

Condro Utomo

**Studies on molecular diagnosis for detection,
identification and differentiation of *Ganoderma*,
the causal agent of basal stem rot disease in oil palm**



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**Studies on molecular diagnosis for detection, identification and
differentiation of *Ganoderma*, the causal agent of
basal stem rot disease in oil palm**

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Contents

Summary	i
Acknowledgement	iv
Abbreviations	v
Index of Figures	vii
Index of Tables	ix
1 Introduction	1
2 Materials and Methods	7
2.1 Media, reagents and chemicals	7
2.1.1 Media for fungi	7
2.1.2 Reagents and buffers for DNA extraction	8
2.1.3 Reagents and buffers for PCR	9
2.1.4 Media and reagents for cloning and sequencing	12
2.1.4.1 Media for propagation of <i>Escherichia coli</i>	12
2.1.4.2 Reagents for cloning and sequencing	13
2.1.5 Solution and buffers for agarose gel electrophoresis	14
2.1.6 Other chemicals and kits	15
2.1.7 Fungal isolates	16
2.2 Detection of <i>Ganoderma</i> in oil palm based on PCR	19
2.2.1 Preparation of oil palm root and fungal samples	19
2.2.2 DNA extraction methods	20
2.2.3 Determination of DNA concentration by optical density measures	21
2.2.4 Primer design and evaluation	22
2.2.4.1 Primer design and PCR conditions	22
2.2.4.2 Determination of detection limit of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> DNA and specificity of primers	23
2.3 Development of molecular diagnosis for identification and differentiation of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> against other <i>Ganoderma</i> species derived from laccase, ITS region, IGS1 region and Mn-SOD genes	24
2.3.1 DNA extraction	24
2.3.2 Primer design and PCR conditions	25
2.3.2.1 Laccase gene	25
2.3.2.2 ITS, IGS1 regions, Mn-SOD gene and restriction fragment length polymorphisms (RFLP) analyse	26
2.3.3 Cloning of PCR products	27
2.3.3.1 Cloning of laccase genes into plasmid pTZ19R	27
2.3.3.2 Cloning of ITS, IGS1 and Mn-SOD gene using the TOPO cloning kit	29
2.3.4 Sequencing of plasmid inserted with PCR product	30
2.3.5 Nucleotide sequence data analysis	31

3 Results	35
3.1 Detection of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i>	35
3.1.1 Primer designs from ITS region and determination of detection limits of the generated primers	35
3.1.2 Cross reaction test of saprophytic fungi by using three primer sets	37
3.1.3 Detection of <i>Ganoderma</i> DNA from naturally infected oil palm roots	40
3.2 Identification and differentiation of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> based on laccase genes	42
3.2.1 Primer design and PCR amplification of <i>Ganoderma</i> DNA using the primer pairs designed from the laccase genes	42
3.2.2 Characterization of the nucleotide sequences of PCR products of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> isolate BS amplified using primer pairs Lac 2a-Lac 2b, Lac 2a-Lac 2r and Lac 2f-Lac 2b	49
3.2.3 Evaluation of primer specificity of Lac 2a-Lac 2b in the PCR amplification of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> DNA	59
3.2.3.1 PCR amplifications using primer pair Lac 2a-Lac 2b with different concentrations of <i>Taq</i> polymerase and MgCl ₂	59
3.2.3.2 PCR Amplification of the DNA fragment of <i>Ganoderma</i> Lac 1700 (designation pU1700) using the primer pair Lac 2a-Lac 2b at different temperatures, concentrations of <i>Taq</i> polymerase and MgCl ₂ .	60
3.2.4 Primer specificity for oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> designed from specific nucleotide sequence corresponding to conserved amino acid sequence of ILHCHI and introns of <i>Ganoderma</i> Lac 1700 fragment	61
3.3 Identification and differentiation of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> based on ITS, Mn-SOD and IGS1 genes	66
3.3.1 ITS region and ITS-RFLP analyses	66
3.3.1.1 ITS region sequences	66
3.3.1.2 Restriction fragment length polymorphism (RFLP) analysis for characterizing the PCR product of the ITS region of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i>	66
3.3.2 Species-specific primer design for oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> and PCR amplification	71
3.3.3 Specificity tests of the primer sets IT1-IT2 and IT1-IT3 for <i>Ganoderma</i>	76
3.3.4 Phylogenetic analysis of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> based on ITS1 and ITS2 regions	79
3.4 Identification of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> based on the Mn-SOD gene sequence	82
3.4.1 Primer design and PCR amplification	82
3.4.2 Phylogenetic analysis of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i>	85
3.5 Identification and differentiation of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> based on the IGS1 region	89
3.5.1 IGS1 sequence and IGS1-RFLP analysis	89

