

1 **THE IMPACTS OF IRRIGATION WITH TRANSFERRED AND SALINE RECLAIMED WATER**  
2 **IN THE SOIL MICROBIAL COMMUNITY OF TWO CITRUS SPECIES**

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6

7 **ABSTRACT**

8 The search for new water resources for the irrigation is a mandatory requirement in  
9 Mediterranean agroecosystems. The impacts of irrigation with water from different sources were  
10 evaluated in the soil microbial community and plant physiology of grapefruit and mandarin trees  
11 in the south-east of Spain. Four irrigation treatments were evaluated: i) water with an average  
12 electrical conductivity (EC) of  $1.1 \text{ dS m}^{-1}$  from the "Tagus-Segura" water-transfer canal (TW); ii)  
13 reclaimed water (EC =  $3.21 \text{ dS m}^{-1}$ ) from a wastewater-treatment-plant (RW); iii) irrigation with  
14 TW, except in the second stage of fruit development, when RW was applied (TW<sub>c</sub>); and iv)  
15 irrigation with RW except in the second stage, when TW was used (RW<sub>c</sub>). Phospholipid fatty  
16 acids (PLFAs) revealed that microbial biomass was higher under grapefruit than under  
17 mandarin trees. In the case of grapefruit, TW treatment showed a lower bacterial PLFA content  
18 than RW, RW<sub>c</sub>, and TW<sub>c</sub>, while RW showed the lowest values in the mandarin soil. In grapefruit  
19 soil,  $\beta$ -glucosidase and cellobiohydrolase activities were greater in RW and TW<sub>c</sub> than in TW and  
20 RW<sub>c</sub>. In mandarin soil, the greatest activity of these enzymes was recorded for TW<sub>c</sub>. The saline  
21 stress induced lower net photosynthesis (*A*) and stomatal conductance (*g<sub>s</sub>*) in plants of RW,  
22 RW<sub>c</sub> and TW<sub>c</sub> in comparison with TW. The annual use of reclaimed water or the combined  
23 irrigation with TW<sub>c</sub> positively influenced the soil microbial biomass and biogeochemical activities  
24 under grapefruit. In contrast, the mandarin soil community seemed more sensitive to the annual  
25 irrigation with RW.

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27 **KEYWORDS:** irrigation; soil microbial community; enzyme activities; semiarid; plant physiology

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## 31 1. INTRODUCTION

32 In Mediterranean regions, water availability is predicted to decrease in the coming decades  
33 (IPCC, 2013). The region of Murcia, located in the south-east of Spain, is characterized by a  
34 deficit of water resources that reaches 606 Mm<sup>3</sup> (Ibor *et al.*, 2011). In these conditions, farmers  
35 need to handle the deficit of water or consider non-conventional water resources for irrigation  
36 (Mounzer *et al.*, 2013). The use of water reclaimed from wastewaters is a cheap and  
37 continuously available option for agriculture. This water has the drawback of containing an  
38 excess of salts that may increase the electrical conductivity and the risk of soil salinization  
39 (Becerra-Castro *et al.*, 2015) and containing contaminants; either of these factors could impair  
40 the productivity of agroecosystems (Ibekwe *et al.*, 2010). Conversely, reclaimed water has  
41 readily available sources of organic matter that could improve the productivity in agricultural  
42 areas (Chen *et al.*, 2008). In this sense, several studies have demonstrated that the use of  
43 reclaimed water has positive effects on the productivity and physiology of *Citrus* sp. crops  
44 (García-Orenes *et al.*, 2015; Pedrero *et al.*, 2015; Nicolás *et al.*, 2016), as well as in the soil  
45 microbial community (Adrover *et al.*, 2012; García-Orenes *et al.*, 2015).

46 Soil microorganisms are greatly responsible for the dynamics of organic matter which remain  
47 fundamental to crop productivity and soil sustainability (Acosta-Martínez *et al.*, 2003; Zornoza *et al.*  
48 *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, microbial properties are sensitive to impacts on ecosystems (Bastida *et al.*  
49 *et al.*, 2008a; Tejada & Benítez, 2014, Zornoza *et al.*, 2015). Traditionally, the activity of  
50 microorganisms has been evaluated by microbial-ecosystemic indicators such as soil respiration  
51 and the activities of enzymes involved in the cycles of C, N, and P (Bastida *et al.*, 2008a;  
52 Rodríguez-Morgado *et al.*, 2015). Furthermore, phospholipid fatty acids (PLFAs) can constitute  
53 a suitable approach for evaluating the impact of agricultural practices on the biomass and  
54 structure of the soil microbial community (Frostegard *et al.*, 1993; Bastida *et al.*, 2008b; Torres  
55 *et al.*, 2015).

56 In a previous study, the impact of regulated deficit irrigation and water quality –transferred water  
57 vs reclaimed saline water - in the soil microbial community of a grapefruit orchard were  
58 evaluated (Bastida *et al.*, 2017). Here, we extend the knowledge on the adaptations to water  
59 scarcity by evaluating the impacts of combinations of water from differing sources in the soil  
60 microbial community of two crops with different water demands (Pedrero *et al.*, 2015; Nicolás *et*

61 *al.*, 2016) – mandarin and grapefruit – in Mediterranean countries. The reason behind this  
62 objective is that *Citrus* spp. are less susceptible to reclaimed water in summer (Nicolás *et al.*,  
63 2016); hence, the use of reclaimed water exclusively in summer, with transfer water being used  
64 the rest of the year, can be an adequate approach to save water in Mediterranean areas.  
65 However, the impacts of combined treatments in comparison to single water source irrigation on  
66 soil chemical and microbial properties are not fully known. We hypothesized that reclaimed  
67 water would increase the soil salinity but at the same time benefit microbially mediated  
68 processes related to the cycling of organic matter. In this respect, combinations of water of  
69 differing sources might represent a proper strategy for combating water limitations in  
70 Mediterranean agroecosystems. Furthermore, given the different plant-water relationships of the  
71 two *Citrus* spp. studied here, soil microbial biomass and community structure were expected to  
72 differ between crops and between irrigation treatments.

73

## 74 **2. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### 75 **2.1. Experimental area, irrigation treatments and soil sampling**

76 The experiment was carried out in Campotéjar-Murcia, Spain (38°07'18"N; 1°13'15"W) - with a  
77 Mediterranean semiarid climate. The annual reference evapotranspiration ( $ET_0$ ) and rainfall are,  
78 on average, 1326 and 300 mm, respectively. Within this area, an orchard of 1 ha was cultivated  
79 with 2 crops. One crop consisted of 16-year-old mandarin trees (*Citrus clementina* cv.  
80 'Orogrande') grafted on Carrizo citrange (*Citrus sinensis* [L.] Osb. × *Poncirus trifoliata* [L.])  
81 rootstock, with a tree spacing of 5 m × 3.5 m. The other crop consisted of 11-year-old 'Star  
82 Ruby' grapefruit trees (*Citrus paradisi* Macf) grafted on Macrophylla rootstock [*Citrus*  
83 *macrophylla*], with a tree spacing of 6 m × 4 m.

