

Characterization of Polyphenoloxidase from 2 Peach (*Prunus persica* L.) Varieties Grown in Argentina

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Abstract Polyphenoloxidase was extracted from September peach ($_{SE}PPO$) and Summerset peach ($_{SU}PPO$) and its physicochemical characteristics were analyzed. The optimum pH was 6.5 for $_{SE}PPO$ and 5.5 for $_{SU}PPO$. The optimum temperature was 35°C for $_{SE}PPO$ and 39.4°C for $_{SU}PPO$. Activation energy (E_a) from thermal activation was 41.5 kJ/mol for $_{SE}PPO$ and 37.5 kJ/mol for $_{SU}PPO$. Heating at 60°C by 5 min, $_{SU}PPO$ was denatured whereas $_{SE}PPO$ retained 2.6% of activity. Activation enthalpy (ΔH^\ddagger) and activation entropy (ΔS^\ddagger) for $_{SE}PPO$ heat-inactivation were 69.9 J/mol and -83.5 kJ/mol·K for $_{SU}PPO$, ΔH^\ddagger was 91.8 J/mol while ΔS^\ddagger was -21.0 kJ/mol·K. Substrate specificity (V_{max}/K_M) was 4-methylcatechol>catechol>pyrogallol for $_{SE}PPO$ and 4-methylcatechol>pyrogallol>catechol for $_{SU}PPO$. For both enzymes, the order of inhibition effectiveness using reductor agents was metabisulphite>ascorbic acid. Benzaldehyde, 4-hydroxybenzaldehyde, and DL-dopa were competitive inhibitors, and their K_i values were 38.86, 8.43, and 2.08 mM, respectively.

Keywords: polyphenoloxidase, peach, activity, stability, inhibition

Introduction

Browning of raw fruits, vegetables, and beverages is a major problem in the food industry and it is believed to be the main cause of quality loss during post-harvest handling and processing. The browning mechanism in food is well

characterized and is mainly enzymatic in origin (1). Polyphenoloxidase (PPO), also known as tyrosinase (EC 1.14.18.1), is a copper-containing oxidoreductase which catalyzes two different reactions using molecular oxygen: the hydroxylation of monophenols to *O*-diphenols (monophenolase activity) and the oxidation of the *O*-diphenols to *O*-quinones (diphenolase activity), which are later polymerized to dark-colored pigments (2,3). The degree of browning depends on the nature and amount of endogenous phenolic compounds, on the presence of oxygen, reducing substances, and metallic ions, on pH and temperature, and on the activity of PPO, the main enzyme involved in the reaction (4,5).

Browning can be prevented by heat inactivation, inhibition of the enzyme, removal or transformation of the substrates (oxygen and phenols), decrease of pH below the range of activity, addition of antioxidants which inhibit PPO, or prevent pigments formation (6-8).

In this work, the characterization of PPO from September ($_{SE}PPO$) and Summerset peach ($_{SU}PPO$) fruits was performed in terms of pH optimum, thermal activation and stability, substrate specificities, and degrees and types of inhibition by general PPO inhibitors, in order to help to predict the behavior of these enzymes.

Materials and Methods

Materials Whole fruits of peach (*Prunus persica* L., cv. Summerset, and cv. September) were obtained at commercial maturity from a local market (San Luis, Argentina) and were stored at 4°C for 24 hr until used in the experiments. Catechol, 4-methylcatechol, pyrogallol, 3,4-dihydroxy-DL-phenylalanine (DL-dopa), *p*-cresol, 3-[4-hydroxyphenyl-DL-alanine] (DL-tyrosine), and 3,3',4',5,7-pentahydroxyflavone (quercetin) were obtained from Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis,

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MO, USA). Triton X-100 was purchased from Fluka Chemicals Co. (Buchs, Switzerland). Benzaldehyde and 4-hydroxybenzaldehyde were from Merck Schuchardt (Hohenbrunn, Germany). All other chemicals were of analytical grade.

