



Research article

Differential phosphatidic acid metabolism in barley leaves and roots induced by chilling temperature

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ABSTRACT

Phosphatidic acid (PA) is an important bioactive lipid that mediates chilling responses in barley. Modifications in the lipid composition of cellular membranes during chilling are essential to maintain their integrity and fluidity. First, we investigated the molecular species of PA present in leaves and roots by ESI-MS/MS, to evaluate the modifications that occur in response to chilling. We demonstrated that PA pools in leaves differ from PA fatty acid composition in roots. Compared with plants grown at 25 °C, the short-term and long-term chilling for 3 h and 36 h at 4 °C not produced significant changes in PA molecular species. The endogenous DAG and PA phosphorylation by *in vitro* DAG and PA kinase activities showed higher activity in leaves compared with that in root, and they showed contrasting responses to chilling. Similarly, PA removal by phosphatidate phosphohydrolase was tested, showing that this activity was specifically increased in response to chilling in roots. The findings presented here may be helpful to understand how the PA signal is modulated between tissues, and may serve to highlight the importance of knowing the basal PA pools in different plant organs.

1. Introduction

Plants are continuously confronted with a great diversity of chemical and physical signals during their life cycle. To cope with these variable environmental conditions, they have developed sensing and signalling mechanisms (Ruelland et al., 2015; Shabala, 2017). Chilling is a physical change that takes place when the plant is exposed to low, non-freezing temperatures. According to their relative chilling sensitivity, plants are classified as resistant, sensitive and extremely sensitive (Kratsch and Wise, 2000). Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) is a chilling-resistant crop species with considerable economic importance in central-eastern Argentina (García et al., 2018). It has spring and winter crop growth habits, with the latter requiring a period of cold-chilling to induce flowering. This fact reflects the tolerance of barley to different environmental conditions (Gürel et al., 2016). Chilling-resistant plants have also developed diverse strategies such as transcriptome

reprogramming and biochemical membrane remodelling to survive chilling and freezing stress (Ruelland and Zachowski, 2010; Shabala, 2017). Modifications in the lipid composition of cellular membranes during chilling are essential to maintain their integrity and fluidity (Li et al., 2004; Ruelland and Zachowski, 2010; Zheng et al., 2016). In general, and under drought conditions, the remodelling of membrane lipid composition comprises two phenomena. The first one involves changes in the proportions of the polar lipid head group (Li et al., 2014), while the second includes changes in the saturation level and in the chain length of fatty acids forming glycerolipid non-polar tails (Yu and Li, 2014).

Phosphatidic acid (PA) is a minor phospholipid but an important signal lipid (Liu et al., 2013; Hong et al., 2016). It is also known as a key precursor for the synthesis of major glycerophospholipids and galactolipids (Dubots et al., 2012). PA is structurally the simplest type of glycerophospholipids, although it comprises a number of molecular

Abbreviations: DAG, diacylglycerol; DAGL, diacylglycerol lipase; DAGK, diacylglycerol kinase; DGPP, diacylglycerol pyrophosphate; FAs, fatty acids; G-3-P, glycerol-3-phosphate; LPA, lysophosphatidic acid; MAG, monoacylglycerol; MAGL, monoacylglycerol lipase; NEM, N-ethylmaleimide; PA, phosphatidic acid; PAK, phosphatidate kinase; PAPI, NEM-sensitive Mg²⁺-dependent phosphatidate phosphohydrolase; PAP2, NEM-insensitive Mg²⁺-independent phosphatidate phosphohydrolase; PC, phosphatidylcholine; PLC, phospholipase C; PLD, phospholipase D; TLC, thin layer chromatography; WSP, water soluble products

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species, which differ in acyl chain length, number of acyl double bonds, and acyl linkage at the sn-1 and sn-2 positions (Testerink and Munnik, 2011). PA levels increase fast and transiently within minutes in response to chilling (Peppino Margutti et al., 2017). Families of multiple enzymes that regulate the timing, location, amount, and molecular species of PA mediate the metabolism of signalling PA (Arisz et al., 2009). Available data suggest that phospholipase D (PLD), which acts hydrolytically on membrane phospholipids, and diacylglycerol kinase (DAGK), which phosphorylates diacylglycerol (DAG), are the two main routes that produce signalling PA (Testerink and Munnik, 2011). On the other hand, enzymes that metabolize PA play an important role in switching off the PA signal. It has been shown that it can be carried out by several enzymes: (1) phosphatidate phosphohydrolase type 2 (PAP2) that dephosphorylates PA to produce DAG, (2) PA kinase that phosphorylates PA to form DGPP, and (3) PA-selective A type phospholipases (PLA) that deacylate PA to produce LPA and free fatty acids (FFAs). In addition to attenuating PA function, the activity of these enzymes can also generate new lipid signals, such as DAG, DGPP, FFAs and LPA (Testerink and Munnik, 2011; Liu et al., 2013). PA mediates cellular processes through several modes of action. These include binding to its targeted proteins to modulate their activity and modifying the biophysical properties of the membrane (Villasuso et al., 2014; Astorquiza et al., 2016; Pokotylo et al., 2018). PA acts as a signalling lipid in the plant's response to the cold. However, the accumulation of PA can affect membrane integrity (Ruelland and Zachowski, 2010). Several studies show that in model plants such as *Arabidopsis*, PLD and PA play important and complex roles in the chilling and freezing response. The cellular functions of two PLDs, PLD α and PLD δ , have been implicated in the freezing induced hydrolysis of phospholipids. PLD α 1-deficient *Arabidopsis* plants displayed less phospholipid degradation and greater freezing tolerance than wild-type plants, suggesting a hydrolytic role for PLD α 1 under severe stress conditions (Welti et al., 2002). By contrast, a knockout of PLD δ renders *Arabidopsis* plants more sensitive to freezing. This opposite behaviour is likely evoked by PLD α -triggered ROS production and PLD δ -mediated ROS reduction (Zhang et al., 2009). Some biophysical evidence suggests that polar lipids such as PA, which lack a head group, can form a destabilized hexagonal II-type phase and thus have a negative effect on membrane stability during freezing (Kooijman and Burger, 2009; Testerink and Munnik, 2011). By contrast, the metabolism of PA toward DAG or DGPP formation may prevent or avoid membrane destabilization (Arisz et al., 2018; Pokotylo et al., 2018). Although some mechanisms by which PA mediates specific processes in the response of barley to chilling are well known, our understanding of PA metabolism and remodelling is still fragmentary. Thus, the aim of this study was to investigate molecular species of PA present in leaves and roots and to evaluate the modifications that occur in response to chilling. We demonstrated that PA pools in leaves differ from PA fatty acid composition in roots. We also showed that short- and long-term chilling modulated enzymatic activities in barley tissues.

