

Development of microsatellites DNA markers in the cultivated seaweed, *Gracilaria chilensis* (Gracilariales, Rhodophyta)

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Abstract

The red algae *Gracilaria chilensis* is extensively cultivated for agar production. In spite of its commercial significance as the first algal resource in Chile, no information is available on the pattern of genetic diversity. In this paper, we isolated six polymorphic microsatellite markers from a *G. chilensis*-enriched DNA library. Genetic diversity was assessed in two natural populations revealing relatively low levels of heterozygosity ranging from 0.00 to 0.51. The six loci developed here are good candidates to assess the level of genetic resources within this species, which probably suffered from over-exploitation in several localities along the Chilean coast.