

1    **Title: Cellular traits regulate fluorescence-based bio-optical phenotypes of coral**  
2    **photosymbionts living *in-hospite***

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4    **Running Head: Linking bio-optical phenotypes with cellular traits**

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21

22 **Abstract:** Diversity across algal family *Symbiodiniaceae* contributes to the environmental  
23 resilience of certain coral species. Chlorophyll-*a* fluorescence measurements are frequently used  
24 to determine symbiont health and resilience, but more work is needed to refine these tools and  
25 establish how they relate to underlying cellular traits. We examined trait diversity in symbionts  
26 from the genera *Cladocopium* and *Durusdinium*, collected from 12 aquacultured coral species.  
27 Photophysiological metrics ( $\Phi_{PSII}$ ,  $\sigma_{PSII}$ ,  $\rho$ ,  $\tau_1$ ,  $\tau_2$ , ABQ, NPQ, and qP) were assessed using a  
28 prototype multi-spectral fluorometer over a variable light protocol which yielded a total of 1360  
29 individual metrics. Photophysiological metrics were then used to establish four unique  
30 phenotypic variants. Corals harboring C15 were predominantly found within a single phenotype  
31 which clustered separately from all other coral fragments. The majority of *Durusdinium*  
32 dominated colonies also formed a separate phenotype which it shared with a few C1 dominated  
33 corals. C15 and D1 symbionts appear to differ in which mechanisms they employ to dissipate  
34 excess light energy. Spectrally dependent variability is also observed across phenotypes that may  
35 relate to differences in photopigment utilization. Cell physiology (atomic C:N:P, cell size,  
36 chlorophyll-*a*, neutral lipid content) was also assessed within each sample and differ across  
37 phenotypes, linking photophysiological metrics with underlying primary cellular traits. Strong  
38 correlations between first- and second-order traits, such as Quantum Yield and cellular N:P  
39 content, or light dissipation pathways (qP and NPQ) and C:P underline differences across  
40 symbiont types and may also provide a means for using fluorescence-based metrics as  
41 biomarkers for certain primary-cellular traits.

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44 **Keywords:** *Symbiodiniaceae*, Coral photosymbionts, Functional Traits, Chlorophyll-*a*  
45 fluorescence, Phenomics

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48 **Introduction:**

49 The dinoflagellate algal family *Symbiodiniaceae* is genetically and phenotypically  
50 diverse, having evolved to occupy numerous niches and lifestyles, which include free-living  
51 open ocean as well as endosymbiotic roles most notably in stony corals (Muscatine & Hand,  
52 1958; Loeblich & Sherley, 1979; Takabayashi et al., 2012). Within the coral holobiont,  
53 *Symbiodiniaceae* live within coral gastrodermal cells, in which they recycle coral waste products  
54 and in turn produce up to 90% of the coral's energy stores through fixed carbon (Yellowlees et  
55 al., 2008). Their endosymbiotic relationship with stony corals is complex and dynamic, with  
56 differing life histories, coral hosts, and environments giving rise to vast diversity in survival  
57 strategies and physiology across the family (Wiedenmann et al., 2012; Pasaribu et al., 2016;  
58 Suggett et al., 2017; LaJeunesse et al., 2018). Elevated seawater temperatures above a certain  
59 threshold have increased the risk of coral endosymbiont loss (coral bleaching) and its associated  
60 sublethal and lethal effects worldwide (Hoegh-Guldberg & Smith, 1989; Steen & Muscatine,  
61 1987; Tchernov et al., 2011). Coral bleaching mitigation and reef restoration relies on improved  
62 holistic understanding of the coral holobiont (the coral host and its microbiome, including  
63 endosymbiotic algae), to determine what traits underpin resilience under environmental stressors.  
64 Association with adaptable and resilient symbiont species is thought to be an important predictor  
65 of coral resilience (Suggett et al., 2017), but the underlying phenotypic differences across the  
66 family are not fully resolved.

67 Inherent functional traits of both the algal symbiont and the coral host, as well as their  
68 interactive physiology, govern coral bleaching susceptibility which varies across different host-  
69 symbiont combinations (Sampayo et al., 2008; Krueger & Gates 2012; Scheufen et al., 2017).  
70 Certain genera of *Symbiodiniaceae*, such as *Durusdinium* (Clade D) are often linked with higher

71 thermal tolerance across many Caribbean and Pacific coral species where mixed assemblages of  
72 photosymbionts are common (Baker et al., 2004; Fabricius et al., 2004; LaJeunesse et al., 2003;  
73 Sampayo et al., 2008). For these ‘symbiont generalist’ coral species, dominance by the species  
74 *Durusdinium trenchii* is particularly notable among colonies that display higher thermal  
75 tolerance. Other coral species only associate with a single symbiont species (specialists), and  
76 their responses to thermal stress are often more nuanced and species/environmentally dependent.  
77 However, symbiont ‘specialist’ corals that house *Cladocopium C15* are often more thermally  
78 resilient than others, suggesting that *C15* may also be a thermally tolerant symbiont type. What  
79 functional traits these two species carry and allow them to be more thermally tolerant than others  
80 is an active area of research both for basic and applied fields of coral conservation.

81 The *Symbiodiniaceae* family is genetically and phenotypically diverse, but phylogeny  
82 alone is not sufficient to explain the broad differences in ecological success that have been  
83 observed across the family (Lewis et al., 2018; Sampayo et al., 2008; Goyen et al., 2017; Suggett  
84 et al., 2017; Mansour et al., 2018). Relatively recent adaptive radiations among certain genera  
85 (Thornhill et al., 2014) driven by variable nutrient and light environments, coral skeletal  
86 architecture, and tissue pigments have presumably resulted in diverse functional traits across  
87 species, including variability in response to environmental perturbations such as thermal stress  
88 (D’Angelo & Wiedenmann, 2014; Sully & van Woesik, 2020; Scheufen et al., 2017; Suggett et  
89 al., 2015; Suggett et al., 2017). However, as there still exists a gap in knowledge regarding how  
90 genomic diversity within this group translates into functional trait differences and phenotypes  
91 across species and environments, a better understanding of algal trait variability across the  
92 *Symbiodiniaceae* family is needed.

93           Chlorophyll-*a* fluorescence techniques are commonly employed within coral research as  
94           a tool for assessing photosynthetic health under high temperature stress (Warner et al., 1999,  
95           Rodríguez-Román et al., 2006, Cunning et al., 2021). Indeed, these tools have been a critical  
96           component of bleaching response research and are increasingly utilized to characterize trait-  
97           based differences within and across coral species (Suggett et al., 2022, Hoadley et al., 2021).  
98           Incorporation of varying light protocols and multispectral analyses (Hoadley et al., 2023, Szabó  
99           et al., 2014) further increases the utility of these tools for assessing nuanced functional trait  
100           differences across coral species and/or environmental conditions. Such tools provide the ideal  
101           platform for phenomic studies as ‘high-content’ data sets can be easily captured from individual  
102           corals and then assessed using machine learning techniques to establish photo-physiological  
103           profiles representative of key species and/or underlying cellular traits.

104           First-order traits, or traits which form the basis of function, are thought to be better  
105           determinants of algal survival and success than secondary traits, which arise from the  
106           performance of primary traits (Suggett et al., 2017). First-order traits such as allometric scaling  
107           (cell size) and nutrient budgeting (atomic Carbon: Nitrogen: Phosphorus ratios) likely regulate  
108           second-order traits, such as photoprotection and light utilization strategies (Suggett et al., 2017;  
109           McIlroy et al., 2020; Hoadley et al., 2021). However, first order traits are often difficult to  
110           measure, requiring destructive and sometimes expensive analytical methodology. In contrast,  
111           second order traits, such as light utilization strategies in photosynthetic organisms, are relatively  
112           easy to characterize using rapid and non-invasive tools such as chlorophyll-*a* fluorescence  
113           (Warner et al., 1999, Suggett et al., 2015, Warner & Suggett 2016). Because light utilization  
114           strategies differ across environmental conditions and species of *Symbiodiniaceae*, characterizing  
115           relationships between such secondary and underlying primary traits could provide useful insight

116 into what drives the observed functional trait differences derived through chlorophyll-*a*  
117 fluorescence. Establishing correlations between primary traits and light utilization  
118 characteristics, future studies may also be able to infer certain primary trait characteristics via  
119 chlorophyll-*a* fluorescence alone.

120 In this study, we characterized photosynthetic poise of six different *Symbiodiniaceae*  
121 species living *in-hospite* among 60 Pacific coral fragments, spanning 12 coral species  
122 (*Montipora capricornis*, *Acropora yongei*, *Montipora digitata*, *Turbinaria reniformis*, *Acropora*  
123 *millepora*, *Acropora humilis*, *Acropora valida*, *Acropora* sp., *Pavona cactus*, *Psammacora*  
124 *contigua*, *Pocillopora damicornis*, and *Cyphastrea chalcidicum*), sourced from the Reef Systems  
125 Coral Farm, Inc, in New Albany, Ohio. Prior to isolation of the algal symbionts for  
126 characterization of primary traits, we first assessed active chlorophyll-*a* fluorescence metrics  
127 using 5 excitation wavelengths during a time-resolved actinic light protocol designed to test  
128 acclimation, relaxation, and light utilization at high and low light intensities (Hoadley et al.,  
129 2023). This yielded a total of 1360 individual metrics which were then used to cluster coral  
130 colonies based on similarity of their photophysiological phenotype. Phenotypes were then  
131 compared to identified symbiont species and linked to underlying differences in primary traits  
132 across phenotypes. Next, a network analysis was utilized to elucidate specific correlations  
133 between our primary and secondary traits. Convergence between algal species and phenotypes  
134 provide a useful means for understanding trait-based differences across genetic lineages, along  
135 with the underlying cellular traits that regulate them.

136

137

138 **Materials and Methods:**

139

140 **Coral husbandry and environmental conditions:** All corals were housed at Reef Systems  
141 Coral Farm (New Albany, Ohio). This facility consists of large ~4000 L raceways (8' x 4' x 4')  
142 housed within a greenhouse facility (optically clear plastic roofing with no shade cloth). Smaller  
143 indoor tanks (~1100 L) contain additional corals under LED illumination. All tanks utilize the  
144 same artificial seawater (Reef Crystals in RO/DI filtered water) and receive frequent (10-20%, 1-  
145 2 week<sup>-1</sup>) water changes. All tanks contain submersible power heads (Tunze) which circulate  
146 water within each system between 50-100 times per hour. Additional overflow pumps exchange  
147 water (1-2 times volume of tank hr<sup>-1</sup>) with external sumps equipped with mechanical (25-micron  
148 sieve) and foam fractionation filtration. All coral fragments are mounted on ceramic disks (3cm)  
149 and attached using cyanoacrylate gel (coral glue). Peak irradiance (measured at the same tank  
150 depth for each tank) within the outdoor (greenhouse) tanks was 1050  $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{ sec}^{-1}$  (walz, 4pi  
151 sensor). Indoor corals were illuminated using LED lighting (Radion Xr30 Pro) on a 10:14 hr  
152 dark: light cycle with peak irradiance measured at 300  $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{ sec}^{-1}$ . Indoor and outdoor corals  
153 thus differ both in max irradiance but also in light spectra (natural lighting vs. LED output).

154                   Reef Systems Coral Farm (New Albany, Ohio) houses over 30 different species of coral,  
155 with thousands of individual fragments originating from coral colonies that were harvested in  
156 Fiji but have been captively grown at the facility for over ten years. All individual fragments  
157 utilized in the study had been fragmented and mounted for at least one month prior to use. In  
158 order to maximize diversity, we collected three replicate fragments from twenty different coral  
159 colonies chosen to include a wide range of life strategies and histories, including both mound and  
160 branching species acclimated to greenhouse conditions; *Psammacora contigua* (1 genotype),

161 *Acropora yongei* (1 genotype), *Acropora millepora* (1 genotype), *Acropora humilis* (1 genotype),  
162 *Acropora valida* (1 genotype), *Acropora* species (1 genotype), *Turbinaria reniformis* (2  
163 genotypes), *Pavona cactus* (1 genotype), *Montipora digitata* (1 genotype), *Montipora*  
164 *capricornis* (3 genotypes), *Cyphastrea chalcidicum* (1 genotype), *Pocillopora damicornis* (2  
165 genotypes). In addition, indoor acclimated fragments representing species *Acropora humilis* (1  
166 genotype), *Turbinaria reniformis* (1 genotype), and *Montipora capricornis* (2 genotypes) were  
167 also included in our analyses.

