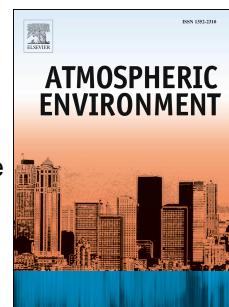


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Smoke aerosol chemistry and aging of Siberian biomass burning emissions in a large aerosol chamber

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Keywords: biomass burning; chamber experiments; aerosol emission factors; aging in dark conditions; anhydrosugars; dicarboxylic acids

Abstract

Vegetation open fires constitute a significant source of particulate pollutants on a global scale and play an important role in both atmospheric chemistry and climate change. To better understand the emission and aging characteristics of smoke aerosols, we performed small-scale fire experiments using the Large Aerosol Chamber (LAC, 1800 m³) with a focus on biomass burning from Siberian boreal coniferous forests. A series of burn experiments were conducted with typical Siberian biomass (pine and debris), simulating separately different combustion conditions, namely, flaming, smoldering and mixed phase.

Following smoke emission and dispersion in the combustion chamber, we investigated aging of aerosols under dark conditions. Here, we present experimental data on emission factors of total, elemental and organic carbon, water-soluble carbon as well as individual organic compounds, such as anhydrosugars, phenolic and dicarboxylic acids. We found that total carbon accounts for up to 80 % of the fine mode (PM_{2.5}) smoke aerosol. Higher PM_{2.5} emission factors were observed in the smoldering compared to flaming phase and in pine compared to debris smoldering phase. For low-temperature combustion, organic carbon (OC) contributed to more than 90 % of total carbon, whereas elemental carbon (EC) dominated the aerosol composition in flaming burns with a 60-70 % contribution to the total carbon mass. For all smoldering burns, levoglucosan (LG), a cellulose decomposition product, was the most abundant organic species (average LG/OC=0.26 for pine smoldering), followed by its isomer mannosan or dehydroabietic acid (DA), an important constituent of conifer resin (DA/OC = 0.033). A levoglucosan-to-mannosan ratio of about 3 was observed, which is consistent with ratios reported for coniferous biomass and more generally softwood.

The rate of aerosol removal for OC and individual organic compounds were investigated during aging in the chamber in terms of mass concentration loss rates over time under dark conditions and

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