

The Tangle Model: An Application of Topology to Biology

The tangle model was developed in the 1980's by professors DeWitt Sumner and Claus Ernst. This model uses the mathematics of tangles to model protein-DNA binding. An n -string tangle is a pair (B, t) where B is a 3-dimensional ball and t is a collection of n non-intersecting curves properly embedded in B . N -string tangles are formed by placing $2n$ points on the boundary of B , and attaching n non-intersecting curves inside B . Tangles, like knots and links, are studied through their diagrams. In the tangle model for DNA site-specific recombination, one is required to solve simultaneous equations for unknown tangles which are summands of observed DNA knots and links. This discussion will give a review of the tangle model including definitions.