2. Methods

2.1. Materials

[2-³H]glycerol (0.8 Ci/mmol) was obtained from Perkin Elmer (Boston, MA, USA) and pre-blended dry fluor 2a70 (98% PPO and 2% bis-MSB) was obtained from Research Products International Corp. (Mount Prospect, IL, USA). The [³²P] γ -ATP (370 Mbq ml⁻¹) was obtained from Amersham Pharmacia Biotech (UK). Solvents and TLC plates were purchased from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany). The fluorescence-labelled phospholipid was obtained from Avanti Polar Lipids. Other chemicals were from Sigma.

2.2. Plant materials, growth conditions, and stress treatment

Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*, cv. scarlett) seeds were surface sterilized, and soaked in sterilized water for 4 days in the dark at 25 °C (control). Seedlings were obtained from whole grains, surface sterilized, grown in a growth chamber on disks of filter paper moistened with sterilized water, in Petri dishes (10-cm diameter), for 4 days in the dark at 25 °C, and then harvested. Chilling stress was induced by incubating seedlings at 4 °C for 3 and 36 h (Peppino Margutti et al., 2017). Roots and leaves were separated and placed in liquid nitrogen for corresponding experiments.

2.3. Lipid extraction and ESI-MS/MS analysis

After stress treatment, samples were immediately immersed in liquid nitrogen and used for ESI-MS/MS lipid profiling. Lipid extraction was performed as described by Welti et al. (2002). For each sample, 3 roots or leaves (approximately 200 mg) were immersed in 3 ml of isopropanol (0.01% w/v 2,6-Di-tert-butyl-4-methylphenol) at 75 °C for 15 min. These conditions led to the inactivation of lipid-modifying or -degrading enzymes (Munnik and Heilmann, 2013). Then, 1.5 ml of chloroform and 0.6 ml of distilled water were added. The tubes were shaken for 1 h at room temperature, and then the extract was removed. The tissues were re-extracted with chloroform/methanol (2:1) with 0.01% 2,6-Di-tert-butyl-4-methylphenol five times, with 30 min of agitation each time, until all of the remaining plant tissue appeared white. The combined extracts were washed once with 1 ml of 1 M KCl and once with 2 ml of water. The organic phase was recovered, and the solvent was evaporated under a nitrogen stream. The lipid extracts were sealed in a glass tube with a Teflon tape screw cap and stored at -20 °C until the analysis. The remaining plant tissues were heated overnight at 105 °C and weighed. These weights are described as plant "dry weight". Lipid samples were analysed on a triple quadrupole MS/MS equipped for ESI. The lipid analyses described here were performed at the Kansas Lipidomics Research Center Analytical laboratory. Data processing was performed as previously described by Li et al. (2008). The lipids in each class were quantified in comparison to two internal class standards. Three replicates of each treatment for each tissue were analysed. The quantification, expressed as nmol mg⁻¹ dry wt, from all three replicates was averaged and used to calculate the standard deviations. The Q-test was performed on the total amount of lipid in each head group class, and data from discordant samples were removed (Li et al., 2008).

2.4. Enzymatic assays

2.4.1. Preparation of membranes

The prepared controls and stressed tissues were thawed and homogenized in 10 vol of 50 mM HEPES (pH 7.4) containing 0.25 M sucrose, 5 mM KCl, 1 mM EDTA, and protease inhibitors (1 mg ml⁻¹ leupeptin, 1 mM phenyl methane sulfonyl fluoride (PMSF), 1 mg mL⁻¹ aprotinin). The homogenate was centrifuged at 1000 \times g for 15 min at 4 °C to remove unbroken cells and cell debris, and the resulting supernatant was further centrifuged at 105,000 \times g for 60 min at 4 °C. The supernatant was eliminated, and the pellet was resuspended in 50 mM HEPES (pH 7.4) and used as crude membrane fraction. Protein concentration of samples was measured using Bradford reagent with BSA as standard (Bradford, 1976; Meringer et al., 2012).

2.4.2. DAG and PA kinase assays

DAG and PA kinase lipid kinases were simultaneously assayed using endogenous lipids as substrates, unless otherwise stated. This method involves monitoring the appearance of labelled lipids as ³²P-PA or ³²P-DGPP after phosphotransfer from [γ -³²P]ATP to DAG or PA, respectively. The membrane fraction isolated (60 μ g protein) as above was added to a thermally equilibrated (30 °C) 50 mM HEPES buffer (pH 7.4), 0.1 mM EDTA, 0.5 mM 1,4-Dithioerythritol, 10 mM MgCl₂,

0.1 mM sodium orthovanadate, 1 mM Mg^{2+} -ATP, and $[\gamma\text{-}^{32}P]$ ATP (370 MBq). Lipid kinase activities were assayed simultaneously using endogenous lipids as substrates (Racagni et al., 2008). Lipid phosphorylation was allowed to proceed for 2 min at 30 °C in a final volume of 100 μ L, and reaction was stopped by addition of 1.5 mL chloroform/methanol (1:2, v/v).

2.4.3. PA and DGPP extraction and separation

Lipids were extracted from membranes following Racagni et al. (2008). Phospholipids were separated by TLC. Samples were spotted on silica gel plates presoaked with 1% of potassium oxalate solution and heated at 110 °C for 60 min just before use. Plates were developed with chloroform/methanol/acetone/acetic acid/water (40:14:15:12:7, v/v) for the first dimension, and chloroform/pyridine/formic acid (35:30:7, v/v) for the second dimension. The position of radiolabeled lipids was determined by autoradiography on NEM™ (Life Science Products) film. Spots were scraped off the plates, and fractions were counted in a scintillation counter.

