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Comment

Interactive comment on “Dimer esters in α -pinene secondary organic aerosol: effect of hydroxyl radical, ozone, relative humidity and aerosol acidity” by K. Kristensen et al.

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General Comments:

This is a very fine manuscript. The comprehensive study presents detailed insights into the experimental conditions under which high-molecular weight dimers from alpha-pinene are formed. This is an actual topic in atmospheric sciences as high-molecular weight products are likely involved in new particle formation under ambient conditions. Unambiguous evidence is provided that high-molecular weight diesters are formed through ozonolysis and not through OH-initiated oxidation of alpha-pinene, and involve

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the participation of a stabilized Criegee intermediate (sCI), thus revising a previous formation mechanism, proposed in Yasmeen et al. (2010), where the high-molecular weight diesters have been explained by esterification of monomeric terpenoic acids in the particle phase. A reasonable explanation is given why in field studies conducted at K-puszta, Hungary, or the Blodgett forest, USA, the high-molecular weight diesters are mainly detected during night-time when ozone chemistry may occur. Evidence is also provided that diaterpenylic acid acetate (DTAA) is formed through OH-initiated oxidation of alpha-pinene and does not serve as a monomer for the MW 358 dimer.

Specific comments:

1) Introduction – page 32532 - lines 5-14; Figure 1: known reactions are discussed here for the sCI which lead to first-generation products such as pinonaldehyde and pinic acid; especially, the formation of pinic acid is relevant as it is incorporated into high-molecular weight diesters with MW 358 and 368. However, nothing is said about reactions that lead to terpenylic acid, which is also incorporated into high-molecular weight dimers with MW 344 and 358. In this respect, a pathway involving ozonolysis of alpha-pinene and campholenic aldehyde, previously suggested by Claeys et al. (2009), has been supported in recent studies by Iinuma et al. (2013) and Kahnt et al. (2014; in press). The reaction of alpha-pinene and ozone leads to alpha-pinene oxide, which can rearrange to campholenic aldehyde. As campholenic aldehyde contains a double bond it can react further with ozone to form terpenylic aldehyde, which can be further oxidized in the particle phase to terpenylic acid. It is worth noting that a sCI has been proposed to play a role in the formation of terpenylaldehyde through ozonolysis of campholenic aldehyde (Claeys et al. 2009; supporting information; Scheme S2).

Refs.:

Iinuma, Y.; Kahnt, A.; Mutzel, A.; Boge, O.; Herrmann, H.: Ozone-driven secondary organic aerosol production chain, *Environ. Sci. Technol.*, 47, 3639–3647, 2013.

Kahnt, A.; Iinuma, Y.; Mutzel, A.; Boge, O.; Claeys, M.; Herrmann, H.: Campholenic

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aldehyde ozonolysis: a mechanism leading to specific biogenic secondary organic aerosol constituents, *Atmos. Chem. Phys.*, 14, in press; doi:10.5194/acp-14-1-2014 (*Atmos. Chem. Phys. Discuss.*, 13, 22487-22534, 2013).

2) Introduction – page 32533 – lines 19-29: Reference should be made to the article by Hoffmann et al. (1998); this could best be done in the paragraph, where arguments are given against the proposed esterification mechanism. This is in my opinion the first article where mention is made of high-molecular weight compounds in an α pinene ozonolysis smog chamber experiment, including the major MW 358 compound, which is shown to be formed in the gas phase concomitantly with cis-pinonic acid, cis-pinonic acid and a MW 172 monomer, tentatively attributed to cis-norpinonic acid. At a later stage, the MW 172 monomer was structurally revised as the lactone-containing terpenylic acid (Claeys et al., 2009).

Ref.:

Hoffmann, T.; Bandur, R.; Marggraf, U.; Linscheid, M.: Molecular composition of organic aerosols formed in the alpha-pinene/O₃ reaction: Implications for new particle formation processes, *J. Geophys. Res.-Atmos.*, 103, (D19), 25569-25578, 1998.

3) Experimental – page 32538 – lines 17-28: It is not completely clear how the quantitation was done. Was there any correction done for losses of the analytes during sample workup? Was an internal recovery standard used to compensate for losses during sample workup?

4) Page 32538 – lines 25-26: The dominant acids in the low alpha-pinene OH-initiated oxidation experiments with the OH radical are MBTCA and DTAA. With respect to the formation mechanism of MBTCA, sufficient information and citations to previous work are given at various places in the text. However, with respect to the formation of DTAA, reference to previous work is missing. The authors could refer to Claeys et al. (2009), where DTAA has been explained through OH-initiated oxidation of alpha-pinene (Scheme 2 in the cited article). It is worth mentioning that part of this pathway

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has been previously suggested in a theoretical study by Vereecken et al. (2007).

Ref.:

Vereecken, L.; Muller, J.-F.; Peeters, J.: Low-volatility polyoxygenates in the OH-initiated atmospheric oxidation of alpha-pinene: impact of non-traditional peroxy radical chemistry, *Phys. Chem. Chem. Phys.*, 9, 5241–5248, 2007.

5) Page 32541 – line 10: A novel dimer ester with MW 388, also previously observed by Gao et al. (2010), is detected. Has MS/MS been performed to obtain information about the monomeric residues? If so, it would be worthwhile to include this information.

Technical corrections:

Abstract – page 32531 – line 4: replace “gas-phase” by “gas phase”

Page 32534 – line 23: replace “detector” by “detection”

Page 32538 – line 12: replace “inlet” by “source”

Page 32541 – line 11: replace “esters” by “ester”

Page 32541 – line 16: replace “pininc” by “pinic”

Page 32547 – lines 6, 8 and 16: replace “gas-phase” by “gas phase”

References: titles of journal articles should not be capitalized; the ref. Gao et al. (2010) should be corrected.

Figure S1: the structure of MBTCA should be corrected; the structure is correct in Table 2 of the main text; also, replace “Diaterpenylci” by “Diaterpenylic”.

Interactive comment on *Atmos. Chem. Phys. Discuss.*, 13, 32529, 2013.

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