Methods The extraction of PPO from September peaches ($_{SE}PPO$) and from Summerset peaches ($_{SU}PPO$) was performed using the procedure of Gauillard and Richard-Forget (9) with some modifications. Peeled crude samples (100 g) were homogenized for 2 min in a Ultracomb commercial blender (Buenos Aires, Argentina) in 100 mL of 50 mM sodium phosphate buffer at pH 6.5, containing 20 mM ascorbic acid, 2%(v/v) polyethylenglycol, and 1%(v/v) Triton X-100. Polyethylenglycol was used to bind phenols which could inactivate PPO activity during the extraction (10), while Triton X-100, a non-ionic surfactant, was required to achieve a full extraction of enzyme (11). After filtration of the homogenate through gauze, the filtrate was centrifuged at $33,586\times g$ for 30 min in a Beckman Coulter J2-HS ultracentrifuge (Fullerton, CA, USA). All steps were carried out at 4°C. The supernatants were recovered and kept in tubes at -20°C and were used as crude enzyme extract which retained PPO activity for about 4 months.

PPO activity assay PPO activity was assayed by a spectrophotometric procedure using a Shimadzu UV-160A (Kyoto, Japan) double beam UV-vis spectrophotometer equipped with a quartz cell of 10-mm path length, with temperature control. Enzymatic activity was assayed by measuring the rate of increase in absorbance at a given wavelength (variable for different substrates and PPOs) at 25°C. The reaction mixture contained 3 mL of buffer solution and different quantities of enzyme ($_{SE}PPO$, 200 μL ; $_{SU}PPO$, 100 μL) and substrate. The reference cuvette contained only buffer solution and the substrate (12). The straight-line section of the absorbance curve as a function of time was used to determine enzyme activity. One unit of PPO activity was defined as the amount of enzyme that caused an increase in absorbance of 0.001/min (13). When a lag phase occurred, the reaction rate was measured after the lag phase. All determinations were performed in triplicate.

Properties of crude $_{SE}PPO$ and $_{SU}PPO$ Effects of pH: PPO activity was assayed in the pH range 4-5.5 in 50 mM acetate buffer, 6.5-7.5 in 50 mM phosphate buffer and 7.5-9.5 in 50 mM Tris buffer [Tris (hydroxymethyl) aminomethane]-HCl using catechol (50 mM)] as substrate and 200 ($_{SE}PPO$) or 100 μL ($_{SU}PPO$) of crude enzyme extract in 3 mL buffer solutions. PPO activity was determined by measurement of absorbance at the maximum

wavelength of the product (408 nm for $_{SE}PPO$ and 395 nm for $_{SU}PPO$).

Thermal activity: PPO activity (at optimum pH values) was measured at different temperatures in a range of 15-50°C using a circulation water bath. Buffer solutions (3 mL) and substrate catechol ($_{SE}PPO$, 13 mM; $_{SU}PPO$, 2.5 mM) were kept for 15 min at temperatures as indicated above, prior to the addition of the enzyme solution ($_{SE}PPO$, 200 μL ; $_{SU}PPO$, 100 μL). All assays were performed in triplicate. The data obtained from the thermal activity have been used to analyze some thermodynamic parameters related to peach PPO activity in the crude enzyme extracts.

Thermal stability: Thermal stability of extract PPO was investigated at optimum pH values at various constant temperatures from 20 to 60°C. The enzyme solution in buffer was incubated in a circulation water bath at temperatures of 20, 30, 40, 50, and 60°C for different times (5-40 min). After the mixture was cooled in an ice bath and brought to 25°C, 3 mL heated enzyme solution was mixed with catechol ($_{SE}PPO$, 12 mM; $_{SU}PPO$, 4 mM), and residual PPO activity was determined spectrophotometrically. The percentage residual PPO activity was calculated by comparison with unheated enzyme.