2.4.4. Preparation of radiolabeled PA and phosphatidate phosphohydrolase type 2 activity assays

Radioactive PA was obtained from $[2\text{-}^3H]$ glycerol-PC ($[^3H]$ PC), which was synthesized from bovine retinas incubated with $[2\text{-}^3H]$ glycerol (200 mCi/mmol) as previously described (Gaveglio et al., 2011). $[^3H]$ PA specific activity was calculated by measuring the phosphorous and radioactivity of an aliquot of the substrate (Gaveglio et al., 2011). PAP activities are differentiated according to NEM-sensitivity. This thiol-reactive compound inhibits PAP1 activity but does not affect PAP2 activity. To determine NEM-insensitive phosphatidate phosphohydrolase type 2 (PAP2) activity, the assay mixture consisted of 50 mM Tris-maleate buffer, pH 6.5, 1 mM DTT, 1 mM EDTA plus 1 mM EGTA, 4.2 mM NEM, and 50 μ g of membrane protein in a volume of 0.1 mL. The reaction was started by addition of 0.1 mM $[2\text{-}^3H]$ phosphatidate, continued for 20 min at 37 °C, and stopped by addition of chloroform/methanol (2:1, v/v). DAG (the product of PAP₂ activity) was separated by gradient-thickness thin-layer chromatography on silica gel G and developed with hexane:diethyl ether:acetic acid (35:65:1, v/v). In this system, solvent DAG migrates to the three fourths of the plate and PA and MAG stay in the origin. To separate MAG from PA, the chromatogram was rechromatographed up to the middle of the plate by using hexane:diethyl ether:acetic acid (20:80:2.3, v/v) as developing solvent. Lipids were measured by scintillation after the addition of 0.5 mL water and 10 mL of 5% pre-blended dry fluor 2a70 toluene/detergent (4:1, v/v) (Gaveglio et al., 2016). PAP2 activity was expressed as the sum of $DPM([^3H]diacylglycerol + [^3H] monoacylglycerol) \cdot (mg \text{ protein} \cdot 20min)^{-1}$.

2.4.5. Preparation of radiolabeled MAG and MAGL assays

Radioactive MAG were obtained from $[2\text{-}^3H]$ glycerol-TAG ($[^3H]$ TAG), which was synthesized from bovine retinas incubated with $[2\text{-}^3H]$ glycerol (200 mCi/mmol) as previously described Pascual et al. (2013). $[^3H]$ MAG specific activity was calculated by measuring the fatty acid content and the radioactivity of an aliquot the substrate (Pascual et al., 2013). Fatty acid composition of MAG was determined by gas chromatography: C16:0 45.1, C16:1 0.8, C17:0 0.9, C16:0 45.1, C18:0 26.5, C18:2n-6 1.8, C18:3n-6 1.2, C20:3n-6 1.2, C20:4n-6 11.5 (% composition). For enzymatic tests, protein (100 μ g) was incubated with $[^3H]$ MAG (10 μ M) previously sonicated with fatty acid-free BSA (0.125% w/v), in a total volume of 200 μ L Tris-HCl buffer (10 mM, pH 7.2) containing 1 mM EDTA, for 15 min at 37 °C. MAGL enzymatic reaction was stopped by adding 400 μ L chloroform:methanol (1:1,v/v), followed by vortex mixing the tubes twice and placing them on ice. Phases were separated by centrifugation for 5 min at 2500 rpm, and the aqueous phase from Folch extraction containing radiolabeled water-soluble products (glycerol and/or glycerol 3- phosphate) was concentrated to dryness and counted by liquid scintillation. Radiolabeled

samples were counted as was indicated in 2.4.4.

2.4.6. PLA assay

For enzymatic tests, protein (80 μ g) was incubated with 3 μ L of liposomes in a total volume of 100 μ L of MES-KOH, pH 6.8, and 1 mM $CaCl_2$ at 33 °C for 30 min. Reactions were stopped with 2 vol of the stopping solution (methanol:chloroform 2:1, v/v). 1 vol 0.1 M KCl was subsequently added, followed by incubation at -20 °C for 20 min. After centrifugation for 2 min at 3300 \times g, the organic phase was evaporated under a stream of nitrogen and redissolved in 20 μ L chloroform for thin-layer chromatography on silica gel 60 (Merck, Darmstadt, Germany) in a solvent made up of chloroform:methanol:water (65:25:4, v/v). Plates were dried and scanned. Fluorescence (excitation 460 nm, emission 534 nm) from lipids was measured in a fluorescence spectrophotometer (Image Station 4000 MM PRO-Carestream Molecular Imaging). Fluorescently labelled lipids were visualized with a UV light box (FBTIV-88, Fisher Scientific). The spots marked were scraped from the plates and placed in 600 μ L chloroform:methanol:water (5:5:1, v/v/v), vortexed, and centrifuged for 5 min at 15,000 \times g. Fluorescence (excitation 460 nm, emission 534 nm) from the eluted lipids was measured with a fluorescence spectrofluorometer (Horiba-Fluoromax-3).

3. Statistical analysis

To determine the statistical difference between at least one pair of means, analysis of variance test (ANOVA) was used. When the assumptions of homogeneity of variance (Levene test) and normality (Shapiro Wilk test) were not checked, corresponding transformations were performed using the appropriate functions. To determine significant differences between treatments, Duncan's Test was applied, with a significance level of 0.05 ($P < 0.05$). The statistical program used was InfoStat (2015e version, Grupo InfoStat, Facultad de Ciencias Agropecuarias, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina). Software R version 3.1.2 was used for ESI-MS/MS analysis from Excel-grouped data. Factor Analysis was performed as exploratory multivariate analysis tools that allow the reduction of the dimensionality of large datasets generated by ESI-MS/MS. The factor analysis was performed using the principal factor method, as the extraction method was applied iteratively. The correlations were calculated as co-variance analysis.

For the enzymatic assay the results are shown as the means \pm SEM for at least three independent experiments. Statistical analyses were evaluated by Duncan's test and by Student's test (Fig. S1), and performed using Origin Pro 8 Copyright 1991–2008. Statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$.