3.5.1.1	Determination of the IGS1 region of 13 <i>Ganoderma</i> isolates	89
3.5.1.2	Nucleotide sequences of the IGS1 region from 13 <i>Ganoderma</i> isolates	89
3.5.2	IGS1-RFLP analyses for oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i>	96
3.5.3	Species-specific primer design for oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> isolates	98
3.5.4	Phylogeny analysis of the IGS1 region	100
4	Discussion	103
4.1	Detection of oilpalm <i>Ganoderma</i>	103
4.2	Identification and differentiation of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i>	105
5	Perspectives	116
6	Zusammenfassung	117
7	References	120
8	Appendixes	134
	Curriculum vitae	
	Declaration (in German)	

Summary

The objectives of this study were to develop molecular tools for detection, identification and differentiation of the oil palm pathogen *Ganoderma*. One approach for detecting the oil palm *Ganoderma* in the naturally infected plants is the use of the internal transcribed spacer (ITS) region as a target sequence for generating specific primers. To develop identification procedures for the oil palm *Ganoderma* and a differentiation against other *Ganoderma* species, that are non-pathogenic or pathogenic to other plants, four genes of the oil palm *Ganoderma*, i.e. ITS region, intergenic spacer 1 (IGS1) region, laccase and manganese superoxide dismutase (Mn-SOD) genes were chosen. Molecular approaches including the use of species-specific primers derived from variable DNA sequences, PCR/RFLP analyses with specific restriction enzymes, and DNA sequence alignment to infer a phylogenetic tree were used for identification and characterisation.

Three DNA extraction procedures were tested to evaluate detection limits in combination with the primer pair Gan1-Gan2, generating a PCR product of 167 bp, when oil palm *Ganoderma* DNA was used. Three DNA extraction methods used showed different detection limit, however, for practical reasons the NaOH extraction was chosen, still amplifying DNA from 1.5 ng freeze-dried mycelia. The other primer pairs IT1-IT2 and IT1-IT3 generated a PCR product of 450 bp and 334 bp, respectively, with the detection limit of 1.5 ng of freeze-dried mycelia using the NaOH extraction method. The specificity of three primer pairs in the PCR-based detection procedure was confirmed by verifying the absence of cross-reaction with DNA extracted from healthy palm tissue and 18 saprophytic fungi isolated from the palm. In sampling studies, oil palm *Ganoderma* was detected by PCR from naturally infected oil palm roots, using the NaOH-DNA extraction method, before any visible symptoms of oil palm infection were visible. Combined with the rapid DNA extraction of the NaOH method, PCR assays would provide a practical tool for the detection oil palm *Ganoderma* within oil palm roots.

Three primer pairs designed from conserved amino acid sequences of known laccase genes of basidiomycete fungi were used in the PCR assay to identify and differentiate between oil palm *Ganoderma* and other *Ganoderma* species studied. Primer pair Lac 2a-Lac 2b produced a unique PCR product of 327 bp, when the laccase gene was used as template of

the oil palm *Ganoderma* DNA. However, most of the other *Ganoderma* species tested with these primers produced a PCR product of the size of 1500-1600 bp within the laccase gene, starting from the copper-binding region I to the copper-binding region IV, according to the previously published laccase gene sequences of basidiomycete fungi. Primer pair Lac2a-Lac2r always generated a single PCR product of 1617 bp when genomic DNA of oil palm *Ganoderma* was used. Otherwise, two different PCR products were observed when genomic DNA of other studied *Ganoderma* species was used, i. e. a single PCR product of 1617 bp (identical size to oil palm *Ganoderma*) and a second amplificate of 1500 bp was visible. Subsequently, other *Ganoderma* species which, by using the primer pair Lac2a-Lac2r, produce a PCR product of an identical size to the oil palm *Ganoderma* can now be discriminated by using the primer pair Lac 2f-Lac 2b, generating an additional PCR product of 1265 bp in size, only when using DNA from oil palm *Ganoderma*. In contrast, genomic DNA of other *Ganoderma* species (identical PCR product in size of all tested oil palm *Ganoderma*, using the primer pair Lac 2a-Lac 2r) produced a PCR product of 1400 bp. Therefore, with the use of both primer pairs (Lac 2a-Lac 2r and Lac 2f-Lac 2b), oil palm *Ganoderma* can now be clearly distinguished from all other *Ganoderma* species studied.