Enzyme kinetics and substrate specificity: $_{SE}PPO$ and $_{SU}PPO$ activity was assayed using monohydroxyphenols (*p*-cresol and DL-tyrosine), dihydroxyphenols (catechol and 4-methylcatechol), trihydroxyphenols (pyrogallol), and a polyhydroxyphenol (quercetin) in buffers at optimum pH values. The rate of the reaction was measured in terms of the increase in absorbance at the wavelength of maximum absorption for the corresponding product. The assays were carried out in cuvettes (3 mL) containing the buffer solution at pH optimum, the extract crude of enzyme ($_{SE}PPO$, 200 μL ; $_{SU}PPO$, 100 μL) and different amounts (5-100 μL) of the substrate solution (*p*-cresol, 200 mM; DL-tyrosine, 150 mM; catechol, 322 mM; 4-methylcatechol, 175 mM; pyrogallol, 160 mM; quercetin, 3.7 mM).

For each substrate, the kinetic data were plotted as $1/\text{activity}$ versus $1/\text{substrate concentration}$, according to the method of Lineweaver-Burk (14). Michaelis-Menten constant (K_M) and maximum velocity (V_{max}) were determined from the linear regression curve. Substrate specificity (V_{max}/K_M) was calculated by using the previously obtained data on a Lineweaver-Burk plot.

Effect of inhibitors: Benzaldehyde (0.8-25 mM), 4-hydroxybenzaldehyde (7.4-24 mM) and DL-dopa (0.6-2.25 mM) were examined for their effectiveness as inhibitors of $_{SE}PPO$ and $_{SU}PPO$ using catechol as substrate. To perform the experiments were used 3 mL of reaction mixture contained the buffer solution at pH optimum, the extract crude of enzyme ($_{SE}PPO$, 200 μL ; $_{SU}PPO$, 100 μL) and different amounts of 330 mM catechol solution as substrate (25-100 μL).

In each case, the type of inhibition was deduced from Lineweaver-Burk double reciprocal plots. The inhibitory constants K_I were calculated from a replot of the slope of each reciprocal plot versus the corresponding inhibitor concentration (15).

In addition, the effect of increasing amounts of reducing compounds, as ascorbic acid (0.03-2.76 mM) and sodium metabisulphite (0.011-0.075 mM), was studied. The assays were carried out using catechol as substrate ($_{SE}PPO$, 12 mM; $_{SU}PPO$, 5 mM), and their $I_{50\%}$ were evaluated.

Results and Discussion

Effects of pH $_{SE}PPO$ had a maximum activity around pH 6.5, and $_{SU}PPO$ had a maximum activity at pH 5.5. The common pH range for optimum fruit PPOs activity is known to be 5.0-7.0 (16). The PPOs from both sources were inactive at pH near 4. Enzyme activity decreased rapidly at alkaline pHs (7-9). The optimum pH depends on genetic properties (variety), nature of phenolic substrates, and extraction methods. In this case, we have used the same procedure for extraction, and the same substrate. Thus, the optimum pH values depend only on peach variety. No reports were found for pH effects on the 2 peach varieties studied.

Thermal activity The temperature had a 2-sided influence on enzymatic activity: increasing temperature enhanced enzymatic reaction velocity but simultaneously led to denaturation of enzyme. Then, from 15°C to the optimum temperature activity increased as temperature increased, and then started to decrease. The optimum temperature for $_{SE}PPO$ activity was 35.0°C and for $_{SU}PPO$ it was 39.4°C. Below and above these temperatures, enzyme activity decreased gradually. This was consistent with reported temperatures for PPO activities in grapes: 40 (17) and 45°C (18); in medlar: 35°C (19), and in plum: 37°C (20).

Activation energy (E_a) was determined according to the Arrhenius equation by measuring the maximal initial rate at different temperatures and plotting the logarithmic value of V_{max} versus $1/T$ (15).

$$\ln V_{max} = \ln A - \frac{E_a}{RT} \quad (1)$$

For $_{SE}PPO$ and/or $_{SU}PPO$ the plot showed no obvious deviation from linearity, with an activation energy (E_a) of 41.55 kJ/mol for $_{SE}PPO$ ($R^2=0.998$), and 37.50 kJ/mol for $_{SU}PPO$ ($R^2=0.995$). As can be seen, the E_a values are very similar.