4. Results

4.1. ESI-MS/MS analysis of PA molecular species

We have demonstrated the action of PLD on membrane phospholipids in response to short- and long-term chilling stress in barley seedlings. Besides, PA was shown to be a key metabolic intermediate and a second messenger that differentially modulates chilling response in barley tissues (Peppino Margutti et al., 2017). We wondered whether short- and long-term chilling stress was also able to modulate PA total content. To answer this, seedlings were incubated at 4 °C for 3 and 36 h and then PA levels were evaluated in leaves and roots using ESI-MS/MS. Fig. 1 shows that neither short- nor long-term chilling treatment modified PA levels in barley tissues. This may indicate that chilling exposure was a moderate stress condition. As mentioned earlier, PA is a group of molecules that differ in their fatty acids moieties. To gain further insight into the metabolism of PA, we studied the PA fatty acid composition of barley tissues incubated for 3 and 36 h at 4 °C (Fig. 2). The analysis allowed the identification and relative quantification of 10 different molecular species of PA, each species being characterized by the couple of acyl chains that composes it. PA molecular species

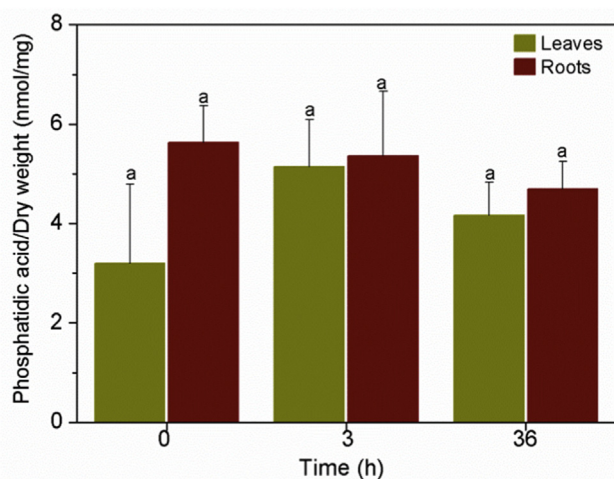


Fig. 1. ESI-MS/MS quantification of phosphatidic acid in barley tissues. After chilling treatment, induced by incubating seedlings at 4 °C for 3 and 36 h, leaves (green bars) and roots (red bars) were separated and immersed in 3 ml of isopropanol (0.01% w/v 2,6-Di-tert-butyl-4-methylphenol) at 75 °C for 15 min. Then, phosphatidic acid was extracted and analysed as described in Section 2.3. The values are the means \pm SEM (n = 3). (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

identified contained C16 and/or C18 acyl chains (Welti et al., 2002). The major molecular species of PA are C34:2 (18:2–16:0) and C36:4 (di18:2 or 18:1–18:2), total acyl chain: double bonds (Welti et al., 2002). Compared with plants grown at 25 °C (T0), short-term and long-term chilling for 3 h (T3) and 36 h (T36) at 4 °C not produced significant changes in PA molecular species (Fig. 2A and B). Although a slight increasing trend can be observed in molecular species containing C34:2 and C36:4 of leaves (Fig. 2A).

Fig. 3 shows the comparison between tissues of relative molecular species compositions of PA pools in the 3 conditions (T0, T3 and T36). Fig. 3A shows that fatty acids moieties composition in leaves and roots from plants grown at 25 °C were similar. However, some difference tissue specific can be observed. The proportion of C34:2 and C36:4 chains in PA molecular species was higher in roots than in leaves. In contrast, the proportion of C34:1, C34:3, C36:3, C36:5 and C36:6 was higher in leaves than in roots.

When plants were submitted to short- (Fig. 3B) or long-term (Fig. 3C) chilling, relative molecular species compositions of PA pools was the same for leaves and roots in the both chilling condition.

As PA composition clearly differs between roots and leaves, a Factorial data analysis was performed. This factor analysis of data from leaf and root tissues during short- and long-term chilling stress shows that one axis (F1) is sufficient to discriminate between data for each one, with leaf data being associated with positive values on the F1 axis and root data being associated with negative values on the F2 axis (Fig. 4A). Interestingly, factor F1 is highly correlated with the PA species containing C18:3 (C34:3, C36:3, C36:4, C36:5, C36:6) (Fig. 4B).

4.2. Enzyme activities involved in PA metabolism

The PA signal is closely related to the production of another lipid signal. PA may be phosphorylated to DGPP, dephosphorylated to DAG or deacylated to LPA. Besides, it has been shown that DAG may act as a precursor to PA via DAGK. As mentioned before, PA molecules differ in their fatty acid moieties. As a consequence, the production of specific PA pools may affect enzyme activities. In the next experiment, we assayed the enzymatic activities involved in PA signal attenuation. Lipid kinase activities (DAGK and PAK) were assayed simultaneously using endogenous lipids as substrates. A phosphorylation assay of endogenous DAG and PA was carried out with the 105,000 \times g membrane fraction in the presence of radiolabeled ATP. Fig. 5A shows that basal DAGK was more active in leaves than in roots (23 ± 2.3 (pmol (mg prot min.)⁻¹) vs 13.6 ± 2 (pmol (mg prot min.)⁻¹, $P < 0.05$). The opposite behaviour was observed in leaves with respect to roots when plants were exposed to chilling. In leaves, DAGK activity (3 ± 0.7 (pmol (mg prot min.)⁻¹); n = 3) decreased after short-term chilling treatment, with respect to the control (23 ± 2 (pmol (mg prot min.)⁻¹); n = 3). This effect was also observed after long-term chilling. By contrast, DAGK activity (25 ± 4 (pmol (mg prot min.)⁻¹); n = 3) increased in roots after chilling treatment for 3 h, with respect to the control (14 ± 2 (pmol (mg prot min.)⁻¹); n = 3). This indicates that short-term chilling modified DAGK activity in roots in a positive manner, although this effect was not observed after long-term chilling. A decrease in DAG phosphorylation (5 ± 1 (pmol (mg prot min.)⁻¹); n = 3) occurred after chilling treatment for 36 h, with respect to the control (14 ± 2 (pmol (mg prot min.)⁻¹); n = 3). Similar trends were observed in PAK activity. In leaves, PAK activity was detected in 105,000 \times g membrane fractions with a specific activity of 12 (pmol (mg prot min.)⁻¹). PAK activity decreased with short-term chilling (Fig. 5B). The opposite effect was observed in roots, where PAK activity increased \sim 50% with short-term chilling stress (Fig. 5B).

