Essential Oils Analyzed by GC-IR

Fig. 1: Spectral Maximum Chromatograms of Essential oils
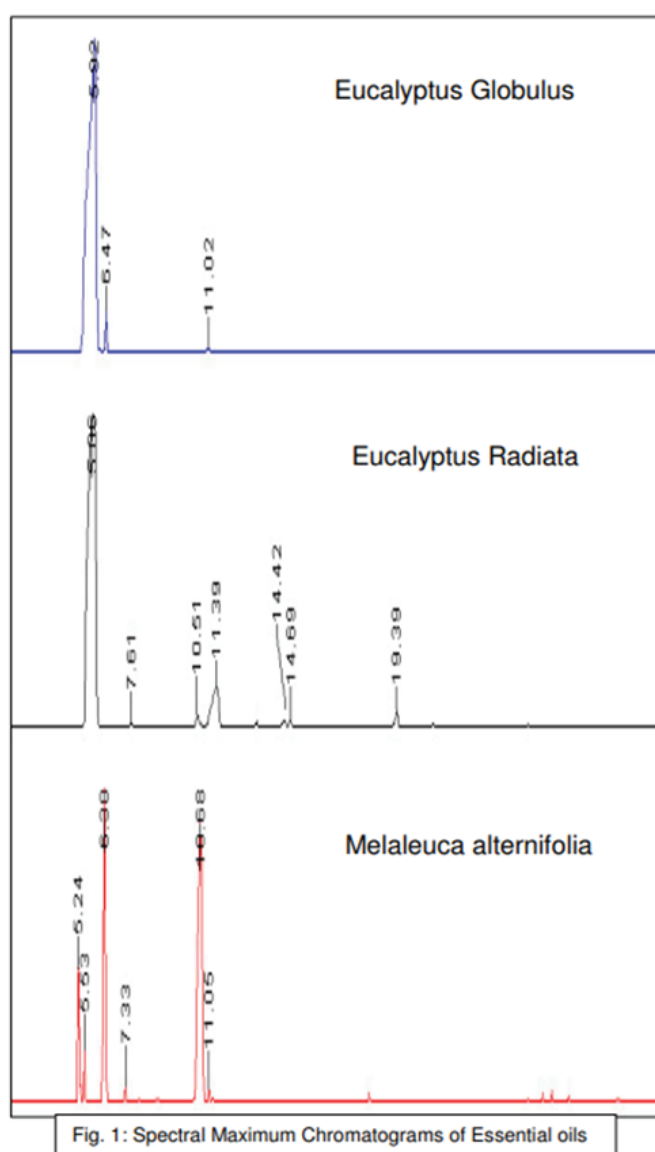
Essential oils of plants from every corner the world are the foundation for many fragrance, flavoring and "nutriceutical" products found in the marketplace. Often the chemicals which give an oil its distinctive qualities are low in abundance compared to the most prevalent species, and can be very similar in structure to components known from related oils previously analyzed. Analysis of these natural products can challenge the state of the art in the analytical lab. Infrared spectral analysis can provide a complementary, "orthogonal" detection method that can lend greater confidence to the identification process. This brief note demonstrates the ability to discriminate among structural isomers by IR spectra alone.

For this series of analyses, three Essential Oils [Eucalyptus globulus, Eucalyptus radiata, & Melaleuca alternifolia (tea tree oil)] were analyzed by deposition and IR detection after separation GC on a standard DB-5 column. Each exhibits a distinctive pattern as a Spectral Maximum Chromatogram (SMC) that plots peaks of highest IR absorbance across all wavelengths.