84 From 2005 to 2007 the field area was fully irrigated with water transferred from the river channel  
85 (TW). After this, four irrigation treatments based on the source of irrigation water were  
86 established. The first treatment was based on irrigation with water pumped from the "Tagus-  
87 Segura" water transfer canal, which supplies a large part of the water used in the Region of  
88 Murcia for both human consumption and irrigation (TW). The TW water had an average  
89 electrical conductivity ( $EC_w$ ) of 1.1 dS m<sup>-1</sup>. The second treatment was consisted on irrigation  
90 with tertiary reclaimed water pumped from a nearby wastewater treatment plant (reclaimed

91 water, RW). Treatments TW and RW were applied along the growing season for both citrus  
92 species from 2008 onwards. In the third and fourth treatments, the trees were irrigated by  
93 combining the water sources in different ways: either the trees were irrigated with TW, except in  
94 the second stage of fruit development when RW was applied (TW<sub>c</sub>), or, conversely, the trees  
95 were irrigated with RW except in this second stage when TW was used (RW<sub>c</sub>). Treatments TW<sub>c</sub>  
96 and RW<sub>c</sub> were applied from 2013 to soils irrigated previously with TW. The irrigation system  
97 consisted of a single drip line laid on the soil surface next to each tree row. It provided three  
98 pressure compensating, in-line emitters per tree, each discharging 4 l h<sup>-1</sup>, which were placed  
99 0.85 m from the trunk and spaced 0.9 m apart in the mandarin trees and were placed 1 m from  
100 the trunk and spaced 1 m apart in the grapefruit trees. The irrigation doses were scheduled on  
101 the basis of the daily crop evapotranspiration (ET<sub>c</sub>) for the previous week (Pedrero et al., 2015;  
102 Nicolás et al., 2016).

103 The trees were irrigated at 100% ET<sub>c</sub> from January to December. The total amount of water  
104 applied was measured with inline water flow meters. The irrigation was controlled automatically  
105 by a head-unit programmer and electro-hydraulic valves. All treatments included application of  
106 the same amounts of fertilizer (N–P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>–K<sub>2</sub>O), applied through the drip irrigation system: 215–  
107 100–90 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> year<sup>-1</sup> for mandarin trees and 215–110–150 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> year<sup>-1</sup> for grapefruit trees.

108 Three plots (n=3) for each treatment and crop were established. A composite soil sample under  
109 the canopy of one tree for each of the three plots was sampled in October 2015. Each  
110 composite soil sample was composed of six subsamples. The samples were sieved at < 2 mm.  
111 A fraction of each sample was kept at room temperature for chemical analysis and the rest was  
112 stored at 4°C until the biochemical and microbial analyses were performed.

## 113 **2.2. Water characterization, soil characteristics and sampling**

114 Water samples were analyzed as described by Bastida *et al.* (2017). The sand, silt, and clay  
115 contents of the soil were 50, 26, and 24%, respectively, with an average bulk density of 1.37 g  
116 cm<sup>-3</sup>. It was classified as a Typic Haplocalcid, according to Soil Survey Staff (2014). Before the  
117 experiment, the soil electrical conductivity (EC) was 2.1 dS m<sup>-1</sup>. Samples were taken to a depth  
118 of 20 cm in October 2015, before harvesting the fruit.

119

120 **2.3. Chemical analyses, soil respiration, soil enzyme activities and phospholipid fatty**  
121 **acid (PLFA) analysis**

122 The pH and EC were measured in a 1/5 (w/v) aqueous soil extract, pH using a pH meter (Crison  
123 mod.2001, Barcelona, Spain) and EC with an electrical conductivimeter (Crison micro CM2200).  
124 The total nitrogen content (N) and total organic C (TOC) were determined using a C/N Flash EA  
125 1112 Series elemental analyzer (Thermo Finnigan EA-1112, Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc., MA,  
126 USA). Microbial respiration was measured in 10-ml capped tubes containing 1 g of soil, as  
127 described elsewhere (Bastida *et al.*, 2015).

128 The urease activity in the soil was determined by the buffered method of Kandeler & Gerber  
129 (1988). Phosphomonoesterase and  $\beta$ -glucosidase activities were analyzed following the  
130 methods described by Tabatabai & Bremmer (1969) and a modification of Tabatabai's method  
131 (1982), respectively. Polyphenol oxidase was determined by the method of Allison (2006). N-  
132 acetyl-glucosaminidase and cellobiohydrolase activities were performed as described by Allison  
133 & Jastrow (2006).

134 Phospholipids were extracted from 6 g of soil with a mixture containing  
135 chloroform:methanol:citrate buffer (1:2:0.8 v/v/v) (Bligh and Dyer,1959), and afterwards were  
136 fractionated and quantified as described by Frostegard *et al.* (1993). Phospholipids were  
137 transformed into fatty acid methyl esters (FAMES) by alkaline methanolysis (Guckert *et al.*,  
138 1985) and designated as described by Frostegard *et al.* (1993). The samples were analyzed  
139 with a Trace Ultra Thermo Scientific gas chromatograph fitted with a 60-m capillary column  
140 (ThermoTR-FAME 60 m x 0.25 mm ID x 0.25  $\mu$ m film), using helium as the carrier gas. The  
141 assignation of fatty acids to microbial groups was carried out as described in Bastida *et al.*  
142 (2017).

143

144 **2.4. Plant water status and gas exchange parameters**

145 The stem water potential ( $\psi_{\text{stem}}$ ) was analyzed monthly at midday using a pressure chamber  
146 (model3000; Soil Moisture Equipment Corp., Santa Barbara, USA) and following the  
147 recommendations of Turner (1988). Two mature leaves from the canopy were selected. At least  
148 2 h before the measurement, the leaves were covered with aluminum foil and enclosed within  
149 polyethylene bags (McCutchan & Shackel, 1992). Instantaneous measurements of net

150 photosynthesis ( $A$ ) and stomatal conductance ( $g_s$ ) were carried out with a portable  
151 photosynthesis system (LI-6400 Li-Cor, Lincoln, NE, USA). Leaf gas exchange was analyzed  
152 monthly on 16 young, fully expanded leaves per treatment, placed in a 2-cm<sup>2</sup> leaf cuvette.  
153 Measurements were performed at a saturating light intensity of 1200  $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$  and at ambient  
154 temperature and relative humidity.