In the next experiment, PA desphorylation was studied. The activity of PAP2 is coupled mainly to PLD activity because the main product of hydrolytic PLD activity, PA, is the substrate used by PAP2 to yield DAG. DAGL activity that produces MAG was assayed in a coupled reaction

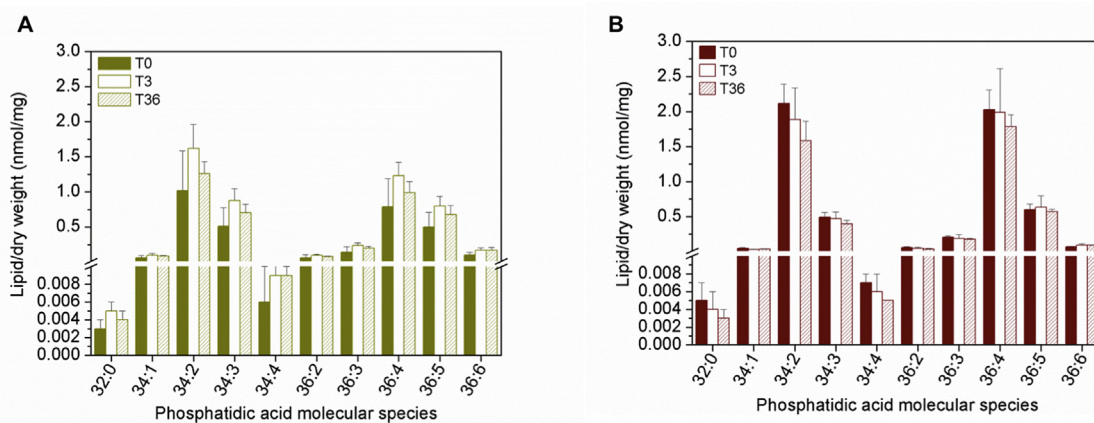


Fig. 2. PA molecular species of barley tissues in response to chilling. Barley leaves (A) and roots (B) were incubated at 25 °C (T0) or at 4 °C for 3 h (T3) and 36 h (T36). The analysis was performed by ESI-MS/MS on three independent samples. The results are expressed as Lipid/Dry weight (nmol/mg). The values are the means \pm SEM (n = 3).

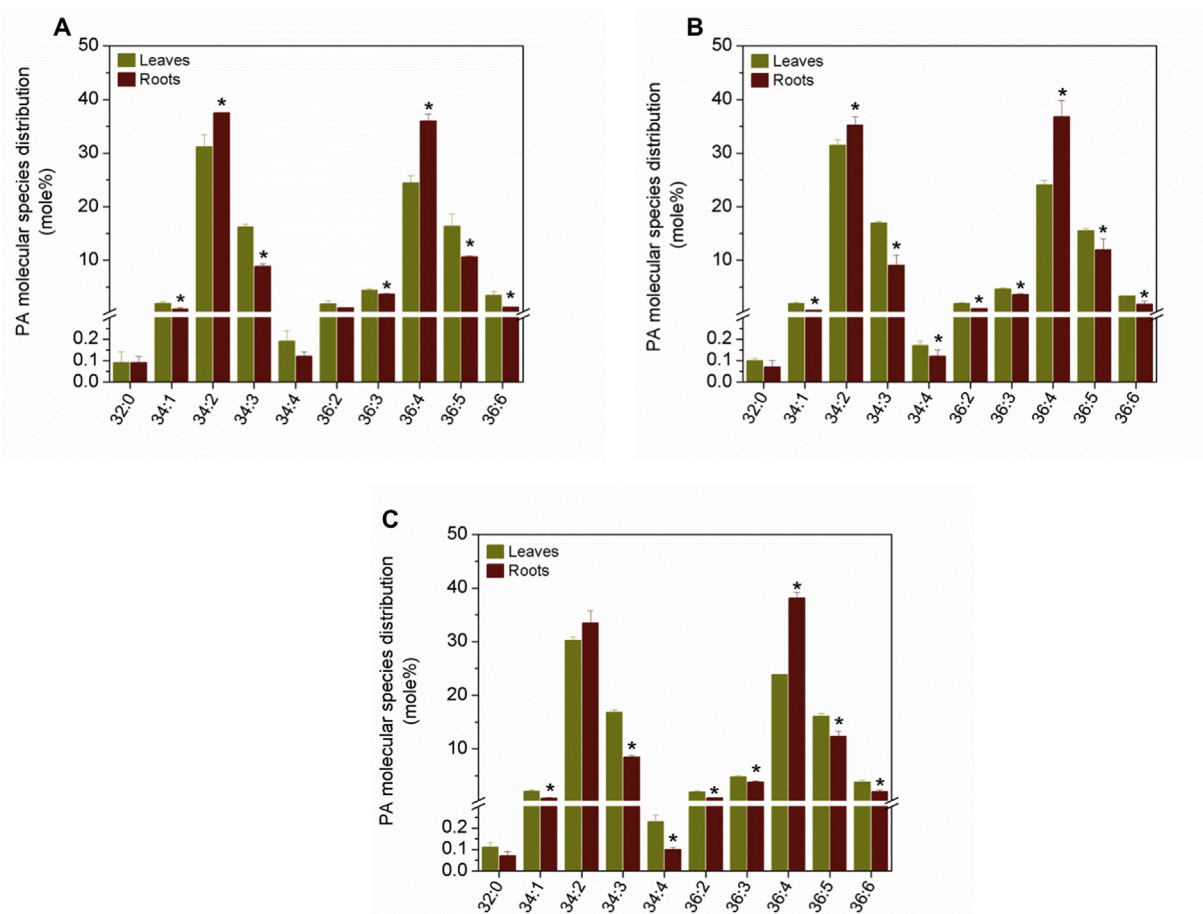


Fig. 3. Comparative analysis of the compositions of PA molecular species in leaves and roots in response to chilling. Barley seedlings were incubated at 25 °C (A) or at 4 °C for 3 h (B) and 36 h (C). The analysis was performed by ESI-MS/MS on three independent samples. The results are expressed as PA molecular species distribution (mole%). The values are the means \pm SEM (n = 3). Asterisks indicate significant differences between leaves and roots (Duncan's Test, $P < 0.05$).