Thermal stability For crude $_{SU}PPO$ the enzyme was stable after incubation for 30 min at 30°C; then, its residual

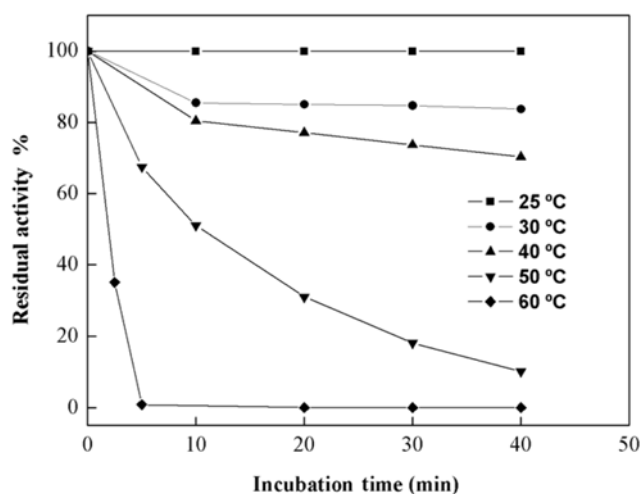


Fig. 1. Thermal stability of PPO from September peach. Assay condition: pH 6.5; 13.2 mM catechol; 200 μ L enzyme

activity percentage decreased to 89%. For 40 and 50°C, PPO activity gradually decreased. After heating for 5 min at 60°C, the relative PPO activity was 32.6%.

The thermal stability profile for $_{SE}PPO$ presented in the form of residual activity percentage is shown in Fig. 1. The enzyme was stable at 25°C for 40 min. At 30 and 40°C, 14.5 and 20% respectively of activity in $_{SE}PPO$ were lost after 10 min. When heated at 50°C the $_{SE}PPO$ activity was lost progressively. At 60°C, heat denaturation of the enzyme occurred after 5 min of incubation. Very short exposures (1-2 min) to temperatures of 70-90°C are sufficient for total irreversible destruction of its catalytic activity (21). The drop in percentage residual activity at high temperatures is actually due to the unfolding of the tertiary structure of the enzyme to form the secondary structure.

Often, thermal inactivation of enzymes can be described by a first-order reaction, and the rate constant for heat inactivation (k) was determined from the following relation (22):

$$k = -\frac{1}{600} \ln \frac{A_t}{A_o} \quad (2)$$

where A_o is the activity of unheated enzyme and A_t is the residual enzyme activity remaining after heating for 600 sec at different temperatures. The temperature-dependence of k (1/sec) was evaluated using the Arrhenius equation, and the E_a for PPOs using catechol as substrate was estimated as 72.6 kJ/mol ($_{SE}PPO$) and 94.5 kJ/mol ($_{SU}PPO$). The E_a values obtained are in agreement with those reported by Weemaes *et al.* (23) for apples, avocados, grapes, and plums.

The activation parameters enthalpy ΔH^\ddagger and entropy ΔS^\ddagger were determined from:

Table 1. Transition state parameters for the heat inactivation of September and Summerset PPOs extract

Thermodynamic parameter	_{SE} PPO	_{SU} PPO
Ea (kJ/mol)	72.6	94.5
ΔH^\ddagger (kJ/mol)	69.9	91.8
ΔS^\ddagger (J/mol K)	-83.5	-21.0
ΔG^\ddagger_{323} (kJ/mol)	96.9	98.6

$$\ln\left(\frac{k}{T}\right) = \ln\left(\frac{k}{h} e^{\frac{\Delta S^\ddagger}{R}}\right) - \frac{\Delta H^\ddagger}{RT} \quad (3)$$

where k ($1.3806 \cdot 10^{-23}$ J/K) is the Boltzman constant, h ($6.6261 \cdot 10^{-34}$ J sec) is the Planck constant, and R (8.314 J/K mol) is the universal gas constant. Results for these analyses, as well as free energy change ΔG^\ddagger for crude _{SE}PPO and _{SU}PPO are reported in Table 1.