155

## 156 **2.5. Data analysis**

157 The normality and homogeneity of the variables were checked by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and  
158 Levene tests, respectively. The variables were transformed logarithmically when necessary. Data  
159 were analyzed using two-way ANOVA with irrigation treatment and crop as main factors.  
160 Differences were considered significant at  $P < 0.05$ . The structure of the microbial community  
161 was determined using principal component analysis of the relative abundances of single fatty acids.  
162 The loading scores of each variable were represented by vectors. The statistical analyses were  
163 carried out using IBM-SPSS Statistics (version 23.0) software.

164

## 165 **3. RESULTS**

### 166 **3.1. Water and soil chemical analysis**

167 Significant differences between TW and RW water were observed: RW had greater salinity and  
168 sodicity, with average values of  $\text{EC}_w$  around 3.21  $\text{dS m}^{-1}$  and of  $\text{SAR}_w$  around 9.45  $[\text{meq l}^{-1}]^{0.5}$ ,  
169 whereas TW had lower values of  $\text{EC}_w$ , 1.00  $\text{dS m}^{-1}$ , and of  $\text{SAR}_w$ , 1.39  $[\text{meq l}^{-1}]^{0.5}$ . The RW  
170 water also had higher concentrations of  $\text{NO}_3^-$ ,  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$ ,  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$ ,  $\text{Cl}^-$ , K, B, and Na than TW (Table 1).  
171 The concentrations of organic C and N in the reclaimed water were 18 and 7  $\text{mg l}^{-1}$ ,  
172 respectively.

173 The soil TOC content was influenced significantly by treatment and crop, and by their interaction  
174 (Table 2). Total N was influenced significantly by treatment and by the interaction between  
175 irrigation treatment and crop. The soil EC was influenced significantly by treatment.

176 The greatest soil TOC value was recorded for  $\text{TW}_c$  (Table 3). The soil TOC content did not differ  
177 in the soils that received reclaimed water (RW,  $\text{TW}_c$ , or  $\text{RW}_c$ ), in comparison to TW (Table 3).  
178 This trend was observed in both mandarin and grapefruit crops. Total N was lower in  $\text{RW}_c$  soil

179 than in the rest of the soils under grapefruit. In the mandarin, the soil N content was greatest in  
180 TW<sub>c</sub> soil, with no significant differences among the other treatments. The EC followed the same  
181 trend in both crops: the RW treatment gave the greatest values, followed by TW<sub>c</sub> and RW<sub>c</sub>  
182 (Table 3).

183

### 184 **3.2. Microbial biomass and community structure estimated by PLFAs**

185 The bacterial PLFA content was influenced significantly by irrigation treatment, crop, and their  
186 interaction, while the fungal PLFA content was influenced exclusively by crop (Table 2). Overall,  
187 the bacterial and fungal soil PLFA contents were higher under grapefruit than under mandarin  
188 trees. In the case of grapefruit, TW produced a lower bacterial PLFA content than RW, RW<sub>c</sub>, or  
189 TW<sub>c</sub>. In contrast, treatment RW showed the lowest values in the mandarin trees (Fig. 1). The  
190 content of Gram-positive bacterial fatty acids was lowest with TW in the grapefruit soil and with  
191 RW in the mandarin. A similar pattern was observed for the Gram-negative PLFA contents (Fig.  
192 1). The fungal PLFA content of the grapefruit soil was greatest with RW<sub>c</sub>. In the mandarin soil  
193 samples, the fungal biomass was lower in RW soil in comparison to the other treatments. The  
194 ratio of the bacterial to fungal fatty acid contents was lowest for TW in the grapefruit soil (Table  
195 3).

196 To estimate the structure of the microbial community, a factor analysis of the relative  
197 abundances of fatty acids was performed together for the grapefruit and mandarin soil samples  
198 (Fig. 2A). Factor 1 explained 22.16% of the variance of the results and Factor 2 explained  
199 14.63% (Fig. 2A). According to Factor 1, the structure of the microbial community of TW under  
200 mandarin, RW under grapefruit and the other treatments differed. Two-way ANOVA analysis of  
201 the factors revealed that Factor 1 was influenced significantly by crop ( $F = 8.06$ ,  $P = 0.012$ ),  
202 treatment ( $F = 11.73$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), and their interaction ( $F = 26.57$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Factor 2 was  
203 influenced significantly by crop ( $F = 41.40$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) and treatment ( $F = 3.56$ ,  $P = 0.038$ ), but  
204 not by their interaction ( $F = 0.49$ ,  $P = 0.69$ ). According to Factor 2, the structure of the microbial  
205 communities of grapefruit soil samples (positive side of Factor 2) was different from that of  
206 mandarin samples (negative side of Factor 2). Gram-negative (18:1 $\omega$ 9c and 18:1 $\omega$ 9t),  
207 actinobacterial (10Me16:0), and fungal (18:2 $\omega$ 6t) fatty acids received a high loading score in  
208 Factor 1. Gram-positive (16:1 $\omega$ 9) and fungal (18:2 $\omega$ 6c) fatty acids received a high loading score

209 in Factor 2. Phosphatase activity and the total organic C and N contents were the only variables  
210 that correlated (negatively) with Factor 1 in the factorial analysis ( $P < 0.05$ ) (Table 4). Urease  
211 activity correlated positively with Factor 2 and EC correlated negatively ( $P < 0.05$ ).

212 Furthermore, a factor analysis of the relative abundances of fatty acids was performed,  
213 separately, for the grapefruit and mandarin soil samples. In the case of grapefruit crop, Factor 1  
214 explained 33.34% of the variance of the results and Factor 2 explained 27.16% (Fig. 2B).  
215 According to Factor 1, the structure of the soil microbial community of TW differed from that of  
216 the soils receiving reclaimed water (RW, TW<sub>c</sub>, RW<sub>c</sub>). According to Factor 2, the structure of the  
217 microbial community of RW soil differed from that of the other soils.

218 In the grapefruit soil, positive correlation coefficients were found between Factor 1 and different  
219 variables (EC, respiration, cellobiohydrolase, and N-acetyl glucosaminidase) ( $P < 0.05$ ) (Table  
220 4). Negative correlation coefficients were observed between Factor 2 and pH and the  $\beta$ -  
221 glucosidase, urease, and p-phenol oxidase activities ( $P < 0.05$ ).

222 In the mandarin soil, Factor 1 (31.10% of the variance of the results) separated TW samples  
223 from the rest. Factor 2 (20.78%) discriminated between RW and the other treatments (Fig. 2C).  
224 Negative correlation coefficients were found between Factor 1 of mandarin soil and the  
225 phosphatase, urease, and p-phenol oxidase activities ( $P < 0.05$ ). A positive correlation  
226 coefficient was observed between Factor 2 and soil respiration ( $P < 0.05$ ) (Table 4).