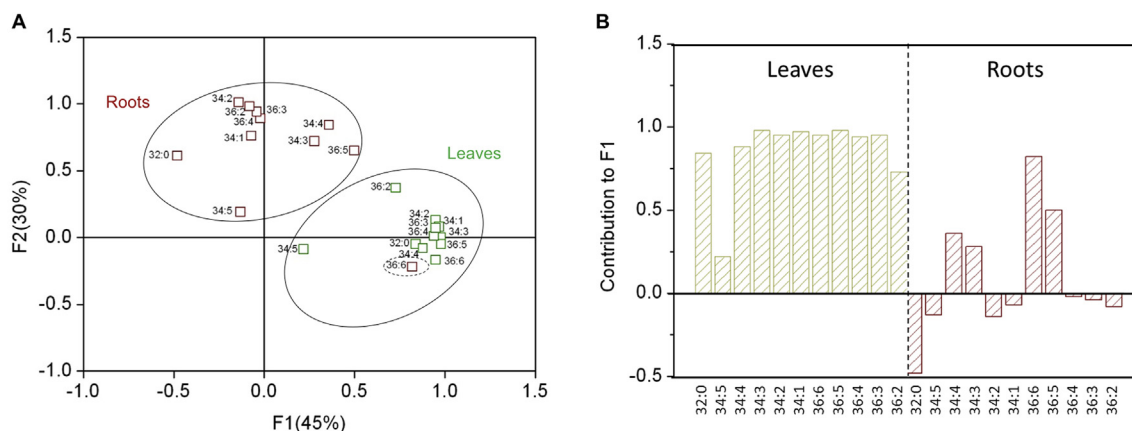


Fig. 4. Factor analysis of PA molecular species from roots and leaves during chilling. (A) Positions of the observations on the two principal factors. Each observation corresponds to the PA fatty acid composition after chilling in roots (red square) and leaves (green square) tissues. Contribution of variables to F1 factor (B). In the analysis, the molecular species were used as variables. Factor analysis was performed with R, using the principal factor method as the extraction method applied iteratively. Correlations were calculated as co-variance analysis. The 11 variables that contributed the most to factor F1 were selected and their loading on the F1 axis represented in (B). (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the Web version of this article.)

using DAG, which is produced by PAP2 activity, as a substrate.

DAG, MAG and WSP (water soluble products, glycerol and/or glycerol 3-P) were identified when microsomal membranes from leaves were incubated with [³H]PA (Fig. 6A, B, C). With 100 μM of [³H]PA, the formation of DAG and MAG (3 DPM(mg prot.20 min)⁻¹) was similar, while the values for WSP were 4 times higher than those for DAG

and MAG. This is indicative of the presence of active MAGL in this tissue (Fig. 6E). In leaves, short- and long-term chilling stress did not significantly alter PAP2 and MAGL activities (Fig. 6D and E).

DAG and MAG formation in roots was 6 times lower than in leaves, 0.4 \pm 0.1 DPM (mg prot.20 min)⁻¹ vs 3.2 \pm 0.42 DPM (mg prot.20 min)⁻¹; n = 3, $P < 0.05$, while WSP formation was similar to

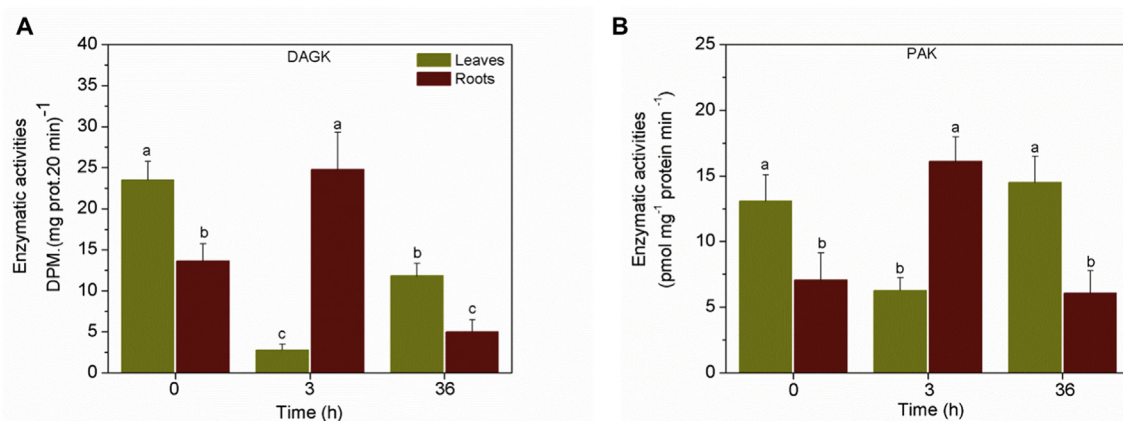


Fig. 5. Effect of short- and long-term chilling treatment on DAGK and PAK activities. Phosphorylation assay of endogenous DAG (A) or PA (B) was carried out with the $105,000 \times g$ membrane fraction in the presence of $370 \text{ MBq } [\gamma\text{-}^{32}\text{P}]\text{ATP}$ for 2 min at 30°C . Labelled lipids were extracted and separated by 1-dimensional TLC with chloroform/methanol/acetone/acetic acid/water (40:14:15:12:7, v/v). Results are expressed as specific activity ($\text{pmol (mg prot. min.}^{-1})$) and shown as mean S.E.M., $n = 3$. Different letters indicate significant differences (Duncan's Test, $P < 0.05$).

that observed in leaves (Fig. 6A and B). In roots, long-term chilling increased PAP2 activity significantly (Fig. 6D). Besides, as shown in Fig. 6C, it was observed that WSP increased in response to long-term chilling stress. Under this assay condition, WSP are produced from PA by PAP2 action. However, WSP (glycerol and/or glycerol 3-P) can be formed by the activity of MAGL or PA-PLA, respectively. Thus, we considered studying the contribution of MAGL to WSP formation. When microsomal membranes were incubated with $[^3\text{H}]\text{MAG}$, MAGL activity was similar in leaves and roots (Fig. 6E). In leaves, no changes were observed in response to chilling, on MAGL enzymatic activity. On the other hand, short- and long-term chilling treatment in roots significantly decreased and increased MAGL and PAP2 activities, respectively (Fig. 6D and E). A similar trend was observed for PA-PLA activity, which was only affected by long-term chilling in roots (Fig. 6F).