168

169 **Chlorophyll fluorescence-based phenotyping protocol:** Prior to measurements, each  
170 individual coral fragment was dark acclimated for 20-25 minutes (Suggett et al., 2015).  
171 Photophysiological responses to changing light conditions were then measured using a prototype  
172 Chlorophyll-*a* fluorometer previously described in Hoadley et al., 2023. Briefly, fluorescence  
173 induction curves were produced through excitation with 1.3- $\mu$ s single turnover flashlets spaced  
174 apart by 3.4  $\mu$ s dark intervals (32 flashlets were utilized under 420, 442, and 458-nm excitation  
175 while 40 flashlets were utilized during 505 and 520-nm excitation). Each fluorescence induction  
176 curve was followed by a 300 ms relaxation phase consisting of 1.3- $\mu$ s light flashes spaced apart  
177 with exponentially increasing dark periods (starting with 59- $\mu$ s). Fluorescence induction and  
178 relaxation curves measured using each excitation wavelength were sequentially repeated 5 times  
179 per measurement timepoint. These photophysiological measurements were repeated 34 times  
180 during an 11-minute variable actinic light protocol in which corals were exposed to an initial  
181 dark period (30s) followed by 3 different light intensities ( $300 \mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{ sec}^{-1}$  for 3.5 minutes,  
182 then  $50 \mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{ sec}^{-1}$  for 1.5 minutes followed by  $600 \mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{ sec}^{-1}$  for 3.5 minutes), and a  
183 final dark recovery period (~ 2 minutes) (Hoadley et al., 2023). Resulting fluorescence data was

184 analyzed using custom R scripts (Hoadley et al., 2023) and according to equations set forth in  
185 Kolber et al., 1998 in order to calculate quantum yield of photosystem II ( $\Phi_{\text{PSII}}$ ), PSII functional  
186 absorption cross-section ( $\sigma_{\text{PSII}}$ ), reaction center connectivity ( $\rho$ ), non-photochemical quenching  
187 (NPQ), antenna bed quenching (ABQ), photochemical quenching (qP), and two time constants  
188 for electron transport ( $\tau_1$  and  $\tau_2$ ) where  $\tau_1$  reflects acceptor-side changes of PSII and  $\tau_2$  reflects  
189 changes in plastoquinone pool reoxidation (Suggett et al., 2022; Hoadley et al., 2023). However,  
190 downstream PQ reoxidation kinetics ( $\tau_2$ ) are typically derived from a multturnover induction and  
191 relaxation flash sequence (Suggett et al., 2022) whereas ours are derived from the second  
192 exponential component of a single turnover induction and relaxation flash sequence ( $\tau_2^{\text{ST}}$ ).  
193

194 **Endosymbiont Isolation:** Once chlorophyll-*a* fluorescence-based measurements were complete,  
195 a portion of coral tissue was removed using the water-pick method (Johannes & Wiebe, 1970)  
196 and filtered seawater (artificial seawater vacuum-filtered, 0.2-micron filter). The resulting tissue-  
197 water slurry was homogenized using a hand-held tissue homogenizer (tissue tearer) and then  
198 measured using a graduated cylinder. Samples were then centrifuged (8,000 X g, 10 minutes,  
199 room temperature). After centrifugation, the supernatant was removed, and the pellets were  
200 resuspended in sterile seawater, vortexed for 30 seconds and then centrifuged once more to wash  
201 the endosymbionts free of the host tissue. Resulting algal pellets were resuspended in 10ml of  
202 sterile seawater.

203  
204 **Flow Cytometry (cell size, chlorophyll-*a*, neutral lipid content, and granularity):** One ml  
205 aliquots of resuspended algal samples were preserved with glutaraldehyde (0.1% final  
206 concentration), incubated in the dark for 20 minutes, flash frozen in LN<sub>2</sub>, and then stored at -80

207 C for downstream flow cytometry. All samples were analyzed using a Attune NxT (Invitrogen,  
208 USA) equipped with a 488 nm (200 mW) laser and a 200  $\mu$ m nozzle. Glutaraldehyde-fixed  
209 samples were re-pelleted using a centrifuge (12,000xg, 5 minutes), resuspended in 1x filtered  
210 PBS, and then filtered through a 50-micron mesh filter to remove residual coral tissue or large  
211 cell aggregates. Samples were then diluted 4x with 1x filtered PBS and spiked with 10  $\mu$ l of  
212 1:1000 diluted fluorescent bead stock (Life Technologies 4.0  $\mu$ m yellow-green 505/515  
213 Fluospheres sulfate). 100- $\mu$ l per culture was analyzed at a flow rate of 200- $\mu$ l min<sup>-1</sup>. For  
214 characterization of *Symbiodiniaceae* cells, data collection was triggered on forward light scatter  
215 (FSC), while red (695/40 nm bandpass filter) autofluorescence detected chlorophyll-a, and both  
216 were utilized to gate the cell and bead populations for bead-normalized FSC, side scatter (SSC)  
217 and chlorophyll fluorescence measurements.

218 For quantification of neutral lipid content, 500  $\mu$ l of the diluted sample was first stained  
219 with 2- $\mu$ l 5mM Bodipy 493/503 (Invitrogen, 4,4-Difluoro-1,3,5,7,8-Pentamethyl-4-Bora-3a,4a-  
220 Diaza-s-Indacene) and then incubated in the dark at 37  $^{\circ}$ C for 15 minutes. Stained samples were  
221 then run according to the same conditions described above. The *Symbiodiniaceae* cell population  
222 was identified using FSC-height and autofluorescence, and the gated population's green  
223 fluorescence was quantified (bandpass filter 530/30).

224

225 **Total C:N:P Content and Nutrient Analysis:** For Carbon and Nitrogen analysis, 2-ml of each  
226 resuspended algal sample was filtered through a 13mm ashed GF/F filter and dried in a 95  $^{\circ}$ C  
227 oven for 24 hours. Filters were packed into tin capsules, combusted (Costech Instruments 4010  
228 Elemental Combustion System) and analyzed via Elemental Analyzer. Total carbon and nitrogen  
229 values were compared to an atropine standard. For particulate organic phosphorus (POP)

230 analysis, 2-ml of each isolate was filtered through a 13mm ashed GF/F filter and stabilized with  
231 a 0.17M Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> rinse. Filters were placed in muffled scintillation vials with 2-ml aliquots of  
232 0.017M Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and evaporated to dryness in a 95°C muffle oven for 24 hours. Vials were  
233 covered in aluminum foil and baked at 450°C for 2 hours, and then were baked with 5-ml 0.2 M  
234 HCl at 90°C for 30 minutes. Samples were diluted with 5-ml ultra-pure water and analyzed  
235 using the Skalar SAN+ system and compared to an Adenosine Triphosphate standard.

236 To confirm that corals across different tanks were grown under similar nutrient  
237 conditions, 20-ml samples from each husbandry tank were collected and stored at -20°C until  
238 analysis, when they were thawed and loaded into the Skalar SAN+ system's autosampler. The  
239 samples were analyzed for μM nitrate, nitrite, ammonia, and phosphate via continuous flow  
240 analysis and according to EPA standard techniques (EPA 1993a, EPA 1993b).

241

242 **DNA Sequencing:** A 2-ml aliquot of isolated symbiont cells were first pelleted (centrifugation at  
243 10000 rcf for 5 minutes) and then stored in 1-ml of DMSO buffer solution (Pettay et al., 2015) at  
244 4°C. DNA was extracted from each sample using the Wizard Genomic DNA Purification Kit  
245 (Promega). Quality of DNA samples were assessed on a 1.0 Nanodrop (Thermo Scientific) and  
246 all samples had 260/280 and 260/230 values above 1.5. For each sample, PCR was first  
247 performed targeting the internal transcribed spacer 2 (ITS2) region using the previously  
248 established primer pairs (ITSintfor2: 5'GAATTGCAGA ACTCCGTG-3', ITS2-reverse:  
249 5'GGGATCCATA TGCTTAAGTT CAGCGGGT-3') (LaJeunesse et al., 2002; Sheffield et al.,  
250 1989). Resulting amplicons were subjected to a second round of PCR (only 8 cycles) using the  
251 same primer pairs with adapter sequence (Forward- TCGTCGGCAGCGTCAGATGTGTATA  
252 AGAGACAGGAATTGCAGAACTCCGTG; Reverse-GTCTCGTGGCTCGGAGATGTGT

253 ATAAGAGACAGGGATCCATATGCTTAAGTTCAGCGGGT). Adapter sequences are  
254 underlined in the above primer sets. All PCR was achieved using Hot Start Taq DNA  
255 Polymerase (New England BioLabs, Inc) under the following settings: denaturation 94.0°C for  
256 30s, annealing 54.0°C for 35s, extension 68.0°C for 3min x 35 cycles (8 cycles in round two),  
257 final extension 68.0°C for 5 minutes. Samples were then purified using the GeneJET PCR  
258 Purification Kit (Thermo Scientific) and visualized on agar gels to confirm results. Amplicons  
259 were submitted to the University of Delaware Sequencing and Genotyping Center for library  
260 preparation and metagenomic sequencing. Amplicons were dual indexed using the Nextera  
261 system and were run as a single library using a paired-end 300 base pair x 2 strategy on an  
262 Illumina MiSeq system. Demultiplexed FASTQ sequences were then uploaded to SymPortal for  
263 profiling (Hume et al., 2019). Given known high variability in rDNA copy numbers across  
264 species and genera (LaJeunesse & Thornhill, 2011) which may hinder translation of data into  
265 accurate relative abundances (Davies et al., 2022), absolute abundance ITS2-type profiles were  
266 then normalized to rDNA copy numbers according to Saad et al., 2020.

267  
268 **Statistical Analyses:** All statistical analyses were conducted in R (version 4.1.3). Algal  
269 genotypes for each coral sample were derived from SymPortal-generated ITS2 profiles  
270 normalized to reflect relative abundance of each symbiont genera. Importantly, known  
271 differences in *Cladocopium* and *Durusdinium* ITS2 copy numbers was addressed by normalizing  
272 to previously derived rDNA copy ratios of 2119:362 (Saad et al., 2020). The dominant (> 70% of  
273 ITS2 sequences) symbiont type in each coral fragment (Fig. 2b) was then utilized to screen for  
274 photophysiological metrics that were significantly different across algal species using either a  
275 one-way ANOVA or Kruskal-Wallis test if data did not meet the assumptions of normality. The

276 resulting dataset was then transformed using Z-scores and then plotted as a heatmap (Fig. 2a)  
277 with individual coral colonies represented by each column, and photophysiological metrics  
278 across rows. A clustering analysis (1000 bootstrap iterations) was performed using the R  
279 packages pvclust (Suzuki & Shimodaira, 2006) and dendextend (Galili, 2015) to cluster  
280 individual coral samples by algal phenotype. Clustering analyses were also carried out on  
281 heatmap rows and resulting clusters were further analyzed using custom scripts to identify which  
282 photophysiological metrics were most important for separating our coral fragments into separate  
283 phenotypes.

284 Full actinic light profiles for identified photophysiological metrics (Fig. 2a) were plotted  
285 in Fig. 3 and a repeated measures linear mixed model with a tukey posthoc (with Bonferroni  
286 correction) identified significant differences across algal phenotypes (Supplemental Table 4)  
287 using the lmerTest (Kuznetsova et al., 2017) and multicomp (Hothorn et al., 2008) R packages.  
288 Spectrally-dependent differences within each photophysiological metric and algal phenotype  
289 were similarly assessed (Supplemental Table 3). Significant differences in cellular physiology  
290 (cell size, Granularity, Chl *a*, N:P, C:P, and C:N ratios) across phenotypes was also assessed. For  
291 each metric, normality was first determined (Shapiro-Wilks). If data were determined to be  
292 normal, a One Way ANOVA followed by a Tukey posthoc was performed. For data that did not  
293 meet the assumptions of normality, a Kruskal Wallace with Bonferroni correction was performed  
294 (Fig. 4).

295 A network analysis was employed to look for significant correlation between  
296 photophysiological metrics and primary cellular traits using averaged values across coral species  
297 replicates ( $3 \text{ species}^{-1}$ ). Only correlations with a Pearson value above 0.6 were utilized.

298 Using the igraph package (Csardi & Nepusz, 2006), specific correlations (Pearson's value of  
299 0.55 or above) between symbiont cellular metrics and fluorescence-based phenotyping data were  
300 identified and are displayed in Fig. 5.  
301

302 **Results:**

303 **Symbiont types:** Symportal analysis revealed that most corals were dominated by a single  
304 genotype (>70% relative abundance) of *Symbiodiniaceae*. *Acropora* (including *A. yongei*, *A.*  
305 *millepora*, *A. humilis*, *A. valida*, and unknown species) predominantly hosted either *C3* or *C21*  
306 symbiont types, while *Montipora* (including *M. capricornis* and *M. digitata*) hosted primarily  
307 *C15*, but sometimes *C26*, variants (Fig. 2b). The symbiont type *D1* was primarily observed in  
308 *Turbinaria*, *Psammacora*, and *Pocillopora*.

309

310 **Phenotype to genotype clustering and profiles:** Of the 1360 algal biometrics derived from the  
311 fluorescence-based excitation profile, 987 were found to be significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) different  
312 across the dominant symbiont species (*C1*, *C3*, *C15*, *C21*, *C26*, and *D1*, Table 1). These  
313 identified algal biometrics were then utilized to organize samples according to trait-based  
314 phenotypes (Fig. 2a), with the resulting dendrogram organized into four distinct phenotypes  
315 according to the largest clustering groups (Fig. 2a). Phenotype 1 contains 14 of the 15 *C15*-  
316 dominated coral colonies (*Montipora digitata* and *Montipora capricornis*), with both high and  
317 low-light acclimated fragments clustering together (Fig. 2). Two additional fragments of  
318 *Acropora* sp. (*C3*) were also found in phenotype 1. Phenotype 2 was predominantly (12 of 16  
319 fragments) comprised of *Durusdinium trenchii* (*D1*)-dominated corals (low-light *Turbinaria*  
320 *reniformis*, *Pocillopora damicornis*, and *Psammacora contigua*). The remaining four coral  
321 fragments in phenotype 2, were dominated by *Cladocodium C1* (in *Cyphastrea chalcidicum* or  
322 *Pavona cactus*). Coral fragments belonging to phenotype 3 were comprised of 3 *A. millepora*  
323 fragments (*C3*) and 5 fragments of high-light acclimated *Durusdinium D1*-dominated *Turbinaria*  
324 *reniformis*. Lastly, phenotype 4 was comprised of both high and low-light acclimated *A. humilis*

325 (C3) fragments, along with all *C21* dominated corals (*A. yongei* and *Acropora sp.*), all three  
326 fragments of *M. digitata* dominated by *C26*, two fragments of *P. cactus* (*C1*) and single *C15*-  
327 dominated (*M. digitata*) and *D1*-dominated (*T. reniformis* – high light acclimated) fragments. Of  
328 the 20 coral colonies represented in this study, only four contained fragments which did not all  
329 cluster within the same phenotype. Based on row clustering and custom scripts, quantum yield of  
330 PSII ( $\Phi_{\text{PSII}}$ ), functional absorption cross section of PSII ( $\sigma_{\text{PSII}}$ ), non-photochemical quenching  
331 (NPQ), photochemical quenching (qP), along with the reoxidation kinetics ( $\tau_1^{\text{ST}}$  and  $\tau_2^{\text{ST}}$ ) were  
332 determined to be the primary drivers for the observed phenotypic structure and were thus plotted  
333 in full detail (Fig. 3) for each of the four phenotypes described above.