Variable sequences of the oil palm *Ganoderma* within the ITS or IGS1 regions were sequenced and were compared with other published *Ganoderma* isolates and were analysed for designing species-specific primers for the identification of oil palm *Ganoderma*. Within the ITS and IGS1 regions, two specific primer pairs were designed to provide a specific DNA amplification for the oil palm *Ganoderma*. Each primer pair produced a single PCR product when oil palm *Ganoderma* DNA was used in PCR amplification, 450 bp (for primer pair IT1-IT2), 334 bp (for primer pair IT1-IT3), 630 bp (for primer pair Q-IGSa) and 1,000 bp (for primer pair Q-IGSc). No PCR amplification product was observed when other *Ganoderma* species DNA were used. Except for *Ganoderma tornatum* isolated from hardwood, both primer pairs Q-IGSa and Q-IGSc showed slight cross-reaction in the PCR amplification. Based on the results of the PCR amplification using the specific primer pairs, identification and differentiation between oil palm *Ganoderma* and other *Ganoderma* species studied are easy to interpret because it is based on the presence or absence of a single DNA fragment.

Another molecular approach for identification and differentiation of oil palm *Ganoderma* against other *Ganoderma* species studied was the use of specific restriction enzymes in the ITS/IGS1-RLFP analyses. The restriction enzymes *SacI*, *MluI* and *HinfI* were used to digest the ITS-PCR product and *HincII*, *ScaI* and *TfiI* were used to digest the IGS1-PCR product. Of the three restriction enzymes used in each rDNA region, *MluI* was specific for the digestion of the ITS regions and *TfiI* was specific for the digestion of the IGS1 region of oil palm *Ganoderma*. A restriction site of *MluI* was also not found in the ITS nucleotide sequence of 31 published *Ganoderma* species used in this study. The use of the combination of the PCR amplification and restriction analysis can be applied as a standard protocol to identify whether *Ganoderma* isolates from fields are related to the pathogenic species.

Phylogenetic trees showed that oil palm *Ganoderma* cluster together with *Ganoderma boninense* LKM but were separately from *Ganoderma boninense* RSH RS in ITS and Mn-SOD gene phylogenies. Sequences analyses of the ITS and Mn-SOD genes revealed a high sequence similarity to *Ganoderma boninense* LKM (for the ITS1 ranged from 94.2 to 98.6 %, ITS2 ranged from 90.7 to 99.5 % and Mn-SOD gene ranged from 96.5 to 98.2 %). On the other hand, oil palm *Ganoderma* have a lower sequence identity to *Ganoderma boninense* RSH RS (for the ITS1 ranged from 80.1 to 82.1 %, ITS2 ranged from 61.6 to 73.2 % and Mn-SOD gene ranged from 86.3 to 87.0 %). Apparently, *Ganoderma boninense* RSH RS was misnamed and was not associated with palms (Moncalvo, personal communication). In this case, a molecular approach has proven to be consistent to define *Ganoderma* species which are pathogenic to oil palms.

In this study, the use of species-specific primers designed from variable DNA sequences, PCR-RFLP analyses of the rDNA with specific restriction enzymes, and DNA sequence alignment to infer phylogenetic trees showed consistency in identification and differentiation of oil palm *Ganoderma* and other *Ganoderma* species studied. This finding conclude that oil palm *Ganoderma* causing the BSR disease on oil palms belongs to a single species.

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Abbreviations

AFLP	Amplified fragment length polymorphisms
BSA	Bovine serum albumin
BSR	Basal stem rot
bp	Base pair
CTAB	Cetyltrimethylammoniumbromide
DMSO	Dimethyl sulfoxide
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
dATP	Deoxyadenosine triphosphate
dCTP	Deoxycytidine triphosphate
dGTP	Deoxyguanosine triphosphate
dTTP	Deoxythymidine triphosphate
dNTP	Deoxynucleoside triphosphate
EDTA	Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
EMBL	European Molecular Biology Laboratory
ELISA	Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
IGS	Intergenic spacers
IPTG	Isopropyl- β -D-thiogalactopyranoside
ITS	Internal transcribed spacers
LB	Luria-Bertani
LB _{amp}	Luria-Bertani ampicillin
Mn-SOD	Manganese superoxide dismutase
mM	Millimolar
μ M	Micromolar
μ l	Microlitre
mRNA	Messenger ribonucleic acid
NCBI	National Centre for Biotechnology Information
ng	Nanogram
OD	Optical density
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
PEG	Polyethylene glycol
pg	Picogram
pmol	Picomole