5. Discussion

The results presented here show that short- and long-term chilling modify PA metabolism in barley. ESI-MS/MS assays demonstrated that PA species molecules are not uniform and differ in their fatty acid moieties (Wang et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2013; Ruelland et al., 2015; Pokotylo et al., 2018). We found that basal PA pools in leaves are different that PA pools in roots. Several factors modulate the PA signal, while PA accumulation can trigger another undesired response (Li et al., 2008). Membranes are the initial sites of temperature sensing and the remodelling of membrane lipids is one of the most important mechanisms used by plants to respond to low temperatures (Perlikowski et al., 2016; Tshabuse et al., 2018). Some studies have used a lipidomic approach to investigate the influence of freezing on the glycerolipid profile in *Arabidopsis*. In these studies, PA formation from PC hydrolysis by PLD α activity is believed to be a key feature in freezing-induced lipid hydrolysis. In line with this, *Arabidopsis* plants that are deficient in PLD α have improved tolerance to freezing (Welti et al., 2002; Li et al., 2008). Therefore, the levels of accumulated PA as a product of PLD action during stress may compromise membrane integrity (Li et al., 2004).

In plants, PA is well established as a signal lipid since rapid PA accumulation is a common reaction to a variety of stresses (Ruelland et al., 2015; Pokotylo et al., 2018). Our data demonstrate that the short- and long-term chilling does not alter PA content in barley tissues. However, a transient PA accumulation was reported in plants that were exposed to moderate cold (Ruelland et al., 2002; Arisz et al., 2013). The fact that PA levels remain unchanged may be the consequence of a moderate stress application or a rapid PA metabolism. In agreement with this, short-term chilling stress caused rapid but transient increases

in PLD activity in young barley leaves (Peppino Margutti et al., 2017). On the other hand, the accumulation of ROS and proline in barley roots was PA-mediated, suggesting that the PA signal differs depending on the plant organs where it is evaluated (Pokotylo et al., 2018). Here, we found that PA molecules of barley tissues have a different fatty composition. The PA in barley leaves contains less unsaturated fatty acid than in roots. Although, the chilling exposition not evoked significant changes in leaves, a slight increasing trend can be observed in molecular species containing C34:2, C36:4 and C36:6 (Fig. 2A). An increase in highly unsaturated PA molecular species might be related to the organization of PA-enriched micro domains, which may contribute to the physical state and the dynamics of other membrane components such as protein binding. For example, one effect of lipid-protein interaction is the modulation of protein catalytic activity, which can be inhibitory or stimulatory, depending on the effector protein (Liu et al., 2013). ABA signalling in *Arabidopsis* requires the functioning of many proteins and PA has been found to interact with several of them, including negative effector ABI1 and positive effector NADPH oxidase. In lipid-protein binding assays, it has been shown that PA composition may affect the protein binding to the target. RbohD and RbohF NADPH-oxidases have a preference for binding to PA that contains at least one unsaturated or poly-unsaturated FA, while no binding was observed for di16:0- or di18:0- PA (Zhang et al., 2009). In other experiments, it has been reported that di18:1-PA also appears to bind ABI1 more efficiently than di18:2-PA (Zhang et al., 2004). Otherwise, PA species enriched with 34:2 and 36:4 acyl chains could also modulate the initial PA signal during chilling response through a still unrevealed mechanism. Alternatively, it may also reflect accumulation of PA as precursor in eukaryotic galactolipids synthesis. Low temperature may cause inhibition of import and consequent accumulation of 34:2 and 36:4 PA species, being main substrates in this biosynthetic route, associated with chloroplast-rich plant tissues (Boudiere et al., 2014; Kelly et al., 2016). Another report indicates that the PA signalling mechanism relies on the fact that PA can be metabolised by multiple enzymes in multiple pathways (Pokotylo et al., 2018).

PA signals can be enhanced or attenuated by conversion to other lipids. This may also be connected to the fatty acid composition of the lipids used as a substrate. In leaves, the lipid kinases DAGK and PAK were more active than the enzymes in roots, although chilling considerably affected their activity, whereas short-term chilling stimulated both kinases in roots. Thus, it seems likely that the PA fatty acid composition observed in roots may have some relation with lipid kinase activity. On the contrary, the increase in unsaturated moieties observed in leaves was not reflected in an increase in kinase activity. Still, these events may not be related, and the fact that we had to measure the