The DiscovIR–GC™ system automatically generates full IR spectra for each peak.
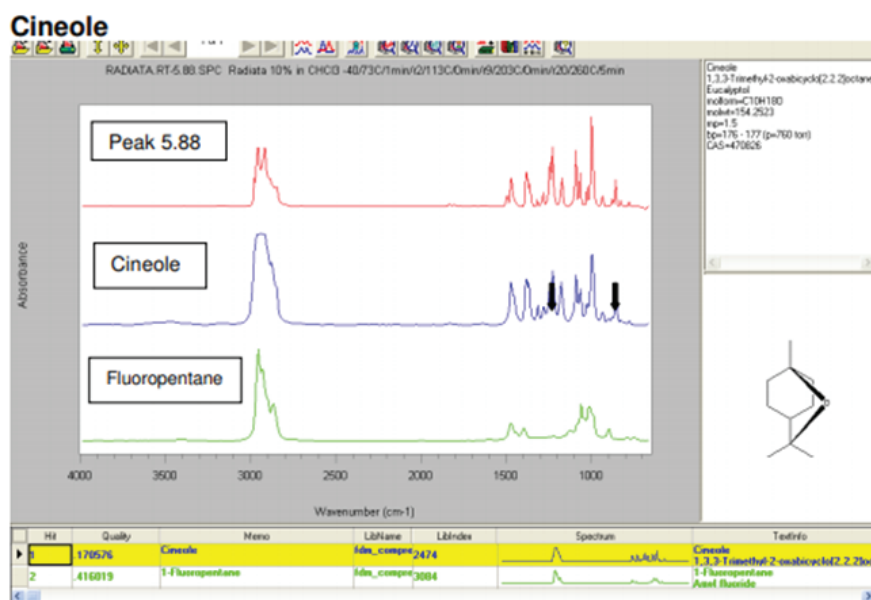Comparison of the spectra to the solid-phase IR libraries by the DiscovIR™ software yields proposed chemical ID's that correspond to the data from GCMS analysis.
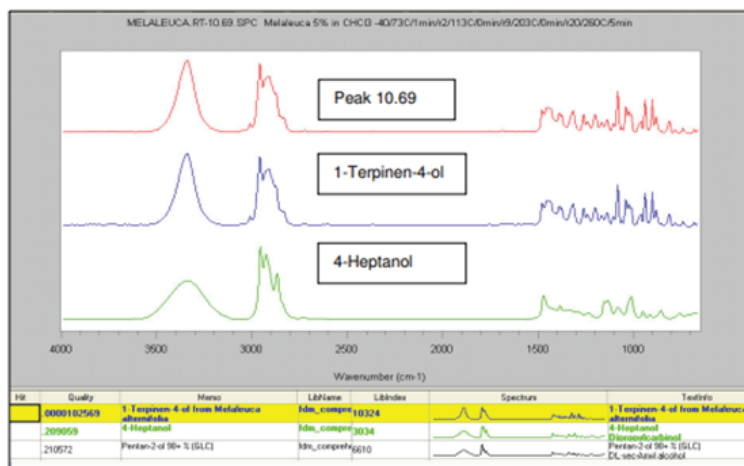
Four commercially available retail fragrances were analyzed by deposition and IR detection after separation GC on a standard DB-5 column. Each exhibits a distinctive pattern as a Spectral Peak Chromatogram (SpC) that plots peaks of highest IR absorbance across all wavelengths. The DiscovIR–GCTM system automatically generates full IR spectra for each peak.

Comparison of the spectra to the solid-phase IR libraries by the DiscovIRTM software can uniquely identify the unknowns. When the potent combination of Mass and IR library matching is used, structure assignments can be made with higher confidence. A key feature of Infrared analysis is that absorption at a certain wavelength is in direct proportion to the amount at hand. Therefore, relative quantities can be determined with confidence, avoiding errors due to disparity in ionization or presence of chromophores.

Compound Search using DiscovIR's Infrared library

Using the peak from E. radiata which elutes a 5.88 minutes (and corresponds to peaks in E. globulus & M. alternifolia), the library shows an overall good pattern match with Cineole.

SPECTRA ANALYSIS INSTRUMENTS, INC.
257 Simarano Drive, Marlborough, MA 01752
Tel: +1.508.281.6232 | Email: info@spectra-analysis.com

www.spectra-analysis.com

MELALEUCA.RT-10.69.SPC Melaleuca 5% in CHCl3 -40/73C/1min/12/113C/0min/9/203C/0min/20/260C/5min

Peak 10.69

1-Terpinen-4-ol

4-Heptanol

Wavenumber (cm-1)

| Hit	Quality	Memo	LibName	LibIndex	Spectrum	TextInfo
	0000182569	1-Terpinen-4-ol from Melaleuca alternifolia	Idm_compre	10324		1-Terpinen-4-ol from Melaleuca alternifolia
	209059	4-Heptanol	Idm_compre	3034		4-Heptanol DiscovAcabinol
	210572	Pentan-2-ol 98+ % (GLC)	Idm_compre	6610		Pentan-2-ol 98+ % (GLC) DL-sec-butyl alcohol

The 10.69 peak from M. Alternifolia was not found in the standard library that comes with the DiscovIR™ system. Research into additional IR libararies along with MS data gave a strong ID of 1-Terpinen-4-ol.