334 A mixed linear model was utilized to identify spectrally dependent differences across  
335 phenotypes for the photo physiological metrics,  $\Phi_{\text{PSII}}$ ,  $\sigma_{\text{PSII}}$ , NPQ, qP,  $\tau_1^{\text{ST}}$ , and  $\tau_2^{\text{ST}}$  reoxidation  
336 kinetics (Fig. 3 and Supplemental Table 4). For all excitation wavelengths except 420nm,  
337 phenotype 1 had significantly ( $p < 0.0159$ ) lower  $\Phi_{\text{PSII}}$  values compared to all other phenotypes.  
338 Under 420nm excitation,  $\Phi_{\text{PSII}}$  profiles for phenotype 1 were significantly ( $p < 0.0001$ ) lower  
339 than phenotypes 2 and 4, but not phenotype 3. Additionally,  $\Phi_{\text{PSII}}$  profiles for phenotype 3 were  
340 also significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) lower than phenotype 2 but only under 420nm and 442nm  
341 excitation whereas phenotype 3 different significantly ( $p < 0.043$ ) from phenotype 4 under all  
342 excitation wavelengths except 525nm. No differences across phenotypes were observed for  $\sigma_{\text{PSII}}$   
343 under any excitation wavelength and indicate that subtle differences may only exist when  
344 comparing across specific symbiont species (not phenotypes). Under all excitation wavelengths,  
345 nonphotochemical quenching profiles reached the highest values in phenotype 1 whereas  
346 relatively small changes were observed in phenotype 2. For phenotypes 3 and 4, NPQ values did  
347 not differ significantly from one another but represent a medium level that is significantly ( $p <$

348 0.001) different from phenotypes 1 and 2. Photochemical quenching (qP) profiles observed in  
349 phenotypes 1 and 3 differed significantly ( $p < 0.003$ ) from those in phenotype 2 and 4 under all  
350 excitation wavelengths. Differences in  $\tau_1^{ST}$  were more sporadic across phenotypes as profiles  
351 under 420nm excitation differed significantly ( $p = 0.001$ ) between phenotypes 1 and 2. Under  
352 442nm excitation,  $\tau_1^{ST}$  profiles for phenotype 1 were significantly ( $p < 0.011$ ) different from  
353 those observed for phenotype 2 and 3. For  $\tau_1^{ST}$  profiles measured under 505nm excitation,  
354 phenotype 1 was significantly ( $p < 0.021$ ) different from all others, while phenotypes 3 and 4  
355 were also differed ( $p < 0.027$ ) from one another. Lastly,  $\tau_2^{ST}$  profiles for phenotype 1 had  
356 significantly ( $p < 0.002$ ) slower (higher time constants) kinetics than those observed for all other  
357 phenotypes under all excitation wavelengths except 420nm. Under 420nm excitation,  $\tau_2^{ST}$   
358 profiles for phenotypes 1 and 3 were only significantly ( $p < 0.002$ ) elevated over those found in  
359 phenotypes 2 and 4.

360 A mixed linear model was also utilized to compare spectrally dependent photo-  
361 physiological profiles within each phenotype (Fig. 3 and Supplemental Table 3). For Phenotype  
362 1,  $\Phi_{PSII}^{420}$ ,  $\Phi_{PSII}^{442}$  and  $\Phi_{PSII}^{505}$  profiles were significantly ( $p < 0.004$ ) higher than  $\Phi_{PSII}^{458}$  and  
363  $\Phi_{PSII}^{525}$ . For phenotype 2,  $\Phi_{PSII}^{420}$ ,  $\Phi_{PSII}^{458}$ , and  $\Phi_{PSII}^{525}$  profiles were lower ( $p < 0.005$ ) than  
364  $\Phi_{PSII}^{442}$  and  $\Phi_{PSII}^{505}$ . For phenotype 3,  $\Phi_{PSII}^{420}$  appeared to be significantly ( $p < 0.006$ ) lower than  
365 all other profiles whereas  $\Phi_{PSII}^{505}$  was significantly ( $p < 0.007$ ) higher than the rest. For  
366 phenotype 4,  $\Phi_{PSII}^{420}$  and  $\Phi_{PSII}^{458}$  profiles were on average lower ( $p < 0.029$ ) than  $\Phi_{PSII}^{442}$  and  
367  $\Phi_{PSII}^{505}$  profiles. For all four phenotypes, spectrally dependent  $\sigma_{PSII}$  differed significantly ( $p <$   
368 0.021) from one another with  $\sigma_{PSII}^{420}$  showing the highest and  $\sigma_{PSII}^{525}$  the lowest values overall.  
369 Interestingly, and in contrast to that observed for  $\sigma_{PSII}$ , no spectrally dependent differences in qP  
370 were observed within any phenotype. NPQ<sup>420</sup> and NPQ<sup>442</sup> displayed significantly ( $p < 0.0001$ )

371 higher values as compared to  $NPQ^{458}$ ,  $NPQ^{505}$ , and  $NPQ^{525}$  profiles within phenotype 1. For  
372 phenotype 2,  $NPQ^{458}$  profiles were similar to  $NPQ^{442}$  and  $NPQ^{505}$  whereas all others differed  
373 significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) from one another, as  $NPQ^{420}$  values tended to be slightly higher than the  
374 rest. For phenotypes 3 and 4, the  $NPQ^{420}$  profile generated significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) higher values  
375 whereas  $NPQ^{505}$  values were significantly ( $p < 0.034$ ) lower than all others. All  $\tau_1^{ST}$  profiles for  
376 phenotypes 2 and 3 displayed significantly different responses from one another whereas  $\tau_1^{505}$   
377 and  $\tau_1^{525}$  were similar to one another within phenotypes 1 and 4. Overall,  $\tau_1^{420}$  and  $\tau_1^{442}$  produces  
378 slower reoxidation kinetics as compared to  $\tau_1^{458}$ ,  $\tau_1^{505}$ , and  $\tau_1^{525}$ . Lastly,  $\tau_2^{420}$  and  $\tau_2^{442}$  values  
379 were significantly lower than all others in phenotypes 1 and 2. For phenotype 3,  $\tau_2^{442}$  and  $\tau_2^{505}$   
380 produced significantly ( $p < 0.004$ ) lower values than  $\tau_2^{420}$ ,  $\tau_2^{458}$ , and  $\tau_2^{425}$ . In contrast,  $\tau_2^{420}$ ,  $\tau_2^{442}$   
381 and  $\tau_2^{505}$  profiles produced significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) lower values than those observed for  $\tau_2^{458}$ ,  
382 and  $\tau_2^{525}$ .

383 Underlying differences in cellular physiology were also compared across the 4  
384 fluorescence-based phenotypes (Fig. 4). Cell size (FSC) was significantly ( $p < 0.002$ ) higher in  
385 phenotype 2 as compared with phenotypes 1 and 4 (Fig. 4a). Granularity (SSC) was significantly  
386 ( $p < 0.008$ ) higher in phenotypes 2 and 4 as compared to phenotypes 1 and 3 and may indicate  
387 differences in light scattering abilities across groups (Fig. 4b). Fluorescence-based chlorophyll-*a*  
388 measurements were significantly ( $p < 0.025$ ) lower in phenotype 2 as compared with phenotypes  
389 1 and 4 (Fig. 4c). N:P and C:P ratios were significantly ( $p < 0.004$ ) higher in phenotype 1 as  
390 compared with phenotypes 2 and 4 (Fig. 4d-e).

391  
392 **Network analysis and Correlation Plots:** In order to look for broad connections between  
393 primary (cellular) and secondary (photophysiological) traits, a network analysis (Fig. 5) was used

394 to search for significant correlation between each of the 1360 fluorescence-based measurements  
395 and traditional cellular characteristics (Carbon per cell, Nitrogen per cell, Phosphate per cell,  
396 C:N ratio, N:P ratio, Cell Size, Chlorophyll-*a* (FSC), Granularity (SSC), and neutral lipids). Our  
397 analysis identified 415 correlations having a significant Pearson value of 0.6 or above. The  
398 cellular metrics N:P, C:P, and SSC displayed the greatest number of significant correlations  
399 (269, 63, and 70 respectively). For N:P ratios, the majority of positive correlations were with  $\tau_s^{ST}$   
400 measurements, while most negative correlations were with  $\Phi_{PSII}$  values. For C:P ratios, most  
401 correlations occurred with NPQ or qP values while SSC correlated more broadly with various  
402 metrics including  $\Phi_{PSII}$ ,  $\tau_s^{ST}$ , qP and connectivity. A select number of these cellular to photo-  
403 physiological correlations are displayed in full detail in Fig. 6.

404 **Discussion:**

405 Molecular and physiological techniques are commonly utilized by the coral research community

406 to better understand what underpins genetic diversity and the broad range of environmental

407 tolerances observed within the *Symbiodiniaceae* family. While the two *Symbiodiniaceae* genera

408 *Cladocopium* and *Durusdinum* are separated by over 100 million years of evolutionary history

409 (LaJeunesse et al., 2018), fluorescence-based phenotypes from our analysis did not entirely

410 converge across these broad genetic designations spread across our 12 coral colonies reared

411 under high and low light conditions (Fig. 1). For example, phenotypes 2 and 3 are comprised of

412 corals with both symbiont genera, indicating high functional trait similarity despite large genetic

413 differences (Fig. 2a). In contrast, greater phenotypic disparity is noted across some of the five

414 *Cladocopium* species in this study and may reflect the relatively high genetic diversity observed

415 in this genera as compared to others (Thornhill et al., 2014; LaJeunesse et al., 2018).

416 Nevertheless, the degree of phenotype to genotype convergence observed within our heatmap

417 analysis is notable, especially within the context of potentially contributing sources of functional

418 trait disparity such as host species and light environment. High content chlorophyll-*a*

419 fluorescence-based phenotyping is already proving useful for understanding functional trait

420 differences and their application to ecosystem services (Suggett et al., 2022, Hoadley et al.,

421 2023), and this study further showcases the technique's utility even across environmental light

422 gradients while also providing direct links with underlying cellular physiology which likely

423 regulate the observed photo physiological traits.

424

425 **'High content' chlorophyl-*a* based phenotypes:** Light acclimation state can mask species-

426 specific differences in certain physiological metrics, as higher irradiances often lead to

427 upregulation of stress-mitigating pathways (Ragni et al., 2010) and a reduction in photopigment  
428 production (Hoadley & Warner, 2017). This has traditionally made it difficult to capture  
429 species-specific trait-based differences without first accounting for light acclimation state.  
430 However, differences in the degree of impact that light acclimation state has on photophysiology  
431 may be largely species dependent, as high- and low-light acclimated fragments of *Cladocopium*  
432 *C15* and *C1* (in *A. humilis*) all clustered within genotypes 1 and 4 respectively, indicating  
433 minimal impact of light acclimation state on the overall photophysiological phenotype derived  
434 through our ‘high content’ chlorophyll-*a* fluorescence protocol (Fig. 2). In contrast, high- and  
435 low-light acclimated *T. reniformis* coral fragments containing *Durusdinium D1* symbionts  
436 clustered into separate phenotypes, as did two of the low-light acclimated *C3*-dominated  
437 *Acropora humilis* coral fragments (Fig. 2). Suggett et al., 2022 also noted that the variance in  
438 light acclimation state (light niche plasticity) differed across three different species of coral  
439 found along the same reef system and at a similar depth. Understanding how various  
440 environmental factors constrain individual coral and symbiont species combinations and their  
441 underlying phenotypes will become increasingly important, especially as trait-based approaches  
442 are further applied toward coral restoration and conservation practices (Voolstra et al., 2021a).

443 While the degree of thermal tolerance can vary across specific host/symbiont  
444 combinations (Suggett et al., 2017), comparatively high bleaching resistance in *Durusdinium D1*  
445 and *Cladocopium C15* has been a focal point of coral research (Voolstra et al., 2021b). Whether  
446 bleaching resistance is derived through similar functional traits or if mechanisms of thermal  
447 tolerance differ across the two species is currently unknown. Coral endosymbiont thermal  
448 tolerance is often linked to photochemistry (Fitt et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2012; Warner et al.,  
449 1999), yet phenotypes differed across *Cladocopium C15* and *Durusdinium D1* dominated coral

450 fragments in this study (Fig.s 2-3), suggesting differences in their photosynthetic poise. For  
451 example, higher reliance on non-photochemical quenching (NPQ) in response to rapid changes  
452 in light is noted for the *Cladocopium C15*-dominated phenotype (phenotype 1 – Fig. 3i) whereas  
453 *Durusdinum D1* symbionts from phenotype 2 and 3 relied more heavily on photochemical  
454 quenching to mitigate excess excitation energy as a larger proportion of PSII reaction centers  
455 remain closed throughout the actinic light protocol (Fig. 3n-o). Reoxidation kinetics between the  
456 *C15* and *D1* phenotypes also differed as phenotype 1 had lower  $\tau_1^{\text{ST}}$  values than phenotype 2  
457 (under 420, 442, and 505nm excitation) or 3 (under 442, 458, 505, and 525nm excitation) and  
458 indicate faster rates of electron transport between the  $Q_a$  and  $Q_b$  sites within the PSII reaction  
459 centers of *Cladocopium C15* symbionts (Fig. 3q-s). Interestingly, faster  $\tau_1^{\text{ST}}$  kinetics for C15  
460 were coupled with much slower  $\tau_2^{\text{ST}}$  rates as compared to other phenotypes (Fig. 3u-w).  
461 Importantly,  $\tau_2^{\text{ST}}$  values are derived from a 2 exponential equation fit model and thus do not  
462 necessarily reflect a specific rate constant (Hoadley et al., 2023), the higher values likely indicate  
463 slower rates of electron transport within and downstream of the plastoquinone pool. Alternative  
464 electron sinks or cyclic electron transport can play an important role in coping with excess  
465 excitation energy (Roberty et al., 2014; Vega de Luna et al., 2020) and differences in their utility  
466 across symbiont species may help drive the different reoxidation profiles observed here. Overall,  
467 stark contrasts in how each species copes with light energy during rapid changes in light are  
468 perhaps not surprising given the > 100 million years of evolutionary history that separate the two  
469 species (LaJeunesse et al., 2018). How and if these different functional traits drive unique  
470 thermal acclimation strategies will need to be the focus of a future study.