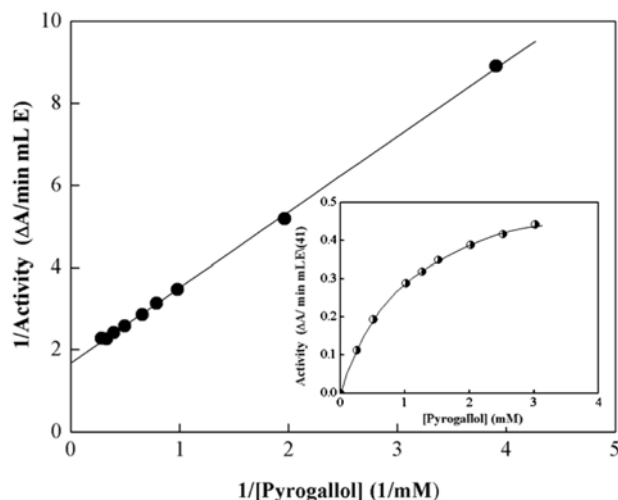
The activation parameters are consistent with the view that PPOs are relatively heat-labile enzymes. Results from this table suggest that _{SU}PPO is more heat-resistant than _{SE}PPO, apparently as a result of the larger ΔH^\ddagger value for inactivation. If only ΔS^\ddagger values are taken into account, _{SE}PPO is more heat-resistant than _{SU}PPO. ΔG^\ddagger values (estimated in Table 1 for 323 K) are very similar. In general, ΔH^\ddagger is seen as a measure of the number of noncovalent bonds broken in forming a transition state for enzyme inactivation, whereas ΔS^\ddagger is a measure of the net enzyme and solvent disorder change accompanying transition state formation (22).

Enzyme kinetics and substrate specificity Mono-hydroxyphenols are not oxidized by the peach extracts. *O*-Diphenols and triphenols were oxidized significantly for _{SE}PPO and _{SU}PPO, displaying Michaelis-Menten kinetics. Linear regression analysis of 1/activity versus 1/substrate concentration determined for _{SU}PPO using pyrogallol as substrate is shown in Fig. 2. The best substrate for each enzyme depends on 2 factors: strong substrate binding or high affinity (low K_M value) and high catalytic efficiency (high V_{max} value) for a fixed enzyme concentration. Thus, the criterion for the best substrate is the V_{max}/K_M ratio (24).

Table 2. Substrate specificity of September and Summerset PPOs extract

Substrate	_{SE} PPO ¹⁾				_{SU} PPO ¹⁾			
	λ	V_{max}	K_M	V_{max}/K_M	λ	V_{max}	K_M	V_{max}/K_M
<i>p</i> -Cresol	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DL-Tyrosine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Catechol	408	416	2.51	165.7	395	1321.6	5.33	247.5
4-Methylcatechol	450	506	3.63	139.4	400	33.6	0.03	1120
Pyrogallol	420	224.9	0.214	1,050.9	410	597.7	1.10	543.4
Quercetin	435	*	*	*	430	*	*	*

¹⁾ λ , wavelength (nm); V_{max} , UE/mL E; K_M , mM; *Inappropriate substrate, cannot be calculated from Lineweaver-Burk plot.

**Fig. 2. Lineweaver-Burk plot and activity as a function of substrate concentration for PPO from Summerset peach.** Assay condition: pH 5.5; substrate, pyrogallol; 100 μ L enzyme

V_{max} and K_M for each substrate are presented in Table 2. For _{SE}PPO, catalytic efficiency was the lowest but substrate binding was the highest with pyrogallol; it was found to be the most efficient phenolic substrate, followed by catechol and 4-methylcatechol.

For _{SU}PPO, however, 4-methylcatechol was the best substrate, followed by pyrogallol and catechol. This result is consistent with a previous report (19) indicating that 4-methylcatechol is usually the best substrate for PPOs.

Quercetin (a polyhydroxyphenol) was oxidized by _{SE}PPO and _{SU}PPO but K_M and V_{max} cannot be calculated from a plot of 1/activity versus 1/substrate concentration by the method of Lineweaver-Burk.