227

### 228 **3.3. Soil respiration and enzyme activities**

229 Respiration and all the enzyme activities were influenced significantly by irrigation treatment,  
230 crop, and their interaction (Table 2). With the exception of RW, soil respiration was higher in  
231 grapefruit soil samples than in mandarin ones. Respiration was greatest in TW<sub>c</sub> soil in the case  
232 of grapefruit, and in RW in the case of mandarin (Table 3). The ratio of respiration to TOC was  
233 greatest in TW<sub>c</sub> soil samples for grapefruit. In contrast, for mandarin, this ratio was lowest in  
234 TW<sub>c</sub> samples.

235 The enzyme activities were higher in grapefruit soil than in mandarin soil, with the exception of  
236  $\beta$ -glucosidase, cellobiohydrolase, and p-phenol oxidase for TW<sub>c</sub>. The enzyme activities of soils  
237 irrigated with reclaimed water were never lower than for TW (Fig. 3).



238 In grapefruit soil, the  $\beta$ -glucosidase and cellobiohydrolase activities were greater in RW and  
239  $TW_c$  than in TW and  $RW_c$ . In mandarin soil, the activity of these enzymes was greatest for  $TW_c$   
240 and no differences were observed between TW and  $RW_c$ . The p-phenol oxidase activity was  
241 greatest for RW soil in the case of grapefruit and for  $RW_c$  in the case of mandarin (Fig. 3).  
242 Urease activity was higher for RW than for the rest of the treatments, for both crops (Fig. 4). For  
243 both crops, the N-acetyl glucosaminidase activity was greatest for RW and  $TW_c$ . Phosphatase  
244 activity was greatest for  $TW_c$ , under both crops

245

### 246 **3.4. Plant physiology and crop yield**

247 The treatment and crop, and their interaction, influenced significantly the net photosynthesis ( $A$ )  
248 and stomatal conductance ( $g_s$ ). The stem water potential ( $\Psi_s$ ) was affected significantly by crop  
249 (Table 2). Lower annual average values of  $A$  and  $g_s$  were observed in plants irrigated with RW,  
250  $RW_c$  or  $TW_c$ , in comparison to TW (Table 5). The average annual values of  $A$  ranged between  
251 12.92 and 9.76  $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$ , in TW and  $RW_c$ , respectively, in the case of grapefruit; in mandarin  
252 trees, the values were 8.77 and 6.81  $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$  in TW and RW, respectively. Similar behavior  
253 was observed in the average annual values of  $g_s$  - which ranged between 0.161 and 0.105 mol  
254  $\text{m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$  in TW and  $RW_c$ , respectively, for grapefruit; in mandarin trees, the values were 0.086 and  
255 0.062 mol  $\text{m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$  in TW and RW, respectively (Table 5). Regarding plant water status, both  
256 species reached similar  $\psi_{\text{stem}}$  values in the different irrigation treatments, although grapefruit had  
257 a lower average annual value of -1.11 MPa across the treatments, with respect to -0.81 MPa in  
258 mandarin trees. The yield was influenced by crop but not by irrigation treatment (Table 2).  
259 Grapefruit yield was similar for all irrigation treatments and reached about 100 t  $\text{ha}^{-1}$  (Table 5). In  
260 the case of mandarin, TW, RW and  $RW_c$  showed similar yields, while  $TW_c$ , reached higher  
261 values of 45 t  $\text{ha}^{-1}$ .

262

## 263 **4. DISCUSSION**

### 264 **4.1. The biomass and structure of the soil microbial community**

265 The impacts of irrigation with water from different sources on soil microbial communities are still  
266 obscure (Rietz & Haynes, 2003). It is known that reclaimed water has elevated content of salts

267 which can impact soil microbiota (García & Hernández, 1996; Becerra-Castro *et al.*, 2015).  
268 However, the negative impacts of salts in reclaimed waters can be buffered by the high content  
269 of Ca and Mg in soils of the south-east of Spain (Adrover *et al.*, 2012). Despite the negative  
270 aspect of its high salt content, reclaimed water has elevated content of soluble organic matter  
271 (Adrover *et al.*, 2012) - that may promote the microbial biomass in soils (Friedel *et al.*, 2000;  
272 Chen *et al.*, 2015). In consequence, the equilibria between these positive and negative factors  
273 can determine the final impact of reclaimed water in soils.

274 Interestingly, the analysis of PLFAs revealed different sensitivities of the soil microbial  
275 communities from grapefruit and mandarin crops to the irrigation treatments. These results  
276 highlight the importance of evaluating the impact of irrigation systems on the soil microbial  
277 community of different crops. The greater microbial biomass in grapefruit soil was linked to the  
278 greater plant activity in comparison to mandarin, as revealed by the higher net photosynthesis  
279 and stomatal conductance in grapefruit. The bacterial biomass was stimulated by irrigation with  
280 regenerated water (RW, TW<sub>c</sub>, RW<sub>c</sub>) in grapefruit soil, but not in mandarin soil. Moreover, the  
281 use of RW during the whole year decreased the microbial biomass in mandarin soil, while the  
282 seasonal combinations (TW<sub>c</sub> and RW<sub>c</sub>) maintained it at the control level (TW). As hypothesized,  
283 the combined water treatments influenced positively the biomass of the soil microbial  
284 community, but this effect was dependent on the crop. Nevertheless, the crop yield of grapefruit  
285 and mandarin was not negatively affected by any of the treatments in comparison to TW.

286 The distinct responses of the two species could be due to the fact that rosstocks had different  
287 physiological resilience to salinity (Pedrero *et al.*, 2015; Nicolás *et al.*, 2016) comparing *Citrus*  
288 *macrophylla* (tolerant to salinity) with Carrizo citrange (sensitive). Indeed, a significant decrease  
289 in mandarin net photosynthesis and stomatal conductance was observed in treatment RW,  
290 which coincided with the lower soil microbial biomass, in comparison to TW. However, no  
291 negative effects of irrigation with reclaimed water were observed in grapefruit. Previous  
292 research has highlighted that plant-water relations may be affected by water origin  
293 (Paranychianakis *et al.*, 2004) and  $\psi_{\text{stem}}$  may regulate processes such leaf physiological  
294 parameters ( $A$  and  $g_s$ ) (Gomes *et al.*, 2004). Thus, the distinct physiological nature and water  
295 relations of each crop could have a critical influence on the structure of belowground microbial  
296 communities. Various studies, particularly in agroecosystems, have detected that plant species

297 may alter the structure of the microbial community (Kowalchuk *et al.*, 2002; Haichar *et al.*,  
298 2008). It is noteworthy that the selection of a particular microbial community under each of the  
299 two crop species studied here occurred even though both crops were located in the same soil  
300 and received the same irrigation treatments.

