

Laboratory culture of the seagrass, *Halophila ovalis* (R.Br.) Hooker f.

ABSTRACT

A small-culture system for growing of *Halophila ovalis* was developed. Plugs of explants were successfully grown in the native substrate and under the light regime of $-200 \text{ } \mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{ S}^{-1}$. The culturing of *H. ovalis* in the laboratory permitted observations on (i) the sustain growth and the development of the population, (ii) the reproductive biology (flowering, and fruiting) and (iii) the pattern of seedling development from seeds to mature plants. Plants increased in density via vegetative propagation and sexual reproduction. Plants produced male, female flowers and fruits. The presence of viable seeds and seedlings demonstrated the successful pollination and sexual reproduction of *H. ovalis* in culture. The morphology of progressive development of *H. ovalis* seedlings to juvenile or young plants for *H. ovalis* in culture is described.

Keyword: Seagrass; *Halophila ovalis*; Laboratory culture; Phenology.