Effects of inhibitors Various inhibitors were examined to determine their potential for inhibition of catechol by crude _{SE}PPO and _{SU}PPO activity. These inhibitors included analogous substrates and reducing agents. Table 3 shows the inhibition results with catechol as substrate. For analogous substrates, Lineweaver-Burk plots of 1/activity versus 1/substrate concentration by various inhibitor concentrations determined the type of inhibition. Good

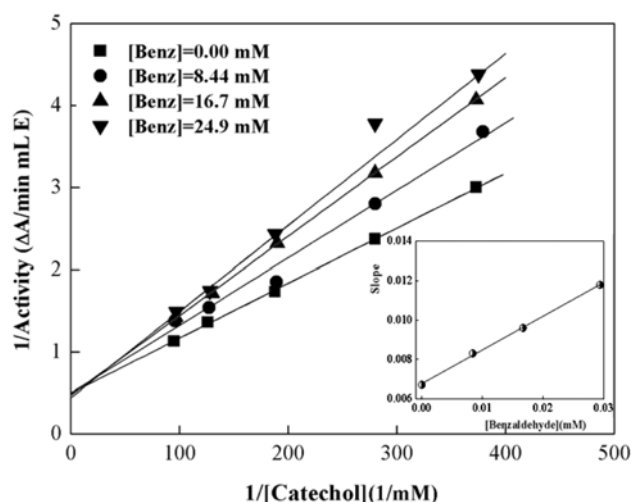


Fig. 3. Inhibition of PPO from Summerset peach by benzaldehyde [Benz]. Assay condition: pH 5.5; substrate, catechol (2.75–11 mM); 100 μ L enzyme

straight lines were obtained. For SE PPO and SU PPO, benzaldehyde and 4-hydroxybenzaldehyde were competitive inhibitors, and their K_I constants are reported in Table 3. Jiménez *et al.* (25) have reported that benzaldehydes behave as classical competitive inhibitors by mushroom tyrosinase.

As can be seen in Table 3, for SE PPO and SU PPO benzaldehyde is a worse inhibitor than 4-hydroxybenzaldehyde. This difference in their inhibitory effects can be attributed to the substituent at the *para*-position. This fact was observed by Janovitz-Klapp *et al.* (26) who determined that *p*-hydroxy substitution enhanced the inhibitory properties of carboxylic acids.

A typical example for competitive inhibition and replots of slope versus inhibitor concentrations is shown in Fig. 3 for SU PPO using catechol as substrate and benzaldehyde as inhibitor. For SU PPO, DL-dopa was a competitive inhibitor, but we cannot ensure the type of inhibition for SE PPO.

For reducing agents, $I_{50\%}$ values were determined and shown in Table 3. It can be seen that SE PPO tends to be inhibited by ascorbic acid more easily than SU PPO, whereas the latter is more strongly inhibited by sodium

metabisulphite than SE PPO. The inhibition reaction mechanism differs, depending on the reducing agent employed. Inhibitions by thiol compounds are attributed to either the stable colorless products formed by an addition reaction with *O*-quinones or binding to the active centre of PPO, like metabisulphite (27). In PPO assays, in which ascorbic acid was used as an inhibitor, a lag period was observed before any changes in absorbance were measured. The extent of the lag period increased with an increase in inhibitor concentration. The mechanism of ascorbic acid inhibition involves the reduction of quinones generated (2, 28). After the lag period, when nearly all ascorbic acid is converted to dehydroascorbic acid, the amount of *O*-quinones formed by PPO action increases.

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Table 3. Effect of inhibitors on the activity of September and Summerset PPOs extract

Inhibitor	SE PPO ¹⁾			SU PPO ¹⁾		
	[Inhibitor]	Type	K_I	[Inhibitor]	Type	K_I
<i>Compound analogues</i>						
Benzaldehyde	6.16-17.90	competitive	20.15	0.84-24.70	competitive	38.86
4-OH-Benzaldehyde	7.40-21.8	competitive	6.47	7.81-23.22	competitive	8.43
DL-Dopa	*	*	*	0.59-2.25	competitive	2.08
<i>Reducing agents</i>						
Ascorbic acid	0.03-0.200	-	0.29	0.41-2.76	-	4.48
Metabisulphite	0.025-0.074	-	0.23	0.011-0.006	-	0.07

¹⁾Inhibitor and K_I , mM; *Cannot ensure

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