PVPP	Polyvinilpolypyrrolidone
RAPD	Random amplified polymorphic DNA
rDNA	Ribosomal DNA
RFLP	Restriction fragment length polymorphisms
SDS	Sodium dodecyl sulfate
<i>Taq</i>	<i>Termus aquaticus</i>
TBE	Tris/borate/EDTA (buffer)
TE	Tris/EDTA (buffer)
TSS	Transformation and storage solution
U	Units
X-Gal	5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl- β -D-galactopyranoside

	Index of Figures	Page
Fig. 1	DNA sequence of ITS region 1 of ribosomal DNA of <i>G.boninense</i> RSH RS. The deduced size of PCR product of primer Gan1- Gan2 was 167 base pairs	35
Fig. 2	Determination of detection limit of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> by using different DNA concentrations, primer pairs and DNA extraction methods	36
Fig. 3	PCR cross-reaction tests of three primer pairs for 18 saprophytic fungi at dilution 1:10 ²	38
Fig. 4	PCR amplification of the naturally infected oil palm root samples using three primer pairs	41
Fig. 5	Results of PCR amplification of <i>Ganoderma</i> spp. using primer pair Lac 2a-Lac 2b	44
Fig. 6	Results of PCR amplification of <i>Ganoderma</i> spp using primer pair Lac 2a-Lac 2r	45
Fig. 7	Results of PCR amplification of <i>Ganoderma</i> spp using primer pair Lac 2f-Lac 2b	47
Fig. 8	Partial nucleotide sequence of the laccase gene of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> BS (DNA fragment of <i>Ganoderma</i> Lac 7)	52
Fig. 9	Partial nucleotide sequence of the laccase gene of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> BS (<i>Ganoderma</i> Lac 1700)	54
Fig. 10	Partial nucleotide sequence of the laccase gene of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> BS (DNA fragment of <i>Ganoderma</i> Lac 1.8)	55
Fig. 11	Alignment of the partial deduced amino acid sequences of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> BS (<i>Ganoderma</i> Lac 1700 and <i>Ganoderma</i> Lac 1.8) with other basidiomyceteous laccase sequences	58
Fig. 12	A phylogenetic tree of the partial laccase genes was constructed using the Clustal method with the PAM 250 residue weight table	59
Fig. 13	PCR amplification using primer pair Lac 2a and Lac 2b in order to amplify an additional band of 1610-bp by increasing concentration of <i>Taq</i> polymerase and MgCl ₂	60
Fig. 14	PCR amplification experiments with primer Lac 2a and Lac 2b to amplify an additional band of 1610-bp at different annealing temperatures and increasing concentration of <i>Taq</i> polymerase and MgCl ₂	61
Fig. 15	PCR amplification of DNA from oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> and other <i>Ganoderma</i> species using primer Lac 2b 2 combined with primers designed from intron sequences of the laccase gene of <i>Ganoderma</i> Lac 1700	64
Fig. 16	Comparison of the nucleotide sequence of the internal transcribed spacer (ITS) region and 5.8S rDNA from 8 isolates of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i>	67
Fig. 17	PCR amplification products of non- <i>Ganoderma</i> amplified by ITS1 and ITS 4 primers and RFLP analyses of <i>Ganoderma</i> using <i>Sac</i> I	68
Fig. 18	Aligned sequences of the ITS1 region of rDNA from oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> with other <i>Ganoderma</i> species	73
Fig. 19	Aligned sequences of the ITS2 region of rDNA from oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> with other <i>Ganoderma</i> species	75