301 Furthermore, we found clear impacts of the irrigation treatments on the structure of the soil  
302 microbial communities under both crops, as demonstrated in other studies (Gatta *et al.*, 2015;  
303 García-Orenes *et al.*, 2015). The structures of the communities from TW and RW soil were  
304 clearly different from those of the combined treatments. Indeed, the application of RW only in  
305 summer (TW<sub>c</sub>) increased the ratio of Gram-positive to Gram-negative bacteria, in comparison to  
306 irrigation during the whole year with reclaimed water (RW). The fact that the Gram-positive  
307 bacteria include groups with endospore formation capacity could mean that the TW<sub>c</sub> treatment  
308 promoted a reservoir of biological activity in soil. Indeed, the increase of Gram-positive in  
309 comparison to Gram-negative bacteria has been suggested as an indicator of soil resistance  
310 against harsh conditions (de Vries & Shade, 2013). However, TW<sub>c</sub> and RW<sub>c</sub> clustered closely  
311 for both crops. Overall, these findings suggest that: i) the structure of the microbial community is  
312 controlled predominantly by the plant species rather than by the irrigation treatments studied  
313 here; ii) irrigation treatment impacted the structure of the microbial community of each crop and  
314 may explain further changes in microbial activity, as discussed below; and iii) combined dual-  
315 irrigation (TW<sub>c</sub> and RW<sub>c</sub>) treatments led to the evolution of a similar community structure. Since  
316 the microbiota of wastewater has short duration in soil (García-Orenes *et al.*, 2007; Becerra-  
317 Castro *et al.*, 2015), it is probable that the changes in community structure are due to the  
318 indirect chemical effects of irrigation with different waters and plant-specific interactions with soil  
319 microbial communities (Becerra-Castro *et al.*, 2015).

320

#### 321 **4.2. The activity of the soil microbial community**

322 The respiration of organic matter by soil microbial communities produces CO<sub>2</sub>. In the present  
323 work, soil respiration and enzyme activities were higher, overall, under grapefruit trees than  
324 under mandarin. Probably, these results derive from the greater plant activity of grapefruit and  
325 the selection of a more abundant microbial community under grapefruit, as revealed by the  
326 analysis of PLFAs. The soil under grapefruit exhibited greater activity - in terms of soil

327 respiration and enzymes related to the cycles of C, N and P - with treatments RW, RW<sub>c</sub>, and  
328 TW<sub>c</sub> than with TW. Several studies observed an increased extracellular enzyme activity in soils  
329 treated with reclaimed water and explained that the soluble organic matter contained in such  
330 water can act as a substrate for these enzymes and for microbial growth (Adrover et al., 2012;  
331 Chen *et al.*, 2015; García-Orenes *et al.*, 2015). Nevertheless, changes in enzyme activities and  
332 respiration can be also explained by variations in community structure, as observed in this  
333 study.

334 Despite the efforts to evaluate these hydrolytic enzymes involved in the extracellular cycling of  
335 nutrients, little has been done to understand the responses of polyphenol oxidase in  
336 agroecosystems. This enzyme is involved in the formation of soil humic substances  
337 (Sinsabaugh *et al.*, 2010; Lucas-Borja *et al.*, 2012). Interestingly, the activity of this enzyme was  
338 greatest with treatment RW for grapefruit soil and with RW<sub>c</sub> for mandarin. This result not only  
339 reinforces the differing impact of reclaimed water on the soil biogeochemistry under the two  
340 crops, but also highlights potential differences in the stabilization of organic matter in the soil  
341 under each crop.

342 Although some authors have argued that elevated salinity could produce a less efficient  
343 microbial community in terms of using C sources (Rietz & Haynes, 2003), we found evidence  
344 that supports the selection of a resistant and well adapted microbial community which maintains  
345 nutrient cycling in soil. For instance, the microbial biomass of mandarin soil was low for RW, in  
346 comparison to TW<sub>c</sub>, but its high microbial efficiency is manifested by the higher MB/TOC and  
347 Resp/TOC ratios for RW, in comparison to TW<sub>c</sub>. Thus, it seems that a less abundant but more  
348 efficient microbial community was selected under mandarin trees receiving RW irrigation and  
349 that it made use of the soluble organic matter contained in the reclaimed water.

350

## 351 **5. CONCLUSION**

352 Irrigation with reclaimed water did not negatively impact the soil microbial community of  
353 semiarid soils under grapefruit and mandarin crops. Indeed, the annual use of reclaimed water  
354 or the dual irrigation with TW<sub>c</sub> influenced positively the microbial biomass and biogeochemical  
355 activities of soil microbial communities under grapefruit. In contrast, the mandarin community  
356 seemed more sensitive to the annual irrigation with RW but, overall, responded positively to

357 dual irrigation, particularly TW<sub>c</sub>. Changes in biomass and activity were coupled to variations in  
358 the structure of the microbial community and, overall, the microbial responses were probably  
359 shaped by the specific plant physiology and water relations of the crop. This finding supports  
360 the specific selection of a given microbial community by each crop. Moreover, crop yield was  
361 not negatively affected by the irrigation with reclaimed water. Overall, our results support the  
362 use of reclaimed water when crop demands cannot be satisfied.

363

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370

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510

## 511 **Figure Captions**

512 **Figure 1.** The PLFA content of microbial groups in soils under different irrigation treatments and  
513 crops. TW (transfer water); RW (reclaimed water); TWc (annual transfer water except  
514 summer irrigation with RW); RWc (annual RW irrigation except summer transfer water  
515 irrigation).

516 **Figure 2.** Factor analysis of phospholipid fatty acids in soils under different irrigation treatments  
517 and crops: A) grapefruit and mandarin soils; B) grapefruit soil and C) mandarin soil. TW  
518 (transfer water); RW (reclaimed water); TWc (annual transfer water except summer  
519 irrigation with RW); RWc (annual RW irrigation except summer transfer water irrigation).

520 **Figure 3.** The activity of  $\beta$ -glucosidase, cellobiohydrolase, and p-phenol oxidase in soils under  
521 different irrigation treatments and crops. TW (transfer water); RW (reclaimed water);  
522 TWc (annual transfer water except summer irrigation with RW); RWc (annual RW  
523 irrigation except summer transfer water irrigation). PNP (p-nitro phenol).

524 **Figure 4.** The activity of urease, N-acetyl-glucosaminidase, and phosphatase in soils under  
525 different irrigation treatments and crops. TW (transfer water); RW (reclaimed water);  
526 TWc (annual transfer water except summer irrigation with RW); RWc (annual RW  
527 irrigation except summer transfer water irrigation). PNP (p-nitro phenol).

