

## **B-38 Determination of washing efficiency for leaf litter of *Michelia nilagirica* and *Semecarpus coriacea***

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In order to determine the activities of fungi associated with fast (*Michelia nilagirica*) and slow (*Semecarpus coriacea*) decomposing leaf litter in the upper montane rain forest, Hakgala, the number of washings required to eliminate the surface contamination in both litter species were evaluated. Ten samples of decomposing leaves of both tree species were collected from the forest floor and taken to the laboratory. Twelve discs (5 mm diameter) from both leaf litter types were transferred into sterilized screw capped bottles (100 ml capacity) containing 25 ml sterilized distilled water and shaken at 300 revolutions / min for 2 min. The water was then decanted into another series of sterilized bottles and the process repeated 30 times. One ml aliquots from the above water in each bottle was transferred to tubes containing molten agar (2% malt extract agar) at 40°C, agitated by hand, poured into petri dishes and incubated for 4 days at room temperature for incubation.

Developing fungal colonies in the petri dishes were counted and the relationship between the number of washings and the number of fungal colonies from each washing was evaluated for both leaf litter types. It was found that 20 repeated

washings were required in order to remove the total biomass of surface contaminants associated with leaf material of both plant species *Michelia nilagirica* and *Semecarpus coriacea*.