471 Use of multiple LED colors to excite chlorophyll-*a* fluorescence allows for potential  
472 differences in photopigment utilization to be incorporated into our phenomic analysis. For

473 example, spectrally-dependent variance in NPQ responses may point towards differences in how  
474 photopigments are utilized to cope with excess excitation energy within phenotypes 1 and 3 (Fig.  
475 3i, k). In contrast, phenotype 2 displayed much lower levels of NPQ in response to changes in  
476 actinic light, and little spectral variance in its profile (Fig. 3j). Non-photochemical quenching  
477 broadly encompasses various mechanisms utilized by photosynthetic organisms to dissipate  
478 harmful excess excitation energy absorbed by light harvesting antennae (Lacour et al., 2020). For  
479 many eukaryotic photoautotrophic taxa, the xanthophyll cycle (XC) is a major energy dissipation  
480 mechanism regulating observed changes in NPQ. While XC is not always involved in NPQ  
481 regulation, and its role in the family *Symbiodiniaceae* is not fully resolved, excess light energy is  
482 dissipated as heat through the inter-conversion of the photopigments (zeaxanthin to violaxanthin)  
483 or (diadinoxanthin to diatoxanthin). The sum of these various photopigments are collectively  
484 known as the xanthophyll pool, and higher concentrations are often associated with acclimation  
485 to high light (Lacour et al., 2020; Schuback et al., 2021). Importantly, these different  
486 photopigments have unique absorption spectra which may be preferentially excited by our  
487 multispectral analysis. For example, absorption spectra for extracted zeaxanthin and violaxanthin  
488 pigments indicate that both absorb light from 420nm, 442nm, and 458nm excitation, but longer  
489 wavelength excitation (505nm and 525nm) may not be as readily absorbed by violaxanthin  
490 (Ruban et al., 2001). The spectrally-dependent variance in NPQ response observed for  
491 phenotypes 1 and 3 (Fig. 3i-k) may potentially reflect differences in the relative abundance and  
492 utilization of various xanthophyll pigments. While additional research is needed, such a  
493 connection between XC pigment pool/utilization and excitation wavelength could provide an  
494 additional dimension for understanding NPQ responses and how they might differ across species  
495 and environmental conditions.

496 Significant spectrally-dependent variability is also notable within the  $\tau_1^{\text{ST}}$  and  $\tau_2^{\text{ST}}$   
497 reoxidation kinetics. These time constants reflect the rate of electron transport between the Qa  
498 and Qb site of the PSII reaction center ( $\tau_1^{\text{ST}}$ ) and further downstream kinetics involving the PQ  
499 pool ( $\tau_2^{\text{ST}}$ ) and further downstream electron transport. Previous work has indeed demonstrated  
500 the utility of  $\tau_1^{\text{ST}}$  for characterizing light or thermal acclimation state in reef corals (Suggett et  
501 al., 2022; Hoadley et al., 2019, Hoadley et al., 2023) or productivity rates in marine algae  
502 (Gorbunov & Falkowski, 2020). Values from  $\tau_2^{\text{ST}}$  are less well understood yet the clear structure  
503 observed in our profiles suggest this metric is indeed useful for assessing trait-based differences  
504 across species and/or environmental conditions.

505

506 ***Linking primary cellular traits with photophysiology:*** Underlying *Symbiodiniaceae* cellular  
507 physiology differed significantly across the four phenotypes derived from chlorophyll-*a*  
508 fluorescence-based measurements. Linking underlying cellular physiology with more easily  
509 measured secondary traits such as photo physiology is critical for broadening the utility of  
510 multispectral and single-turnover chlorophyll-*a* fluorometers. These non-invasive, optical tools  
511 could serve as highly informative platforms for monitoring health and resilience of  
512 photosynthetic organisms, including reef corals (Suggett et al., 2022). Cellular traits, such as  
513 granularity which broadly measures the light scattering properties of a cell, were significantly  
514 higher in phenotypes 1 and 3 and may serve to deflect excess excitation energy. Reductions in  
515 photochemical quenching are more quickly relaxed in phenotypes 1 and 3 and higher granularity  
516 may serve to mitigate rapid shifts in light, functioning to reflect excess excitation energy away  
517 from the cell and reducing reliance on downstream processes such as closing PSII reaction  
518 centers in response to high light (qP, Fig. 3n, p). In contrast, large cell size and lower chlorophyll

519 content cell<sup>-1</sup> for phenotype 2 could reduce the package effect within these symbionts, thereby  
520 reducing overall reliance on NPQ (Fig. 3j) as less light is captured by each individual cell.  
521 Indeed, cellular characteristics may help explain the photo physiological strategies employed by  
522 each phenotype, and further correlative analysis between primary and secondary traits is  
523 warranted.

524 As chlorophyll-*a* fluorescence-based measurements are increasingly utilized for  
525 understanding photosynthetic poise and the utilization of stress response mechanisms by coral  
526 photosymbionts, identifying direct linkages between photo physiology and ecosystem services or  
527 underlying cellular traits are needed (Suggett et al., 2017). Our network analysis identified key  
528 correlations between basic cellular traits and photo physiological parameters across 20 different  
529 coral/symbiont combinations (Fig. 5). Certain chlorophyll-*a* fluorescence-derived  
530 photophysiological parameters may serve as useful biomarkers for some primary cellular traits,  
531 especially when properly contextualized within specific environmental and/or acclimatory  
532 conditions. For example, N:P ratios are inversely correlated to quantum yield of PSII  
533 measurements and directly correlated with  $\tau_2^{\text{ST}}$  reoxidation kinetics suggesting that phosphorous  
534 limited cells downregulate photochemical activity. Specifically, reductions in the quantum yield  
535 of PSII indicate reduced efficiency of light utilization for photochemistry whereas increases in  
536  $\tau_2^{\text{ST}}$  reflect slower rates of electron transport, both of which appear to occur as N:P ratios rise.  
537 From a genotype perspective, both cell size and C:P differ significantly across the predominantly  
538 *Cladocopium C15* and predominantly *Durusdinium D1* phenotypes (phenotypes 1 and 2  
539 respectively, Fig. 4a, e; Fig. 6a, c). These genotype level differences in cellular physiology may  
540 also be reflected in the reoxidation kinetics values where *Durusdinium D1* (phenotype 2) appears  
541 to have slower (higher rate constant) light acclimated  $\tau_1^{\text{ST}}$  (Fig. 3q, r) yet faster (lower rate

542 constant)  $\tau_2^{\text{ST}}$  (Fig. 3u, v) reoxidation rates than those for *Cladocopium C15* (Fig. 6d). Linking  
543 both primary and secondary trait differences, especially across species known for their thermal  
544 tolerance, can be valuable for understanding what function traits are important for establishing  
545 resilient coral symbioses.

546 Carbon to phosphorous ratios also appear to be correlated with various photochemical  
547 metrics, most notably photochemical and non-photochemical quenching mechanisms which  
548 function to balance light utilization within the cell. Phosphorous limitation thus appears well  
549 linked to photochemical metrics, potentially regulating gene expression along with cell  
550 ultrastructure (Rosset et al., 2017; Ferrier-Pagès et al., 2016; Lin et al., 2019). Granularity is also  
551 linked with many different photochemical metrics which is perhaps not surprising given the  
552 strong phenotype differences observed for this cellular trait (Fig. 4). Overall, the strong linkages  
553 observed in our network analysis help strengthen our understanding of how differences in  
554 cellular traits across Symbiodiniaceae species regulate chlorophyll-*a* fluorescence-based  
555 phenotypes.

556

557 **Conclusions:** The trends in this study further emphasize the utility of using photo-  
558 physiologically derived biomarkers across a variable light protocol to elicit different phenotypic  
559 responses in coral photosymbionts. Through the collection and analysis of large-scale  
560 chlorophyll fluorescence data sets, it is possible to resolve differences across *in hospite* coral  
561 symbionts for some species, regardless of growth environment. Further, by identifying  
562 correlations between critical first-order cellular traits and second-order photo physiological  
563 measurements, we can gain insight regarding how cellular mechanisms and characteristics affect  
564 algal photosynthesis under environmental stress. Implementation of low-cost, open-sourced

565 methods of fluorescence measurement in coral restoration facilities may allow for quick  
566 determination of endosymbiont characteristics and better identification of the traits which  
567 underly thermal tolerance.

568

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570 S.W., L.L., and K.H conducted fieldwork, and analyzed data. T.M maintained the coral in  
571 healthy and stable conditions prior to and during our experiment. A.M and K.H wrote the  
572 manuscript. All authors provided feedback on the manuscript. A.M. and K.D.H agree to serve as  
573 corresponding authors, responsible for contact and communication.

574

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577

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580

581 **Data Availability:** All data needed to evaluate the conclusions in the paper are present in the  
582 paper and/or the Supplementary Materials. Pending scientific review, raw data and analytical  
583 scripts for Fig.s 2 - 5 will be available via github ([khoadley/coral\\_phenotypes\\_2023](https://github.com/khoadley/coral_phenotypes_2023)).

584 **Figure Legends:**

585

586 **Figure 1 – Coral images, light environments, and dominant symbiont types.** Panels a-t show  
587 the 12 coral species with 1-3 variants per species, separated by growth environment (Outdoor  
588 grown corals on the left and indoor grown corals on the right). Dominant symbiont type found  
589 for each coral is included in the top left of each panel, along with corresponding colored symbols  
590 (circles and triangles) which are utilized throughout the remaining figures to identify symbiont  
591 type. All photos taken by Audrey McQuagge.

592 **Figure 2 –Heat map with dendrogram and relative abundance bar graphs.** The heatmap (a)  
593 analysis reflects a total of 987 photophysiological biometrics which were found to differ  
594 significantly across symbiont types. Dominant photo-physiological metrics within each of the  
595 four identified row clusters are displayed on the right of the heatmap. The colored dendrogram  
596 above the heat reflects 4 distinct phenotypes with resulting bootstrap support indicated at each  
597 major branch. The larger bar graph directly below the heat map (b) represents the relative  
598 abundance of symbionts within each coral sample whereas the second (c) and third (d) bar  
599 graphs represent host coral genera and coral growth environment (indoors or outdoors)  
600 respectively. Capital letters underneath the bar graphs represent the coral species listed under the  
601 various panels in Fig. 1. Letters that are in bold indicate that all three fragments for that coral  
602 colony are found in the same phenotype.

603

604 **Figure 3 – Profiles for photophysiological biometrics driving variability across phenotypes.**  
605 Average ( $\pm$  standard error) traces for photo-physiological metrics identified in Fig. 2 as  
606 contributing significantly towards establishing the four phenotypes across our coral colonies.  
607 Phenotypes 1-4 are displayed from left to right. Panels **a-d** reflect the Quantum Yield of PSII  
608 ( $\Phi_{PSII}$ ), **e-h** reflect the absorption cross-section of PSII ( $\sigma_{PSII}$ ), **i-l** reflect non-photochemical  
609 quenching (NPQ), **m-p** reflect photochemical quenching (qP), **q-t** and **u-x** reflect the reoxidation  
610 constants  $\tau_1^{ST}$  and  $\tau_2^{ST}$  respectively. Line color indicates excitation wavelength with purple  
611 representing 420-nm; dark blue, 442-nm; light blue, 458-nm; teal blue, 505-nm, and green, 525-  
612 nm. The grey line on panels a-d displays the variable light protocol. Bonferroni-adjusted p-  
613 values for comparisons across excitation wavelength and phenotype can be found in  
614 Supplemental Tables 3 and 4.

615

616 **Figure 4 – Differences in cellular physiology across phenotypes.** Differences in the  
617 underlying symbiont cellular physiology was compared across our four photo-physiologically  
618 derived phenotypes. Flow cytometrically derived cell size (**a**) granularity (**b**), chlorophyll-*a*  
619 fluorescence (**c**), Nitrogen to phosphorous (**d**), Carbon to phosphorous (**e**), and Carbon to  
620 nitrogen (**f**) ratios are represented as the mean ( $\pm$  standard error) for each phenotype. Different  
621 letters above the bars in each panel reflect significant differences (Tukey posthoc) across  
622 phenotypes.

623

624

625

626

627 **Figure 5 – Network analysis between cellular and photophysiological traits.** The network  
628 analysis only reflects significant correlations between first (cellular) and second (photo-  
629 physiological) order traits. Cellular traits are indicated by numbered grey vertices, **1** = cell size, **2**  
630 = C:N, **3** = C:P, **4** = N:P, **5** = Granularity, **6** = Chl *a*. Line thickness corresponds to the strength  
631 of the correlation (between 0.6 and 0.9 Pearson R values), with thicker lines representing traits  
632 that are more highly correlated. Positive correlations are indicated by black lines, while negative  
633 correlations are indicated by orange lines. Colored circles reflect the various photophysiological  
634 variables with strong (> 0.6 Pearson R) correlation to underlying cellular metrics.  
635  
636

637 **Figure 6 – Correlation plots between symbiont cellular and photophysiological parameters.**  
638 **Five correlations between** cellular and photo-physiological traits with high Pearson  $R^2$  values  
639 are displayed in panels (a) ABQ vs. Cell size, (b) Connectivity vs. C:N ratio, (c) qP vs. C:P ratio,  
640 (d)  $\tau_2^{ST}$  vs. N:P ratio, and (e)  $\Phi_{PSII}$  vs. Granularity. Point shapes indicate coral growth  
641 environment (triangles: outdoor, circles: indoor) while point color indicates ITS2 symbiont type.  
642

643 **Table 1:** Coral hosts, growth environments, and relative abundances of ITS2 symbiont types  
 644 determined through SymPortal.