**Table 1.** Physical and chemical analyses (electrical conductivity;  $EC_w$ , sodium absorption ratio;  $SAR_w$ , pH, cations; Na, K, Ca, and Mg, and anions;  $Cl^-$ ,  $NO_3^-$ ,  $PO_4^{3-}$  and  $SO_4^{2-}$ ) in 2015, for both transfer water (TW) and reclaimed water (RW). Values are annual averages  $\pm$  SE with N = 12.

		TW	RW
<b><math>EC_w</math></b>	<b><math>dS m^{-1}</math></b>	1.00 $\pm$ 0.01	3.21 $\pm$ 0.20
<b><math>SAR_w</math></b>	<b><math>(meq L^{-1})^{0.5}</math></b>	1.39 $\pm$ 0.10	9.45 $\pm$ 0.30
<b>pH</b>		8.41 $\pm$ 0.09	7.70 $\pm$ 0.10
<b>Ca</b>	<b><math>meq L^{-1}</math></b>	1.99 $\pm$ 0.10	3.58 $\pm$ 0.20
<b>Mg</b>	<b><math>meq L^{-1}</math></b>	1.58 $\pm$ 0.10	3.92 $\pm$ 0.30
<b>K</b>	<b><math>mg L^{-1}</math></b>	3.65 $\pm$ 1.40	38.94 $\pm$ 1.40
<b>Na</b>	<b><math>meq L^{-1}</math></b>	1.86 $\pm$ 0.20	18.30 $\pm$ 1.2
<b>B</b>	<b><math>mg L^{-1}</math></b>	0.10 $\pm$ 0.01	0.66 $\pm$ 0.04
<b><math>Cl^-</math></b>	<b><math>meq L^{-1}</math></b>	3.15 $\pm$ 0.40	20.10 $\pm$ 3.01
<b><math>NO_3^-</math></b>	<b><math>mg L^{-1}</math></b>	7.7 $\pm$ 3.60	25.42 $\pm$ 10.6
<b><math>PO_4^{3-}</math></b>	<b><math>mg L^{-1}</math></b>	0.31 $\pm$ 0.02	1.73 $\pm$ 0.70
<b><math>SO_4^{2-}</math></b>	<b><math>meq L^{-1}</math></b>	5.90 $\pm$ 0.50	17.20 $\pm$ 3.4

**Table 2.** Two-way ANOVA of chemical, biochemical, microbial, and plant physiology variables, including irrigation treatment and crop as factors.

	TOC		TN		EC		pH		Resp		Resp/TOC		Bacteria			
	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value		
<b>Treatment (T)</b>	5.10	0.011	23.84	<0.001	8.46	<0.001	7.02	0.003	3.96	0.027	8.37	<0.001	7.02	0.003		
<b>Crop (C)</b>	10.19	0.006	3.27	0.09	1.22	0.28	101.1	<0.001	24.55	<0.001	10.84	0.005	101.1	<0.001		
<b>T x C</b>	8.34	<0.001	12.67	<0.001	0.63	0.66	9.80	0.001	1.93	0.17	4.39	0.020	9.80	0.001		
	Fungi		G+		G-		B/F		G+/G-		β-glucosidase		Cellobiohydrolase			
	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value		
<b>Treatment (T)</b>	1.49	0.25	10.23	0.001	6.17	0.005	4.62	0.016	13.51	<0.001	68.19	<0.001	170.1	<0.001		
<b>Crop (C)</b>	46.83	<0.001	110.55	<0.001	75.63	<0.001	16.47	0.001	7.98	0.012	162.4	<0.001	287.2	<0.001		
<b>T x C</b>	0.99	0.42	18.38	<0.001	4.30	0.021	4.49	0.018	10.75	<0.001	32.07	<0.001	28.31	<0.001		
	PPO		Urease		NAG		Phos		A		g <sub>s</sub>		Ψ <sub>s</sub>		Y	
	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value	F ratio	P value
<b>Treatment (T)</b>	7.75	0.002	43.44	<0.001	118.4	<0.001	74.73	<0.001	9.10	<0.001	16.39	<0.001	0.49	0.692	0.98	0.14
<b>Crop (C)</b>	3.07	0.099	228.7	<0.001	294.6	<0.001	82.83	<0.001	133.17	<0.001	148.02	<0.001	109.64	<0.001	25.97	<0.001
<b>T x C</b>	14.23	<0.001	17.17	<0.001	17.26	<0.001	43.04	<0.001	4.37	<0.005	3.06	0.028	0.15	0.926	3.34	0.09

Abbreviations: TOC (total organic C), TN (total nitrogen), EC (electrical conductivity), Resp (basal soil respiration), Bacteria (bacterial PLFA content), Fungi (fungal PLFA content), B/F (bacterial to fungal PLFA ratio), G+/G- (Gram+ to Gram- bacterial ratio), PPO (poly-phenol oxidase), NAG (N-acetyl glucosaminidase), A (net photosynthesis), g<sub>s</sub> (stomatal conductance), stem water potential (Ψ<sub>s</sub>), crop yield (Y).

**Table 3.** Soil chemical parameters, basal respiration, and microbial ratios in grapefruit and mandarin irrigation treatments.

Parameter	Grapefruit				Mandarin			
	TW	RW	TW <sub>c</sub>	RW <sub>c</sub>	TW	RW	TW <sub>c</sub>	RW <sub>c</sub>
<b>TOC</b>	0.99±0.11	0.92±0.01	1.10±0.06	0.91±0.07	0.75±0.04	0.81±0.07	1.24±0.07	0.77±0.09
<b>Total N</b>	0.19±0.01	0.14±0.01	0.19±0.01	0.12±0.02	0.13±0.01	0.14±0.01	0.26±0.05	0.16±0.01
<b>EC</b>	616±187	2486±221	1786±98	2070±143	839±91	2316±173	1326±84	1770±95
<b>pH</b>	8.01±0.24	8.43±0.27	8.11±0.15	8.09±0.19	8.18±0.22	8.30±0.17	8.30±0.24	8.41±0.20
<b>Respiration</b>	25.21±1.39	29.98±2.14	47.08±4.98	28.09±2.01	13.88±0.87	31.40±2.54	20.85±3.27	13.86±0.55
<b>Resp/TOC</b>	15.21±1.19	19.77±2.21	23.52±0.97	18.98±2.73	12.59±2.35	25.53±2.47	8.55±1.48	11.73±1.14
<b>B/F</b>	2.96±0.26	3.44±0.13	3.43±0.17	3.26±0.21	3.50±0.14	3.76±0.16	3.35±0.01	3.70±0.20
<b>G+/G-</b>	0.93±0.078	0.86±0.11	1.15±0.094	0.83±0.10	1.21±0.10	0.77±0.12	1.04±0.097	1.13±0.083

TOC (total organic C, ln %); Total N (ln %); EC (electrical conductivity,  $\mu\text{S cm}^{-1}$ ); Respiration (basal respiration,  $\text{mg CO}_2\text{-C kg}^{-1}\text{ soil day}^{-1}$ ); Resp/TOC (the ratio between basal respiration and TOC); B/F (ln bacterial to fungal fatty acid ratio); G+/G- (the ratio between Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacterial fatty acids). TW (transfer water); RW (reclaimed water); TW<sub>c</sub> (annual transfer water except summer irrigation with RW); RW<sub>c</sub> (annual RW irrigation except summer transfer water irrigation). Data are averages  $\pm$  standard deviation with N = 12.

