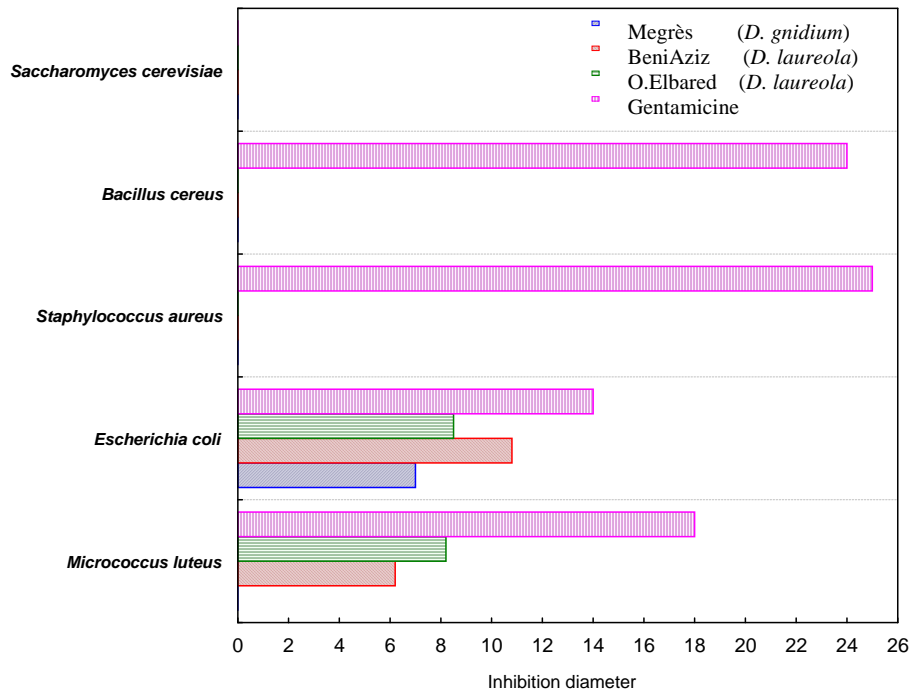
Figure 1  
 Stations sampled; (1 and 2) *D. laureola*, (3) *D. gnidium*



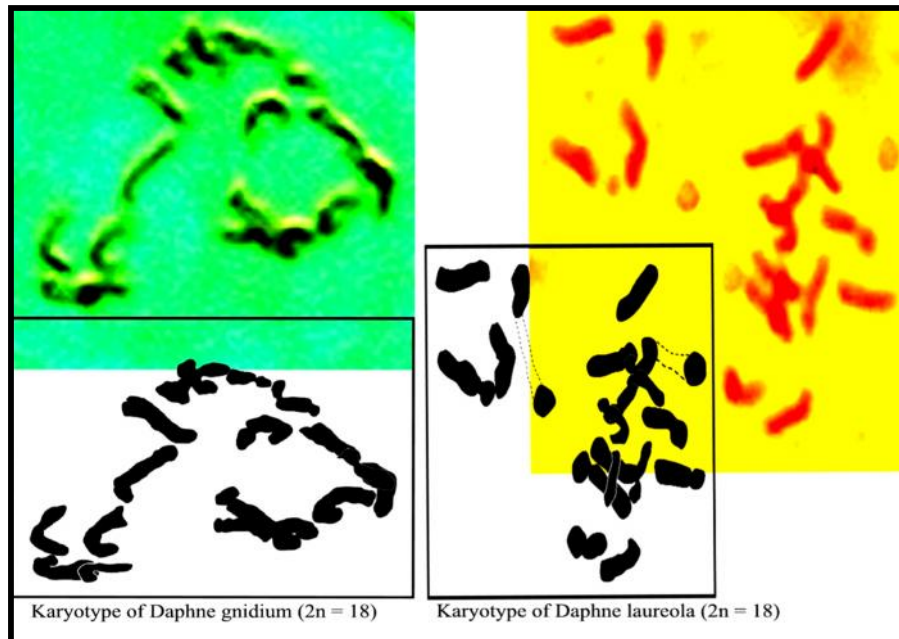
**Figure 2**  
*Daphne gnidium* from Megrès and *D. laureola* from BeniAziz)