Coral Host	Growth Environment	Dominant Symbiont Type (full ITS2 Name)	Rel. Abundance	Secondary Symbiont Type (Full ITS2 Name)	Rel. Abundance
<i>A. humilis</i> var 1	Outdoor	C3k/C3-C50a-C3dq-C50f-C3ba-C3a	1.00		
<i>A. millepora</i>	Outdoor	C3/C3u-C115-C21ab-C3ge	1.00		
<i>Acropora</i> sp.	Outdoor	C21-C3-C21ag-C21af	1.00		
<i>A. valida</i>	Outdoor	C3z-C3-C3.10-C115-C3an	0.98	C21	0.02
<i>A. yongei</i>	Outdoor	C21-C21ag-C3-C21as	1.00		
<i>C.chalcidium</i>	Outdoor	C1/C3-C1c-C1b-C42.2-C1bh-C1br	1.00		
<i>M.capricornis</i> var 1	Outdoor	C26A-C21	0.98	C1	0.02
<i>M.capricornis</i> var 2	Outdoor	C15-C15he-C15ed-C15cq-C15vl	1.00		
<i>M.capricornis</i> var 3	Outdoor	C15-C15he-C15ed-C15cq-C15vl	1.00		
<i>M.digitata</i>	Outdoor	C15/C15gb-C15vk	1.00		
<i>P. cactus</i>	Outdoor	C1b/C1/C1mm-C3-C1u-C1dg	1.00		
<i>P. contigua</i>	Outdoor	D1-D4-D4c-D1h	0.98	C1ec/C1-C1b-C3	0.02
<i>P. damicornis</i> var 1	Outdoor	D1/D6-D1h-D1kg-D1ke-D1kf-D1kh	0.98	C1d/C1/C42.2/C3-C1b-C3cg-C45c-C115k-C1au-C41p	0.02
<i>P. damicornis</i> var 2	Outdoor	D1/D6-D1h-D1kg-D1ke-D1kf-D1kh	0.84	C1d/C1/C42.2/C3-C1b-C3cg-C45c-C115k-C1au-C41p	0.16
<i>T. reniformis</i> var 1	Outdoor	D1-D4-D1ki-D1c	1.00		
<i>T. reniformis</i> var 2	Outdoor	D1-D4-D4c-D1c-D2-D1k	0.99	C3z-C3-C3.10-C115-C3an	0.01
<i>A. humilis</i> var 2	Indoor	C3k/C3-C50a-C21ab-C50f-C3ba-C3dq	0.97	C1/C1c	0.03
<i>M.capricornis</i> var 2	Indoor	C15-C15he-C15ed-C15cq-C15vl	0.95	D1/D6-D1h-D1kg-D1ke-D1kf-D1kh	0.05
<i>M.capricornis</i> var 3	Indoor	C15-C15he-C15ed-C15cq-C15vl	0.98	D1/D6-D1h-D1kg-D1ke-D1kf-D1kh	0.02
<i>T. reniformis</i> var 2	Indoor	D1-D4-D1ki-D1c	0.97	C1/C21/C3-C1b-C1c-C42.2-C1bh	0.03

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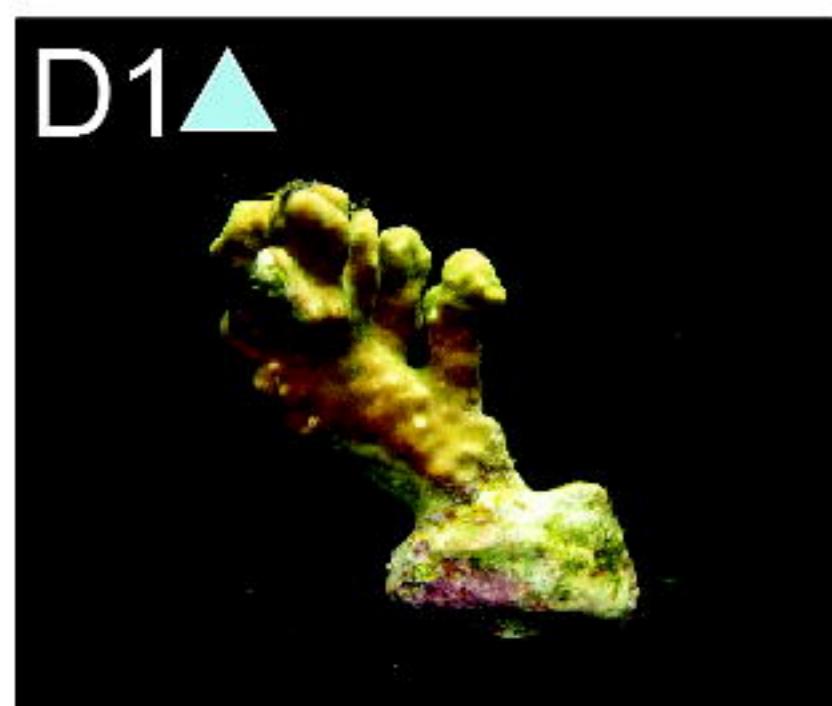
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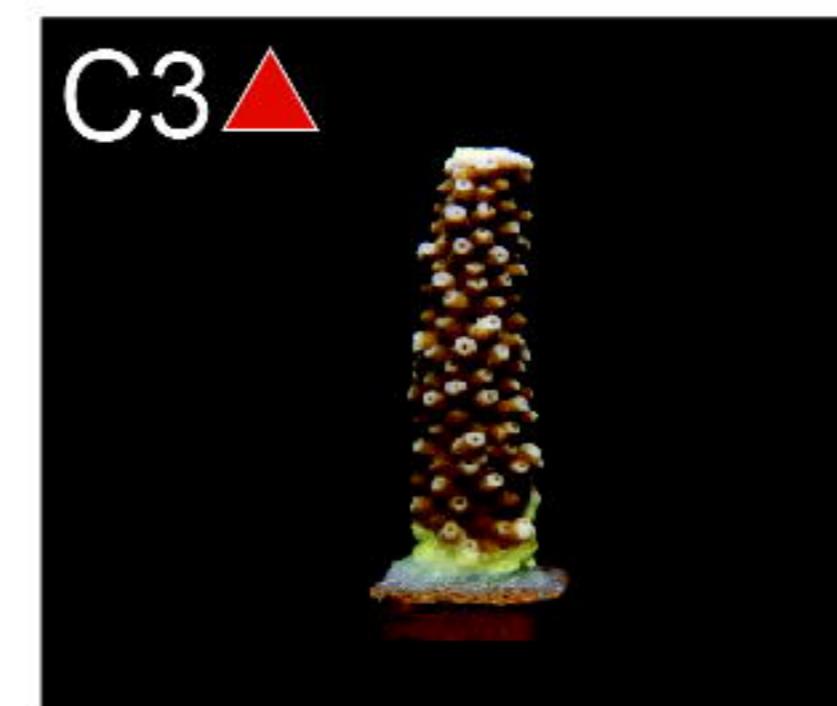
# Outdoor