**Table 4.** Correlation coefficients between factors obtained from the factor analysis of PLFAs and chemical and microbial variables. This table shows correlations for the PLFA analysis of the grapefruit and mandarin soils together, as well as for each soil separately.

	EC	pH	TOC	TN	Respiration	$\beta$ -glucosidase	Phosphatase	Urease	PPO	CBH	NAG
<b>Grapefruit and Mandarin</b>											
Factor 1	-0.001 (0.995)	0.219 (0.304)	-0.580 (0.003)	-0.498 (0.013)	-0.375 (0.071)	-0.269 (0.203)	-0.749 ( $<0.001$ )	0.099 (0.644)	-0.102 (0.635)	-0.285 (0.176)	-0.244 (0.250)
Factor 2	0.070 (0.744)	-0.450 (0.027)	-0.081 (0.708)	-0.337 (0.107)	0.314 (0.136)	0.160 (0.455)	0.027 (0.900)	0.568 (0.004)	-0.275 (0.193)	0.134 (0.534)	0.232 (0.275)
<b>Grapefruit</b>											
Factor 1	<b>0.586</b> <b>(0.045)</b>	0.348 (0.268)	0.302 (0.340)	-0.146 (0.650)	0.672 (0.017)	0.390 (0.210)	0.155 (0.630)	-0.070 (0.83)	0.159 (0.622)	0.651 (0.022)	0.686 (0.014)
Factor 2	-0.502 (0.097)	-0.834 (0.001)	0.337 (0.284)	0.237 (0.459)	0.254 (0.426)	-0.663 (0.019)	0.424 (0.169)	-0.878 ( $<0.001$ )	-0.703 (0.011)	-0.439 (0.153)	-0.470 (0.123)
<b>Mandarin</b>											
Factor 1	-0.446 (0.146)	-0.485 (0.110)	-0.443 (0.150)	-0.531 (0.076)	-0.473 (0.121)	-0.465 (0.127)	-0.680 (0.015)	-0.744 (0.006)	-0.742 (0.006)	-0.481 (0.113)	-0.542 (0.069)
Factor 2	0.172 (0.594)	-0.573 (0.052)	-0.114 (0.725)	-0.249 (0.435)	0.697 (0.012)	-0.159 (0.622)	-0.092 (0.776)	0.496 (0.101)	-0.530 (0.077)	-0.018 (0.955)	0.022 (0.947)

Abbreviations: EC (electrical conductivity), TOC (total organic C), TN (total nitrogen), PPO (poly-phenol oxidase), NAG (N-acetyl glucosaminidase). *P* values are in parentheses.

**Table 5.** The physiology, water status and yield of evaluated crops

Parameter*	Grapefruit				Mandarin			
	TW	RW	TW <sub>c</sub>	RW <sub>c</sub>	TW	RW	TW <sub>c</sub>	RW <sub>c</sub>
<b>A</b>	12.91±0.33	12.31±0.37	11.55±0.89	9.76±0.94	8.77±0.29	6.81±0.32	8.31±0.32	6.95±0.56
<b>g<sub>s</sub></b>	0.16±0.01	0.13±0.01	0.12±0.01	0.10±0.01	0.086±0.01	0.062±0.01	0.070±0.01	0.065±0.01
<b>ψ<sub>s</sub></b>	1.083±0.84	1.13±0.94	1.11±0.97	1.13±0.94	0.80±0.37	0.81±0.38	0.81±0.47	0.85±0.45
<b>Y</b>	96.67±12.25	101.67±14.72	91.25±11.58	103.33±15.97	35.86 ± 3.47	31.21 ± 2.14	45.26 ± 3.51	36.54 ± 2.87

Average values of gas exchange parameters (*net photosynthesis* –A,  $\mu\text{mol}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  - and *stomatal conductance* –g<sub>s</sub>,  $\text{mol}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ ), plant water status (*stem water potential* -ψ<sub>s</sub>, -MPa) and crop yield (Y,  $\text{t ha}^{-1}$ ). TW (transfer water); RW (reclaimed water); TW<sub>c</sub> (annual transfer water except summer irrigation with RW); RW<sub>c</sub> (annual RW irrigation except summer transfer water irrigation). Data are averages ± standard deviation with N =12