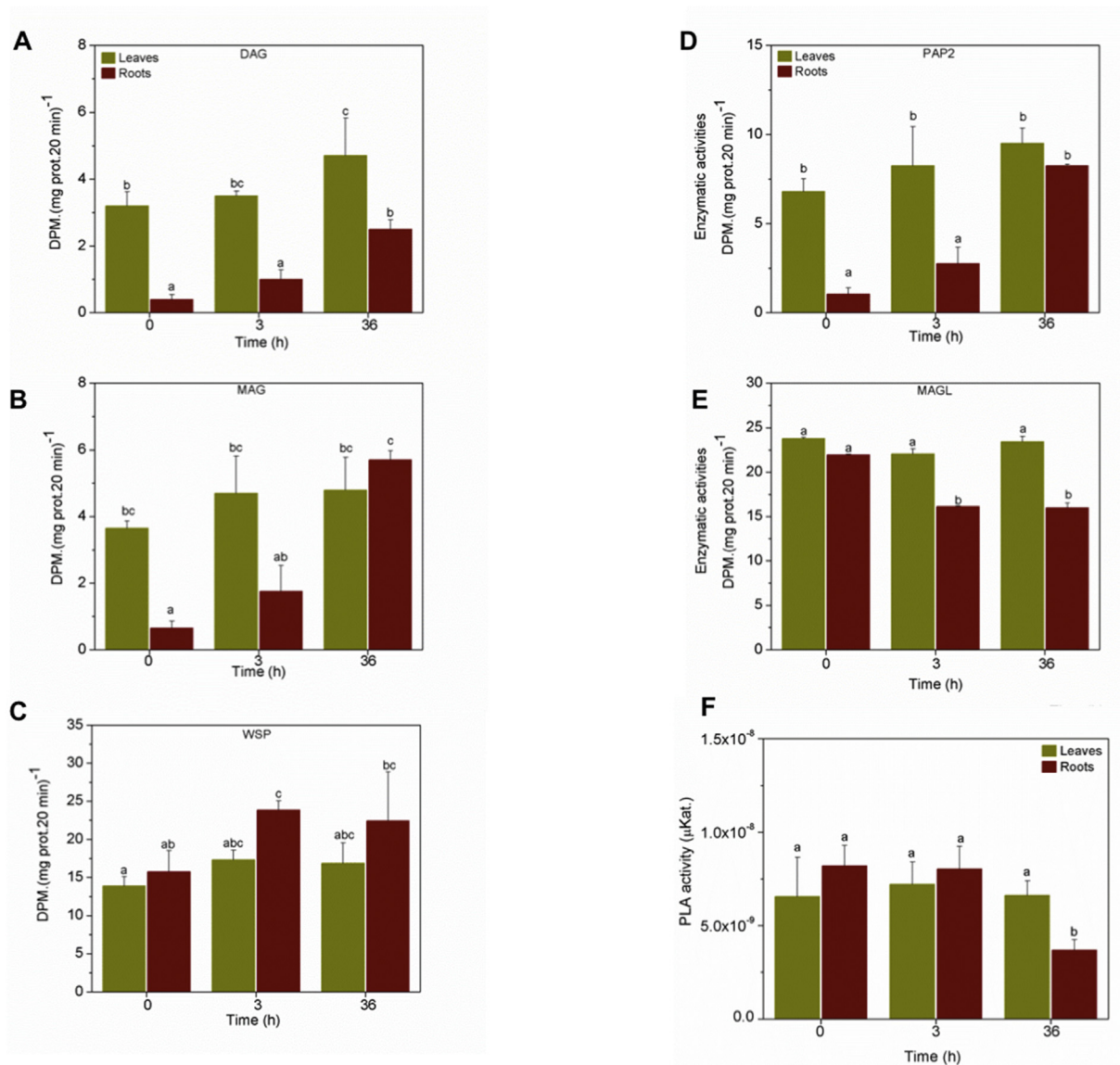


Fig. 6. Chilling-related changes in the enzymatic pathways involved in PA/DAG/MAG metabolism in leaves (green bars) and roots (red bars). (A) DAG, (B) MAG and (C) WSP production as a function of time chilling exposure. (D) PAP2 activity was determined using 0.1 mM [³H]PA and 50 μg of 105,000 × g membrane fraction in a final volume of 100 μL, as described in Section 2.4.4. (E) MAGL activity was determined by monitoring the formation rate of [2-³H]glycerol-WSP using monoacyl [2-³H]glycerol. The subsequent procedure is specified in Section 2.4.5. (F) PLA activity was determined using NBD-PA and 80 μg of 105,000 × g membrane fraction in a final volume of 100 μL, as described in Section 2.4.6. Lipids were extracted and separated by 1-dimensional TLC with chloroform:methanol:water (65:25:4, v/v). Results represents the mean ± S.E.M., n = 3. Different letters indicate significant differences (Duncan's Test, *P* < 0.05). (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the Web version of this article.)

kinases with an endogenous substrate would support this idea.

On the other hand, the fact that DGPP formation occurs only in roots after short-term chilling would indicate that it might act as a molecular switch that may turn the PA signal on and off. Physicochemical studies have shown that DGPP stabilizes the bilayer phase at neutral pH, unlike PA, which induces negative curvature stress on the membrane. In addition, DGPP will carry more negative charge in its head group than PA. Therefore, the conversion of PA to DGPP will affect curvature and local membrane electrostatics. (Kooijman et al., 2007; Kooijman and Burger, 2009; Strawn et al., 2012). Furthermore, adding complexity to the PA signal, PA can also be dephosphorylated to DAG by PAP2 activity in barley roots (Racagni et al., 2008). Basal PAP2 activity in control roots is indeed much less active than in leaves. However, it was stimulated several times in response to long-term chilling. This stimulatory effect seems to occur only in roots responding to chilling. PAP2 activity is sensitive to abiotic stress, but it was inhibited in response to ABA in

aleurone and during saline stress in barley roots (Racagni et al., 2008; Meringer et al., 2016). Thus, the results suggest that barley roots might modulate the DAG-PA-DGPP balance during exposure to the cold. Both the change in MAG formation by DAGL activity and MAGL inhibition are more pronounced with long-term chilling. We propose that this effect, linked to unmodified PA levels, might facilitate tolerance during a long term-chilling situation.

In view of the present observations, the PA signal is differentially modulated by changes in the enzymatic activities during the chilling signal transduction process in barley seedlings, as illustrated schematically in Fig. 7.

The findings presented here may be helpful in understanding how the PA signal is modulated between tissues during moderate chilling stress, and highlight the importance of knowing the basal PA pools in different plant organs.

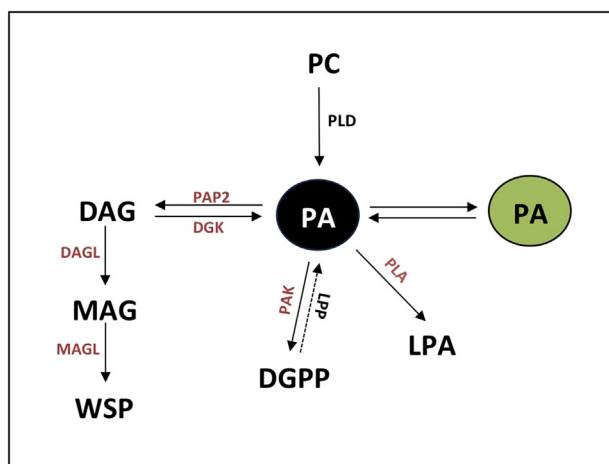


Fig. 7. Scheme of the contribution of the present work with PA metabolism in barley. PA pools in leaves (green circle) differ from PA fatty acid composition in roots (black circle). Chilling treatment modified different enzymatic activities (red letters) involved in the attenuation of the PA signal in roots. (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the Web version of this article.)

Author contributions

Conceived and designed the experiments: MPM, ALV. Performed the experiments: MPM, VG. Analyzed the data: MPM, VG, MR, ALV. Contributed reagents/materials/analysis tools: ALV, SJP. Result discussion: MPM, VG, SJP, ALV. Wrote the paper: ALV. Edited the manuscript, wrote figure legends, and helped with the outline of the paper: MPM, ALV.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plaphy.2018.08.038>.

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