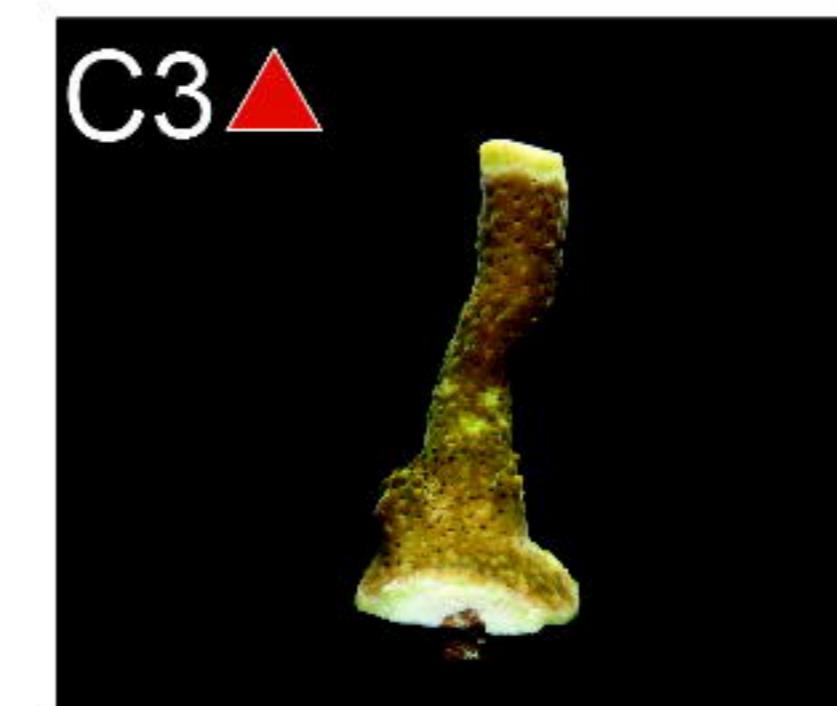
A. *P. contigua*



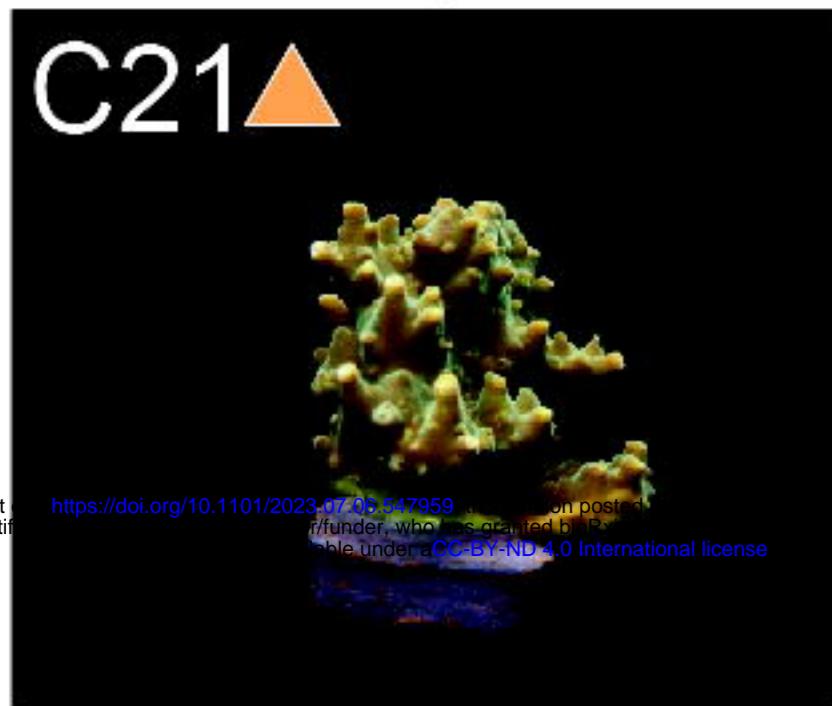
B. *A. yongei*



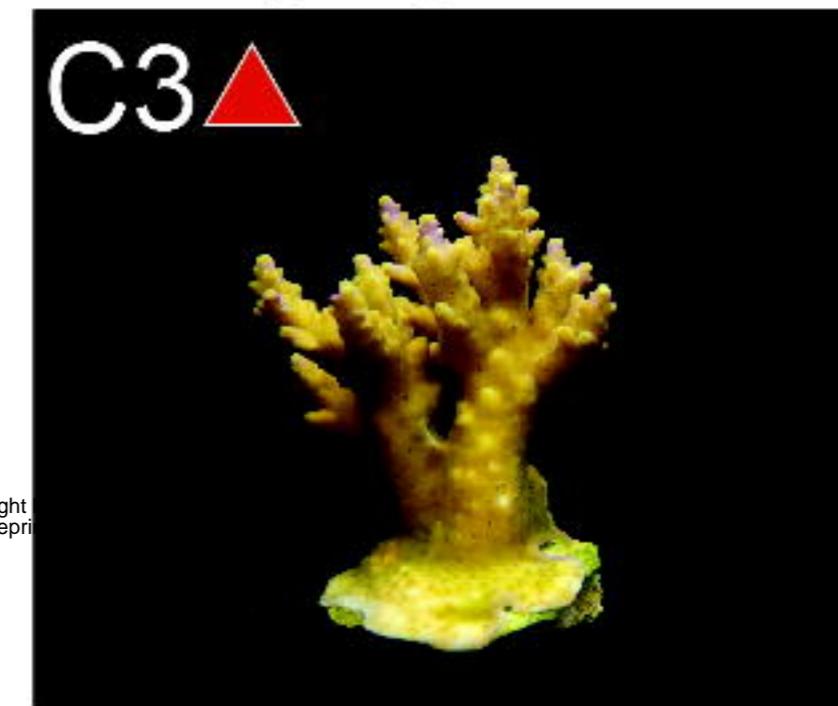
C. *A. millepora*



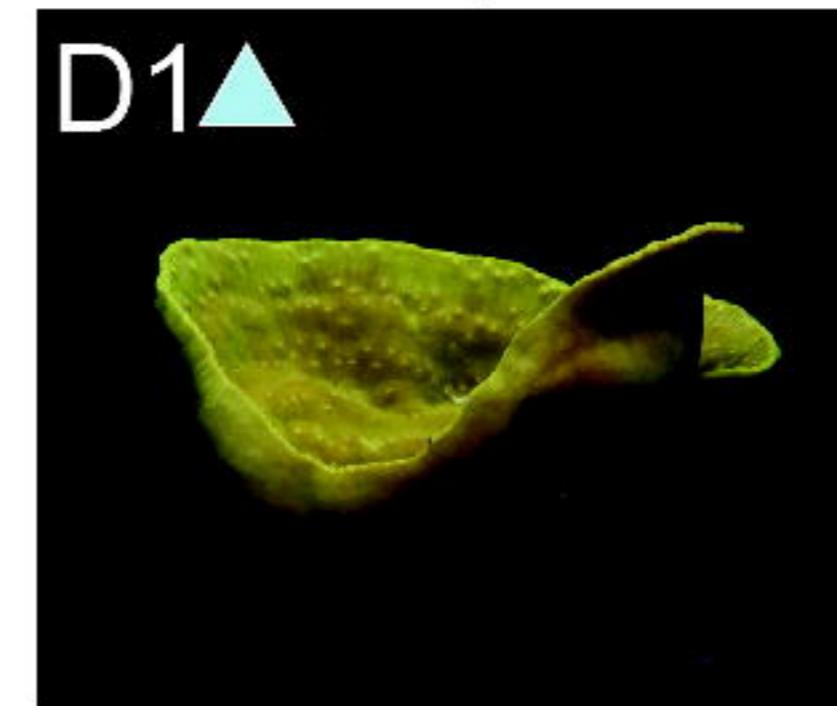
D. *A. humilis* var. 1



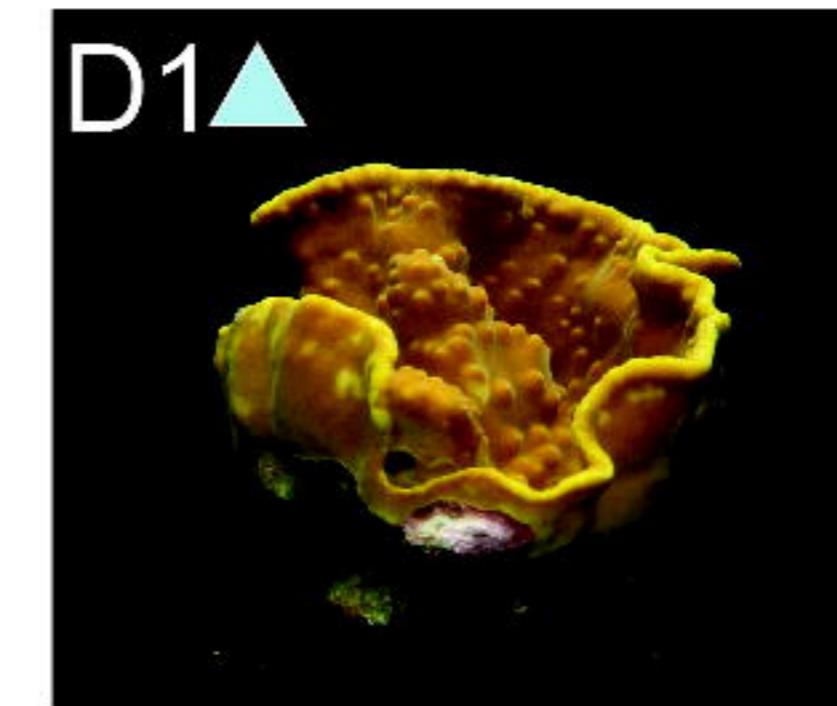
E. *Acropora* species



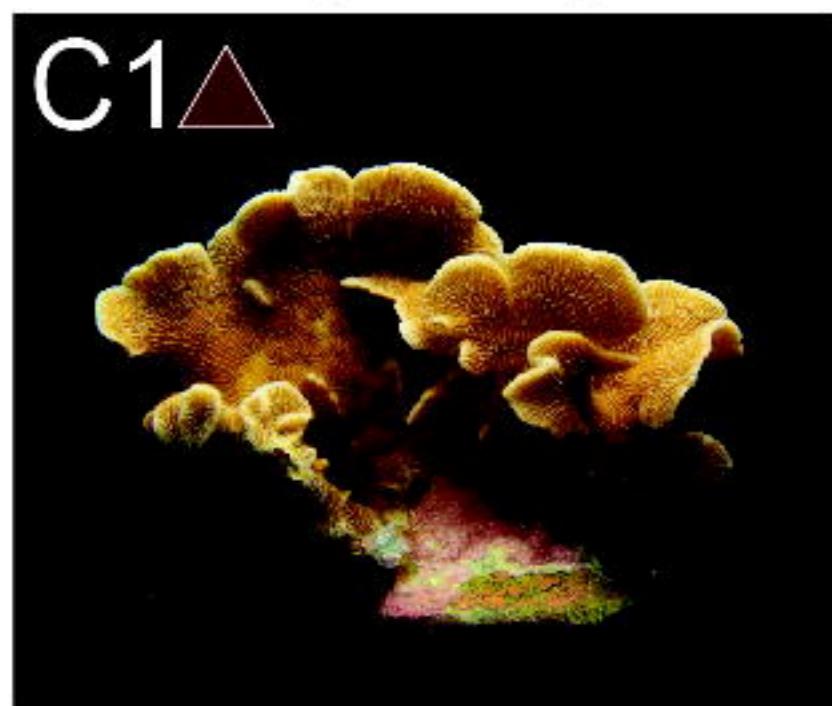
F. *A. valida*



G. *T. reniformis* var. 1



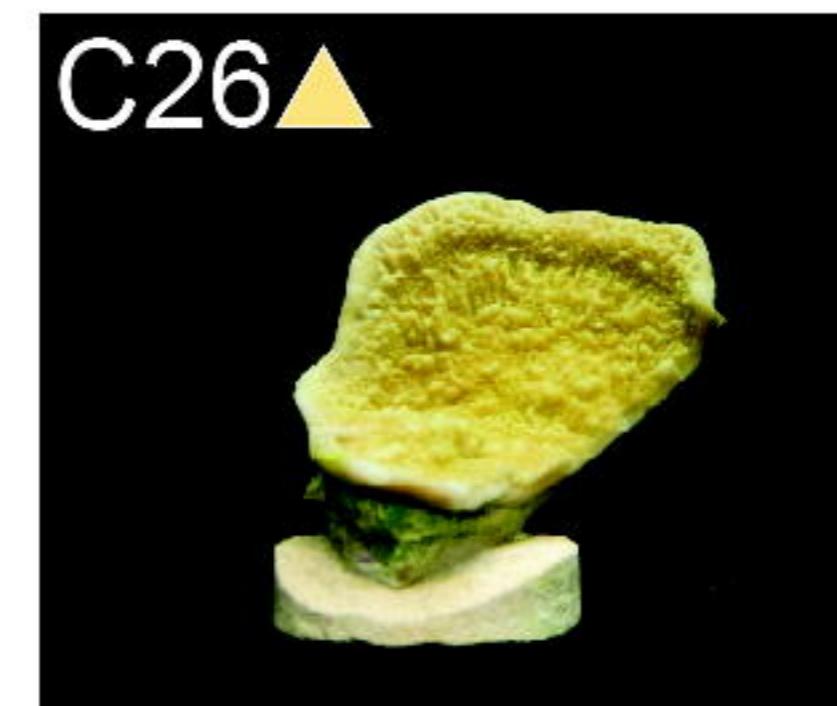
H. *T. reniformis* var. 2



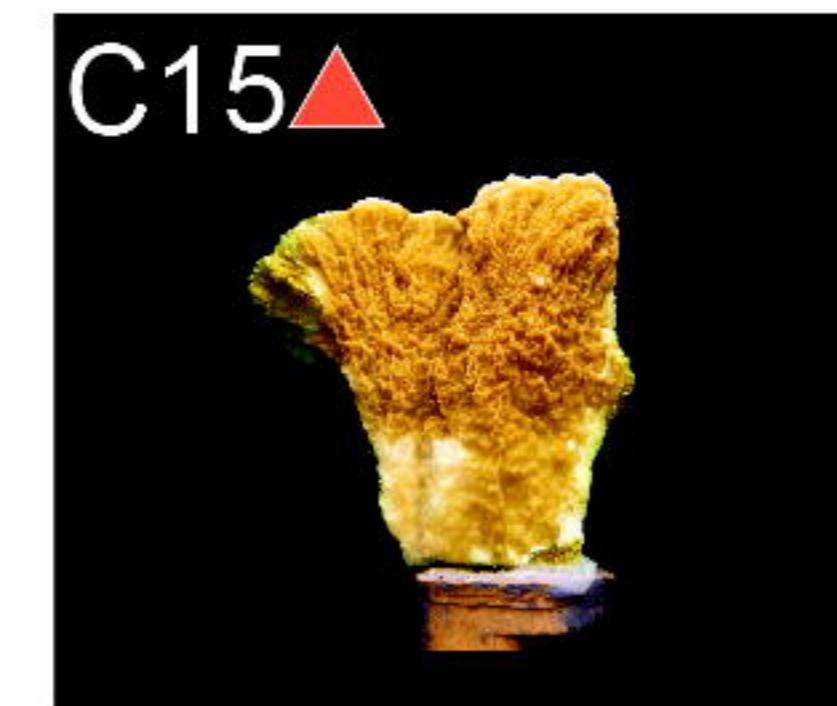
