

THE DEGRADATION RATES OF MANGROVE LEAVES OF *RHIZOPHORA APICULATA* (BL.) AND *AVICENNIA MARINA* (FORSK.) VIERH. AT PHUKET ISLAND, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

The degradation rates of mangrove leaves of *Rhizophora apiculata* (Bl.) and *Avicennia marina* (Forsk.) Vierh. were studied from January to March 1977. The measurement of degradation rates of leaves was made by calculating the differences between the wet and dry weights. The experiment showed that *R. apiculata* leaves lost half of their weight in 40 days and those of *A. marina* in 20 days in the mangrove forest at Ao Yon, Phuket Island. The rate of degradation of *R. apiculata* leaves within the forest was relatively quicker than that of those placed in a non-mangrove environment.

There was no obvious difference in the weight loss of leaves of *R. apiculata* and *A. marina* placed in nets of differing mesh sizes in the mangrove channel and in the open seashore waters localities.