Figure 1

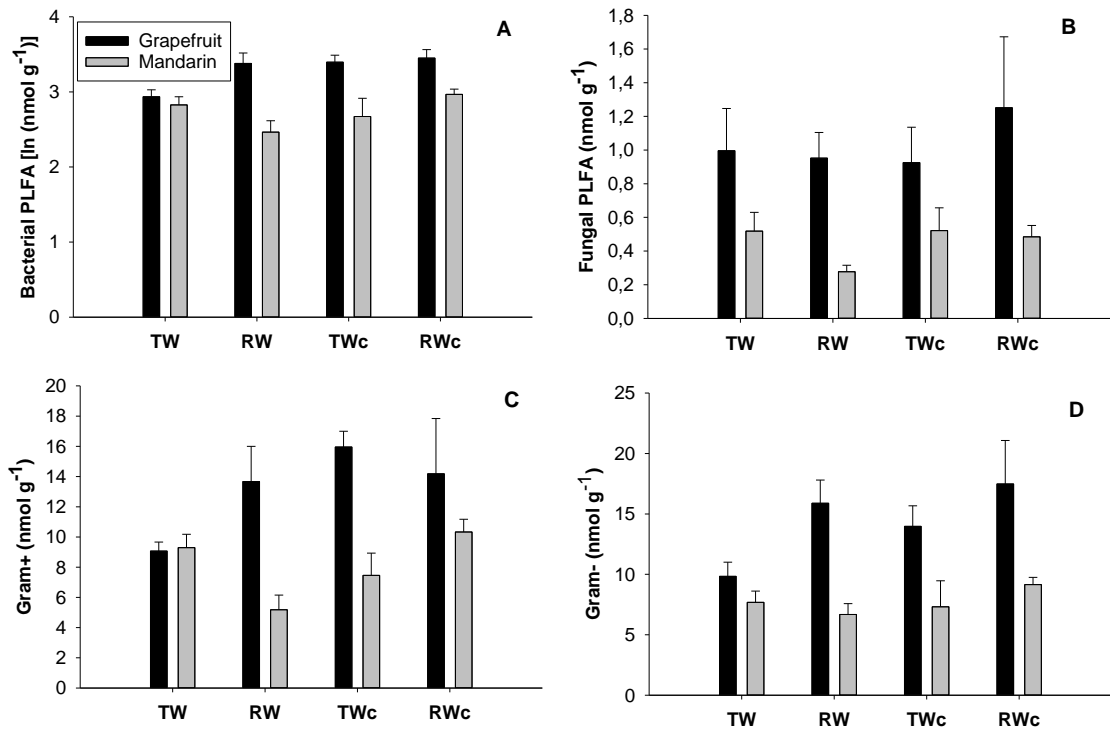


Figure 2

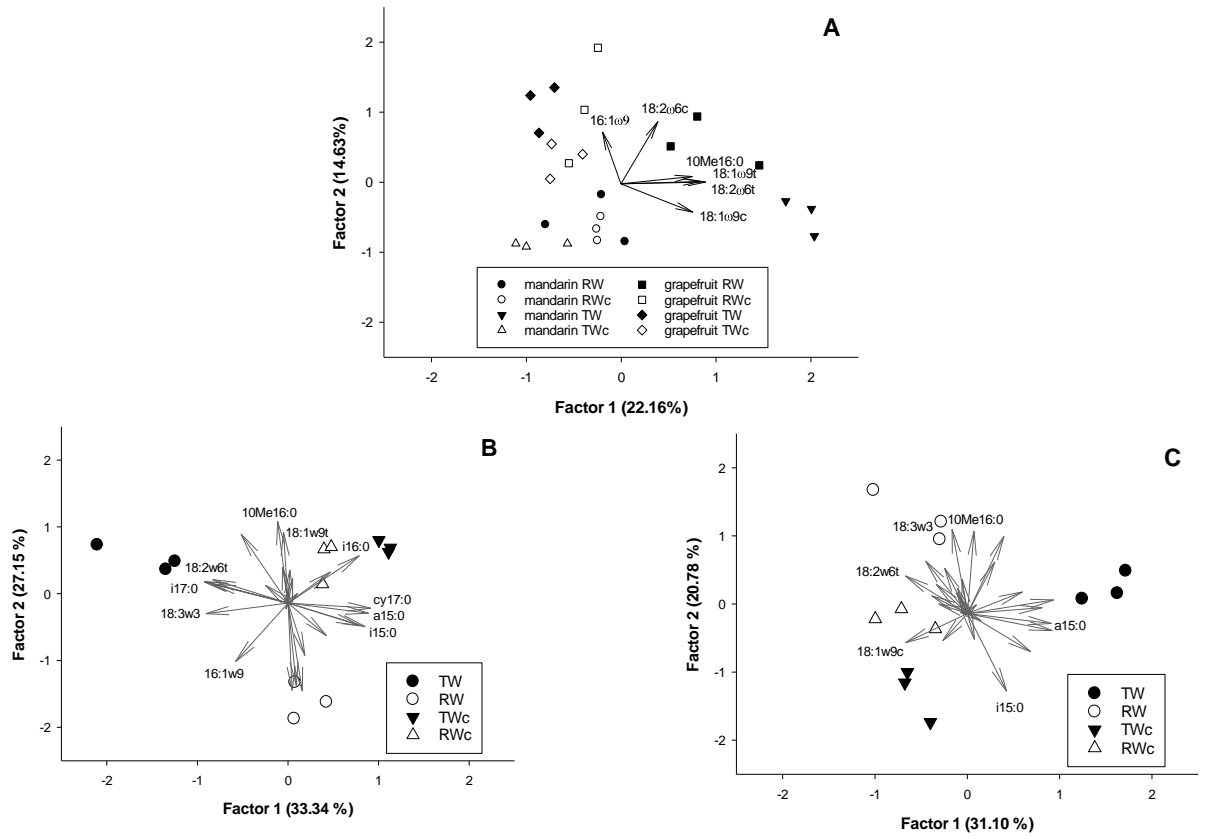


Figure 3

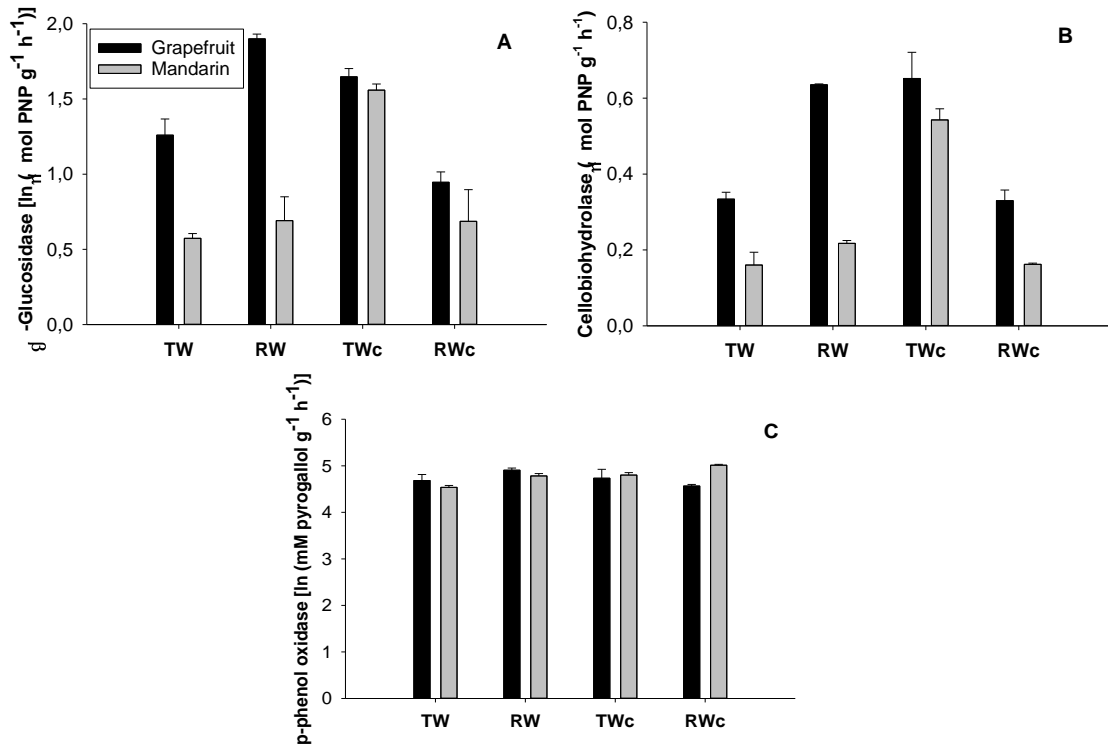


Figure 4