I. *P. cactus*



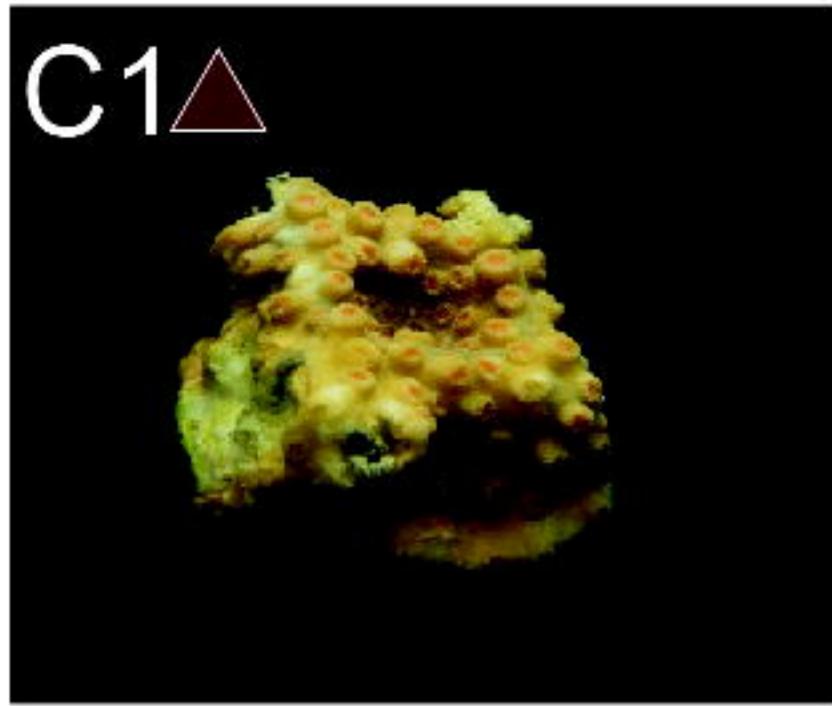
J. *M. digitata*



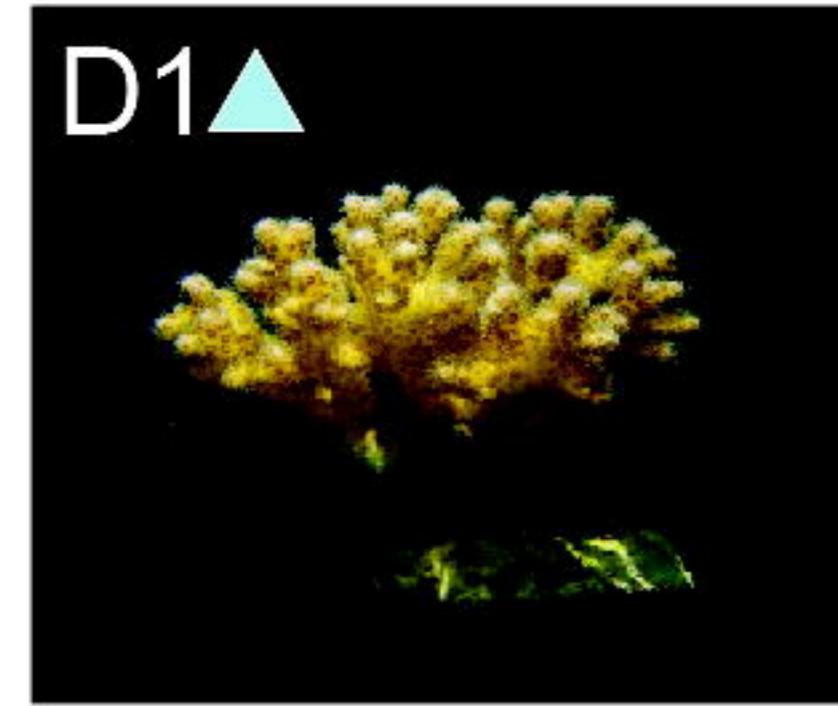
K. *M. capricornis* var. 1



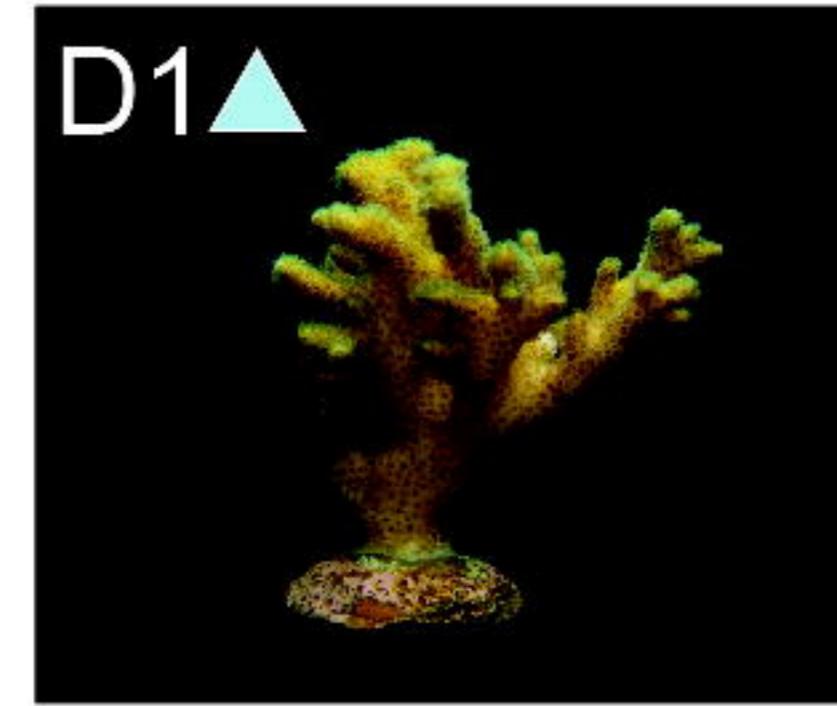
L. *M. capricornis* var. 2



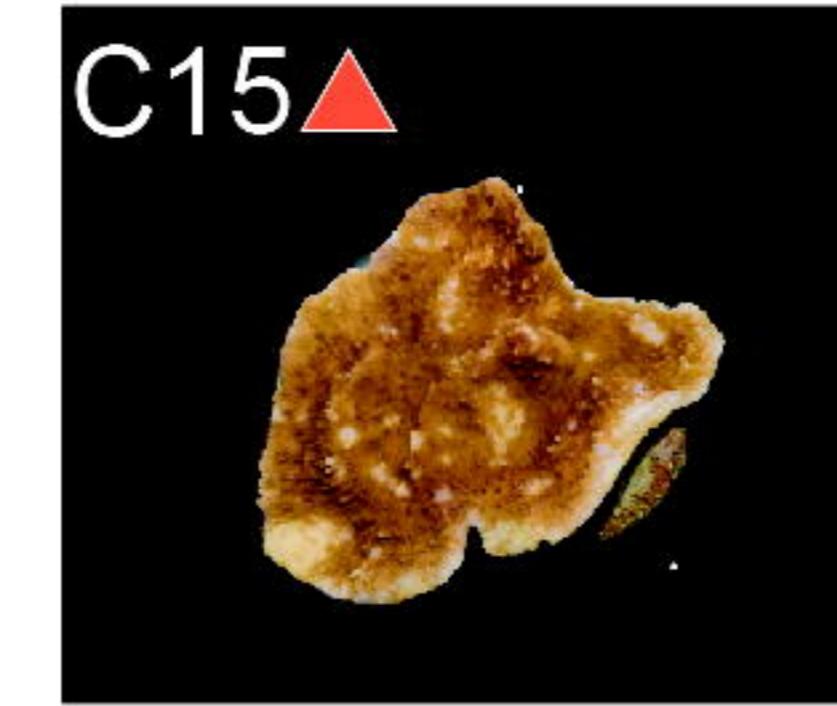
M. *C. chalcidium*



N. *P. damicornis* var. 1



O. *P. damicornis* var. 2

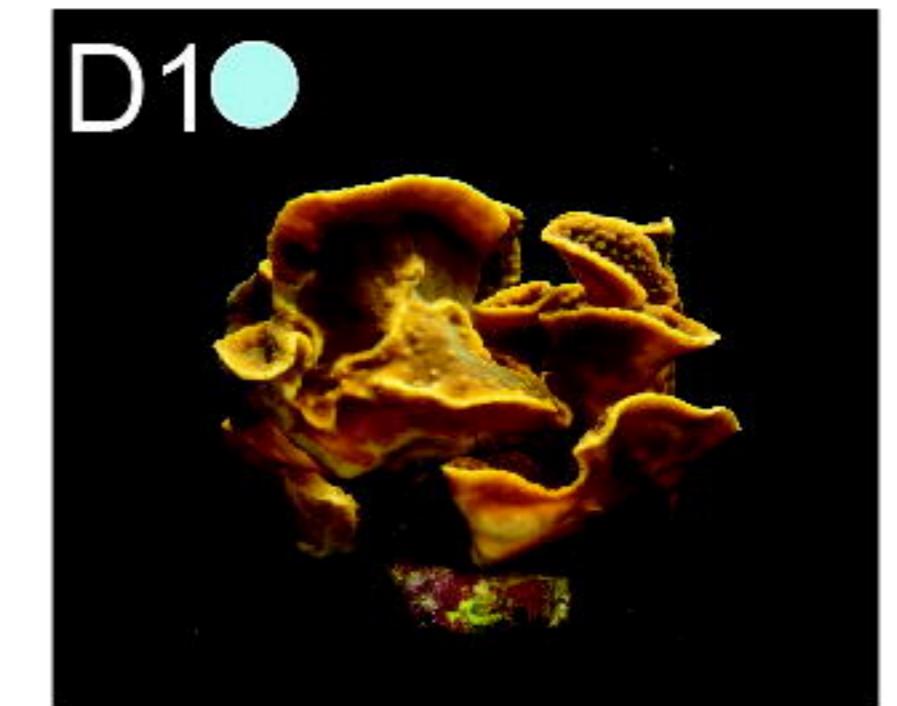


P. *M. capricornis* var. 3

# Indoor



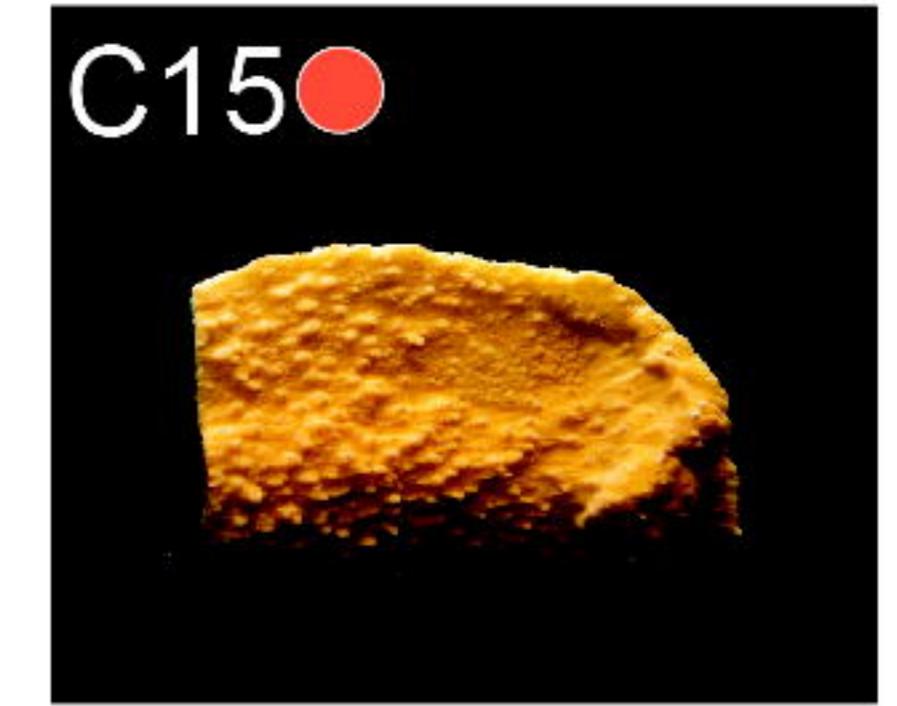
Q. *A. humilis* var. 1