**Figure 3**  
Profile GC / FID of essential oils of *Daphne*  
(A: *D. gnidium*; B: *D. laureola*)



**Figure 4**  
Antibacterial and antifungal activity of *Daphne* species essential oils



**Figure 5**  
Karyotypes of *Daphne gnidium* and *D. laureola* ( $2n = 2x = 18$ )

**Table 1**  
**Chemical composition of two species of *Daphne***

Species		<i>gnidium</i>	<i>laureola</i>	
Populations		Megrès	Beni aziz	O. El-Bared
Yield (v/v)	KI	0.05	0.04	0.06
Number of compounds		31	47	33
Total (%)		85.2	86.6	96.1
2-heptane	863	0	0.59	0
-pinene	934	0	0	4.31
-pinene	978	0	0	0.89
Cymene-ortho	1025	0.81	2.96	1.03
Limonene	1030	0.99	0	1.31
-terpinene	1059	0.66	0	0
Linalool	1099	0.51	0	1.42
Nonanal	1105	1.46	2.13	2.02
-campholenal	1128	0	0	0.66
Methyl salicylate	1193	0.38	0	0
Dodecane	1204	5.03	3.57	1.13
Neryl formate	1220	1.31	0.56	1.33
Thymol	1291	1.40	31.75	16.73
Carvacrol	1301	0	0	0.56
Tridecene	1309	0.81	0	0
Undecanal	1310	0	0.71	0.66
Hexenyl tiglate-(3E)	1323	0.78	0.36	0
Caryophyllene-(Z)	1325	0	1.92	0
Decyl acetate	1330	0	0.32	0
-copaene	1335	0	0.77	0
-guaiene	1339	0	0.65	0
Neryl acetone	1351	0.84	3.56	1.88
-humulene	1361	0	0.48	0
-damascenone-(E)	1381	0.67	0.84	0
-ionone-(E)	1383	1.97	0.99	0.56
Germacrene-D	1386	0	2.16	0
Methyl decyl	1394	0	1.34	0
2-tridecanone	1396	0	0.66	0
Tetradecane	1401	0.45	0	0
Dodecanal	1411	0.82	4.08	0.59
Pentadecane	1501	0.67	0.45	0.43
Tridecanal	1514	4.55	0.72	4.52
-cadinene	1522	0	0.36	0
Nerolidol-(E)	1563	1.26	0.77	0

Table 1: Continued

Table 1: Continued

Species Populations	KI	<i>gnidium</i>	<i>laureola</i>	
		Megrès	Beni aziz	O. El-Bared
Hexenyl benzoate-(3Z)	1575	4.47	0.96	2.53
Spathulenol	1584	0	0.13	0
Caryophyllene oxide	1589	0	0.36	1.36
Tetradecanal	1615	1.01	1.49	1.09
-cadinol	1661	0	0	3.29
Heptadecane	1765	1.52	0.46	0
Cyclocolorone	1751	0	0	1.32
Drimenin	1826	0	0	15.76
Phytol	1842	1.37	0	2.42
Pentadecanone	1844	0	2.64	0
Farnesyl acetone-(5Z, 9E)	1913	0	1.92	0
Methyl hexadecanoate	1926	0	0.21	0
Palmitic acid	1966	20.97	6.19	9.47
Eicosene	2114	12.49	0	0
Phytol acetate-(E)	2115	0	0	4.52
Linoleic acid	2144	6.83	0	2.91
Octadecanol acetate	2146	0	0.88	0
Triacosane	2200	0	0	0.54
Tricosane	2300	1.85	1.74	0
Octacosane	2335	2.11	0.90	1.77
Tetracosane	2399	0.58	0	0
Triacotane	2399	0	0	0.95
Pentacosane	2501	2.96	2.86	2.95
Dotriacontane	2599	0	0	0.48
Tritriacontane	2700	0	0	4.68
Hexacosane	2702	3.67	2.41	0

**Table 2**  
**Inhibition zone diameter of *Daphne* species essential oil**

Species Populations	<i>D. laureola</i>		<i>D. gnidium</i>	Gentamicin
	Beni aziz	Oued Elbared	Megrès	
<i>Escherichia coli</i> ATCC 25922	10.8 ± 0.7	8.5 ± 0.5	7 ± 1	14
<i>Micrococcus luteus</i> ATCC 533	6.2 ± 1	8.2 ± 1	0	18
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> ATCC 6538	0	0	0	25
<i>Bacillus cereus</i> ATCC 10878	0	0	0	24
<i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i> ATCC 763	0	0	0	0

(\*) Average of inhibition zone diameter (mm) of three experiments with Standard Deviation



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