Fig. 20	Variable regions in the ITS1 and ITS2 sequences of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> (isolate BS) aligned with other <i>Ganoderma</i> species to design specific primers for oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i>	76
Fig. 21	Results of PCR amplification of the ITS region of <i>Ganoderma</i> species using primer pairs IT1-IT2 and IT1-IT3	77
Fig. 22	Phylogenetic relationships of <i>Ganoderma</i> species inferred from the nucleotide sequences of ITS 1	80
Fig. 23	Phylogenetic relationships of <i>Ganoderma</i> species inferred from the nucleotide sequences of ITS 2	81
Fig. 24	Design of PCR primers to isolate the Mn-SOD gene of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i>	82
Fig. 25	Nucleotide sequence alignment of the partial Mn-SOD gene from 3 oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> (isolates AP, BJ 8 and BS)	83
Fig. 26	Partial nucleotide sequence of the Mn-SOD gene of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> (isolate BS)	84
Fig. 27	Phylogenetic relationships of <i>Ganoderma</i> species inferred from nucleotide sequences of the Mn-SOD genes	86
Fig. 28	Nucleotide sequence alignment of the partial Mn-SOD gene of <i>Ganoderma</i> species	88
Fig. 29	Determination of the 3' end of the LS rDNA of 13 <i>Ganoderma</i> isolates	91
Fig. 30	Determination of the 5' end of the 5S rDNA of 13 <i>Ganoderma</i> isolates	92
Fig. 31	Multiple nucleotide sequence alignments of the complete IGS1 region of 13 <i>Ganoderma</i> isolates	95
Fig. 32	Restriction patterns of the IGS1 region of <i>Ganoderma</i> species digested with the restriction enzymes <i>Hinc II</i> and <i>Sca I</i>	98
Fig. 33	Agarose gel showing PCR products obtained from <i>Ganoderma</i> DNA using species-specific primers Q-IGSa and Q-IGSc	99
Fig. 34	Phylogenetic relationships of <i>Ganoderma</i> species inferred from nucleotide sequences of the IGS1 region	102
Fig. 35	Schematic ribosomal DANN repeat unit of <i>Ganoderma</i>	110

	Index of Tables	Page
Table 1	Origin, hosts and source of fungi used in this study	16
Table 2	Laccase amino acid sequences of various basidiomycete fungi used for comparison with the isolated laccase genes from oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> BS	32
Table 3	Published nucleotide sequences of the ITS1 and ITS2 regions from different <i>Ganoderma</i> species obtained from GenBank	33
Table 4	Nucleotide sequences of the Mn-SOD genes from <i>Ganoderma</i> species deposited in GenBank	34
Table 5	The detection limit of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> mixed with healthy oil palm root by using DNA extraction of NaOH method	37
Table 6	Results of PCR amplification of mixing oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> with healthy oil palm root at different mixing and dilution series using primer pairs IT1-IT2 and IT1-IT3	37
Table 7	Saprophytic fungi were mixed with healthy root, diluted in 10-fold dilution series and amplified using primer pair Gan1-Gan2	39
Table 8	Cross reaction test of saprophytic fungi by using primer pairs IT1-IT2, IT1-IT3 and ITS1-ITS4 (as control PCR) in order to amplify the ITS regions of saprophytic fungi	40
Table 9	The results of PCR amplification from oil palm root samples using primer pairs Gan1-Gan2, IT1-IT2 and IT1-IT3	41
Table 10	Selection of primer from nucleotide sequences of the conserved amino acid of laccase genes of 6 known basidiomycete fungi	42
Table 11	Determination of the optimum DNA concentration of oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> for PCR amplification	43
Table 12	Results of PCR amplification using primers of Lac 2a-Lac 2b, Lac 2a-Lac 2r and Lac 2f-Lac 2b for different <i>Ganoderma</i> species.	48
Table 13	Percent amino acid identities of the partial sequenced laccase genes of <i>Ganoderma</i> Lac 1700 and <i>Ganoderma</i> Lac 1.8 compared to published laccase genes of other basidiomycete fungi	56
Table 14	Results of PCR amplification of DNA from <i>Ganoderma</i> using primer pairs Lac 2b2 with Intron 9, Intron 1, Intron 2, Intron 4 and Intron 5	65
Table 15	PCR amplification products of <i>Ganoderma</i> species amplified by primer pairs ITS1-ITS4 and ITS3-ITS4 were digested by several restriction enzymes in order to discriminate oil palm <i>Ganoderma</i> from other <i>Ganoderma</i> spp.	69
Table 16	Presumed RFLP of the published ITS1 and ITS2 region from other <i>Ganoderma</i> species digested by three restriction enzymes of <i>SacI</i> , <i>MluI</i> and <i>HinfI</i>	70
Table 17	PCR results obtained from the genomic DNA from <i>Ganoderma</i> species amplified by using primer pairs IT1-IT2, IT1-IT3 and ITS1-ITS4 (as a control PCR)	78
Table 18	The length of intergenic spacer (IGS1) sequence of 13 <i>Ganoderma</i> isolates	92
Table 19	Results of the IGS1 DNA patterns of <i>Ganoderma</i> species studied digested with <i>Hinc II</i> , <i>Sca I</i> and <i>Tfi I</i>	97
Table 20	Results of PCR amplification of total genomic DNA from <i>Ganoderma</i> species using primer pairs Q-IGSa, Q-IGSc and Q-5SA	101