R. *T. reniformis* var. 2

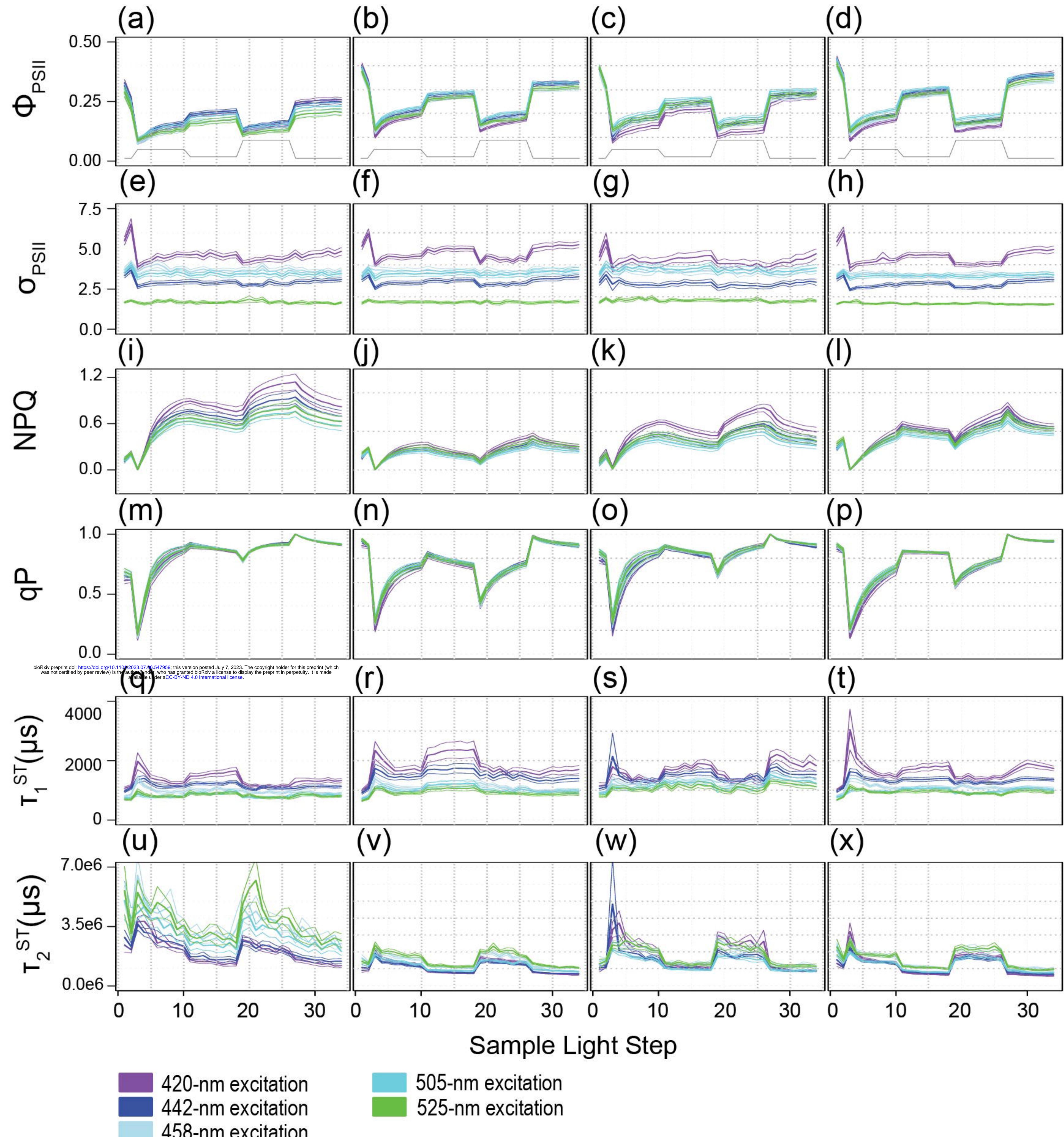


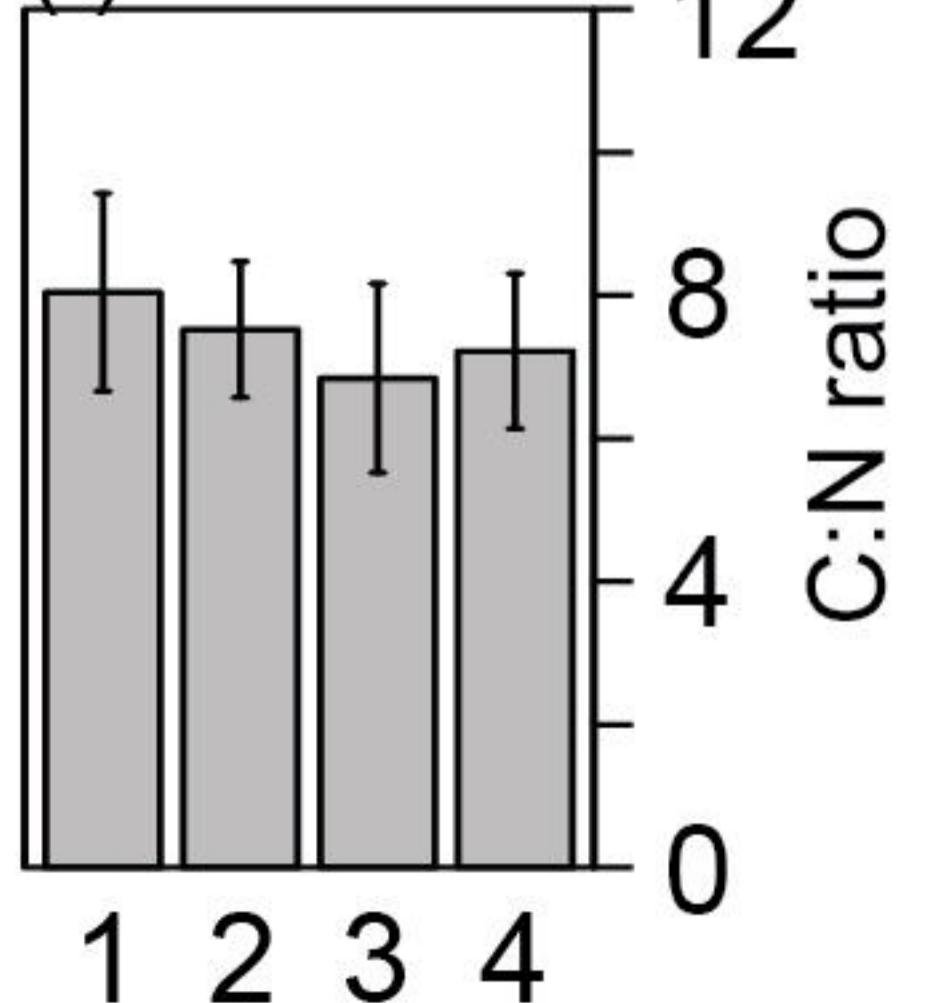
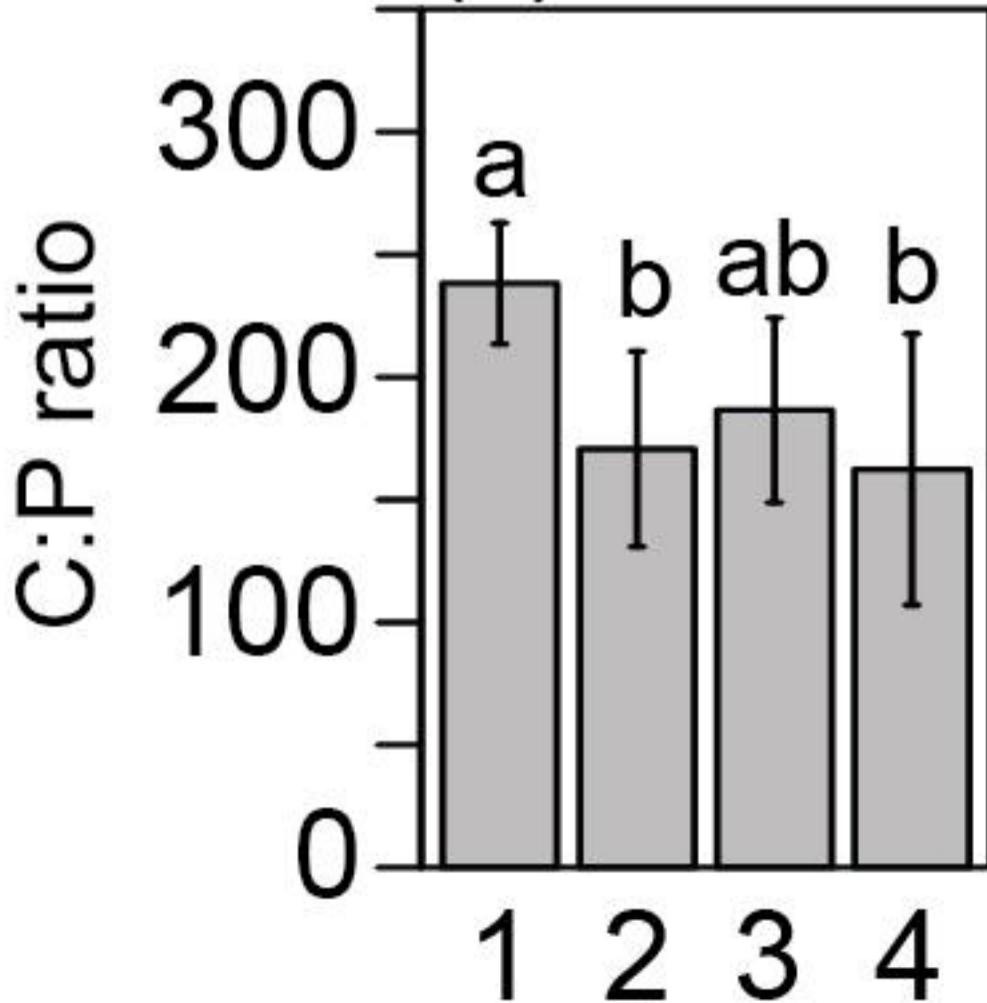
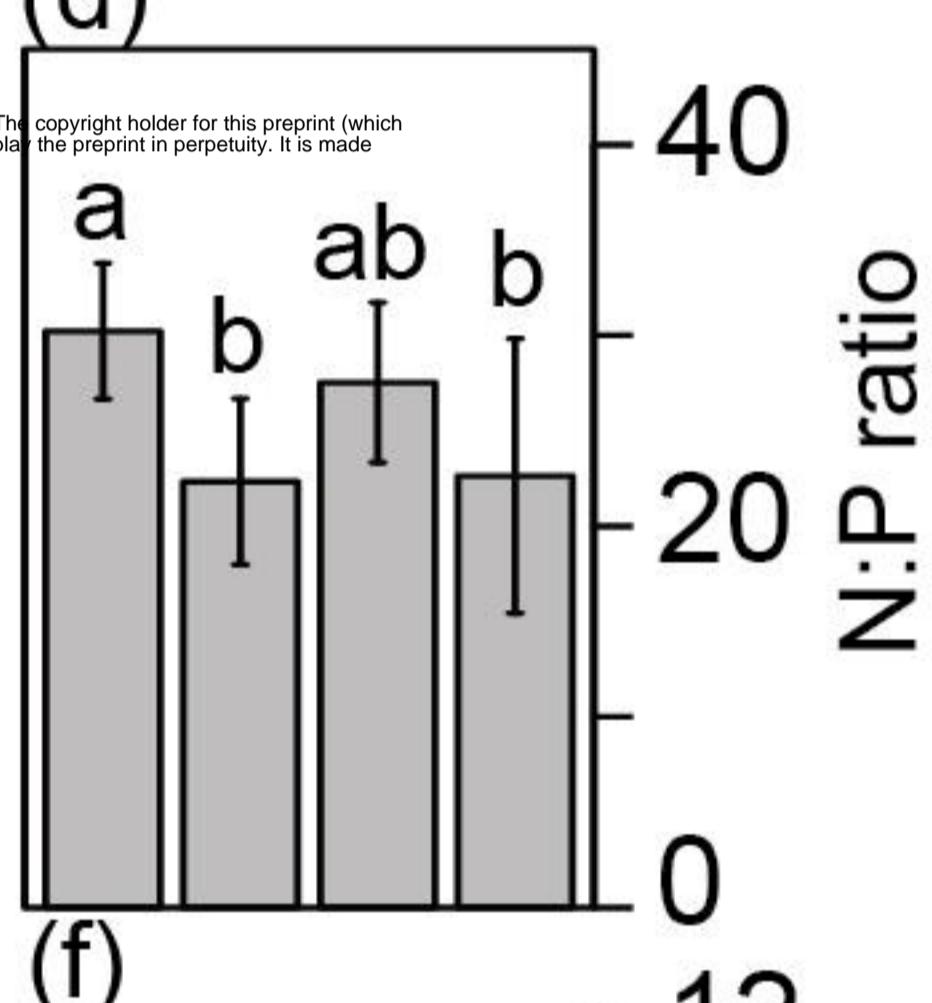
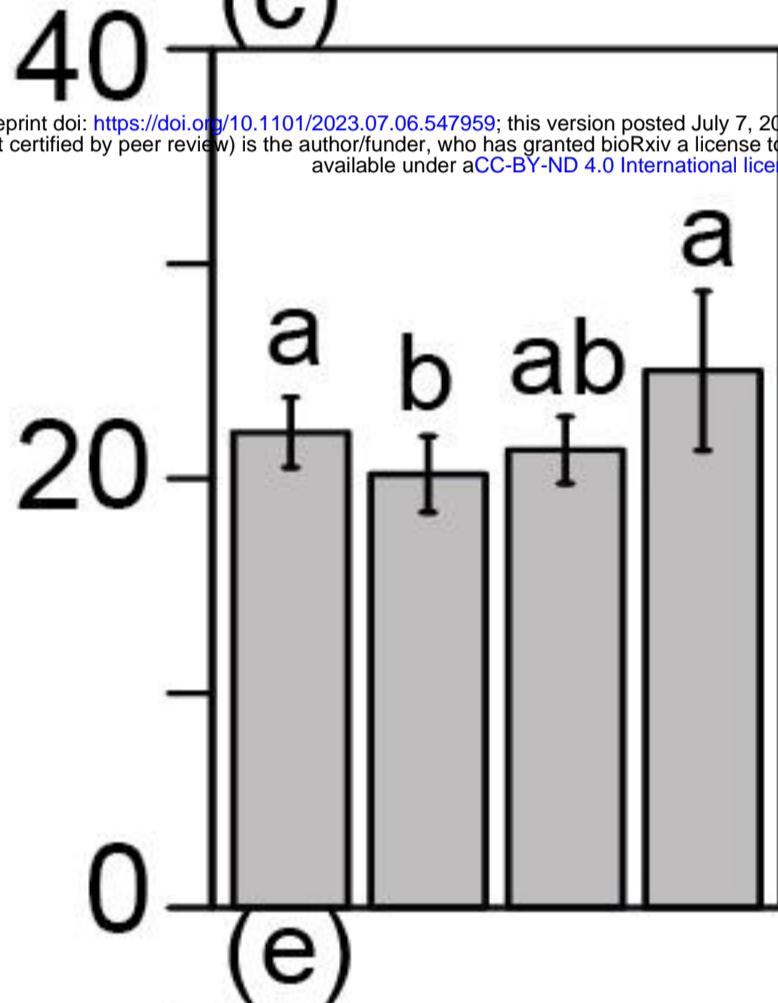
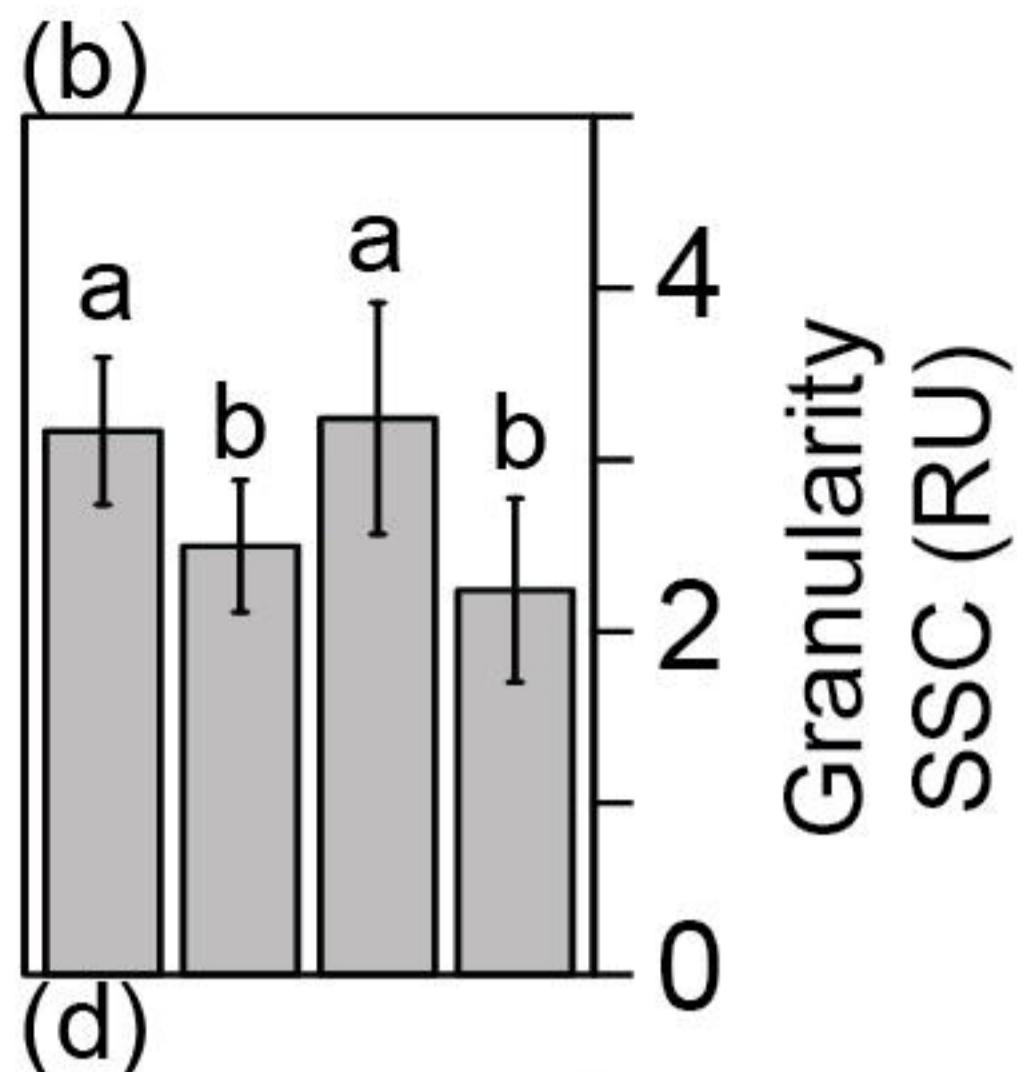
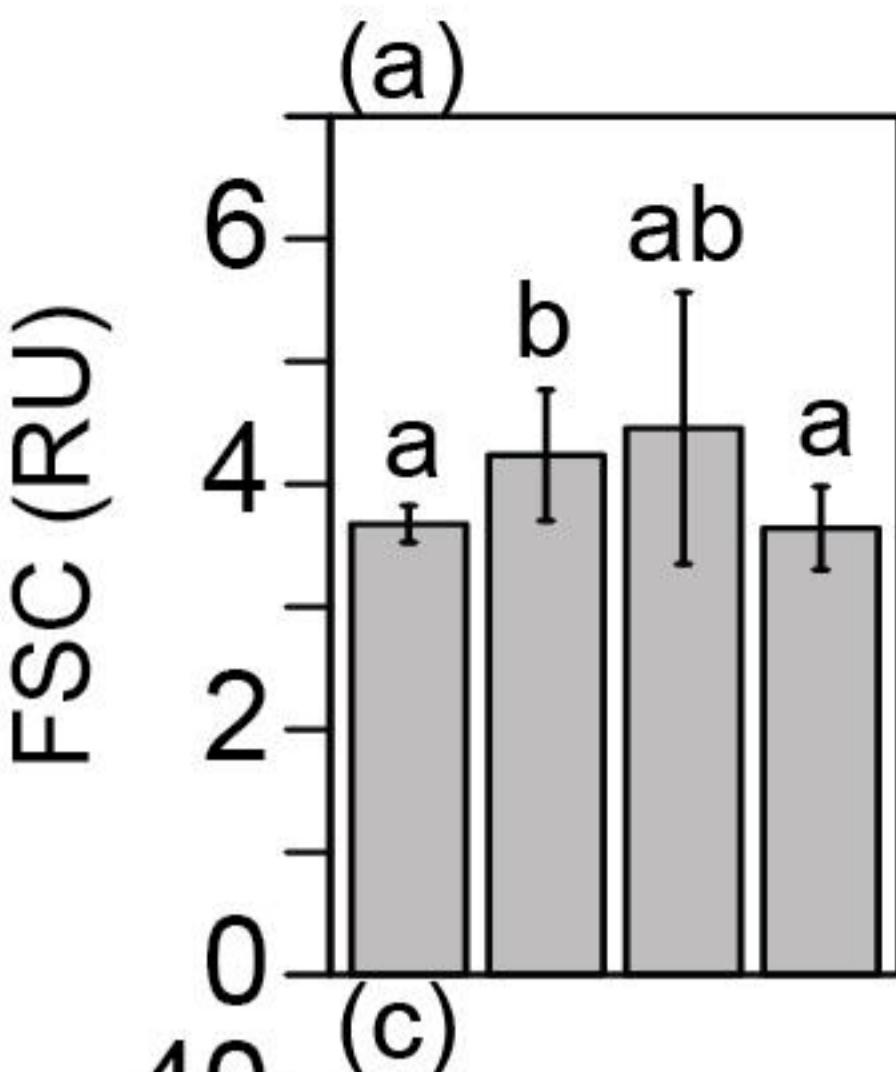
S. *M. capricornis* var. 2



T. *M. capricornis* var. 3

# Phenotype 1    Phenotype 2    Phenotype 3    Phenotype 4





Phenotype

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