The spectrum was easily added to the DiscovIR™ library so future analyses would display this result.

1-Terpinen-4-ol

E radiata

E. globulus
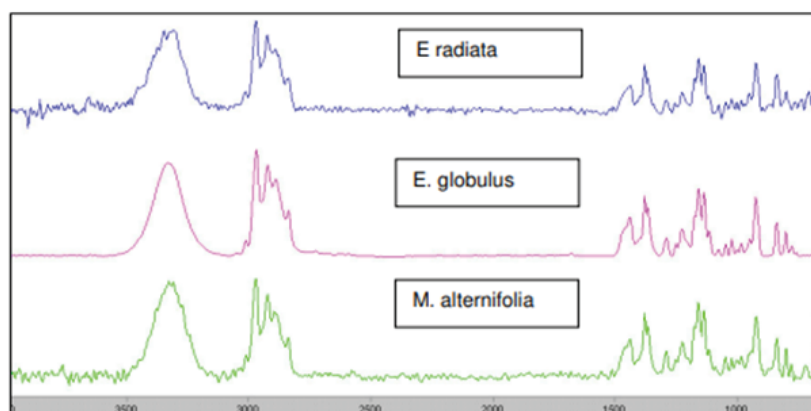
M. alternifolia

The three spectra here come from corresponding peaks from the three oils. E. radiata 11.39 The peaks from E. globulus at 11.02 min & M. alternifolia 11.05 are relatively small peaks (see figure 1), but the spectra here are of equal quality to the more substantial peak of E. radiata.
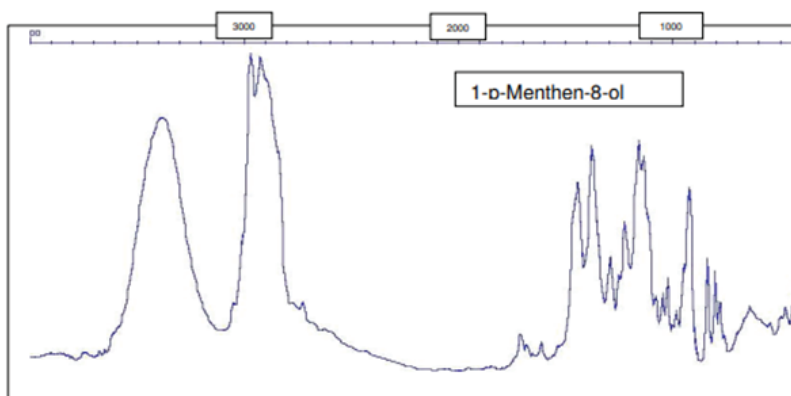
1-ᴅ-Menthen-8-ol

This spectrum of 1-p-menthen-8- ol from the literature corresponds closely to those above. Mass data from GCMS confirms the assignment

The data above are from the real-time deposition and detection procedure, even though the peaks are minor species, demonstrating the sensitivity of the system. An added feature of The DiscovIRTM System is the capability to re-scan the deposited track as many times as necessary to reinforce the signal and build a useful spectrum from out of the random noise, providing even better sensitivity when needed.

Sample Conditions:

Sample:	Commercially available essential oils
Concentration	10% in CHCl$_3$
Injection:	1 µL using split/splitless injector, split 50:1
Column:	DB5, 20-meter x 0.32-mm ID, 0.25-µm film
Conditions:	Helium carrier, 1 mL/min
Temp program:	70^{0}C for 1 min, 2^0/min up to 113^0, 9^0/min up to 203^0, 20^0/min to 260^0
Sample disc:	-40^{0}C

Injector, transfer line, restrictor tip all at 250^{0}C