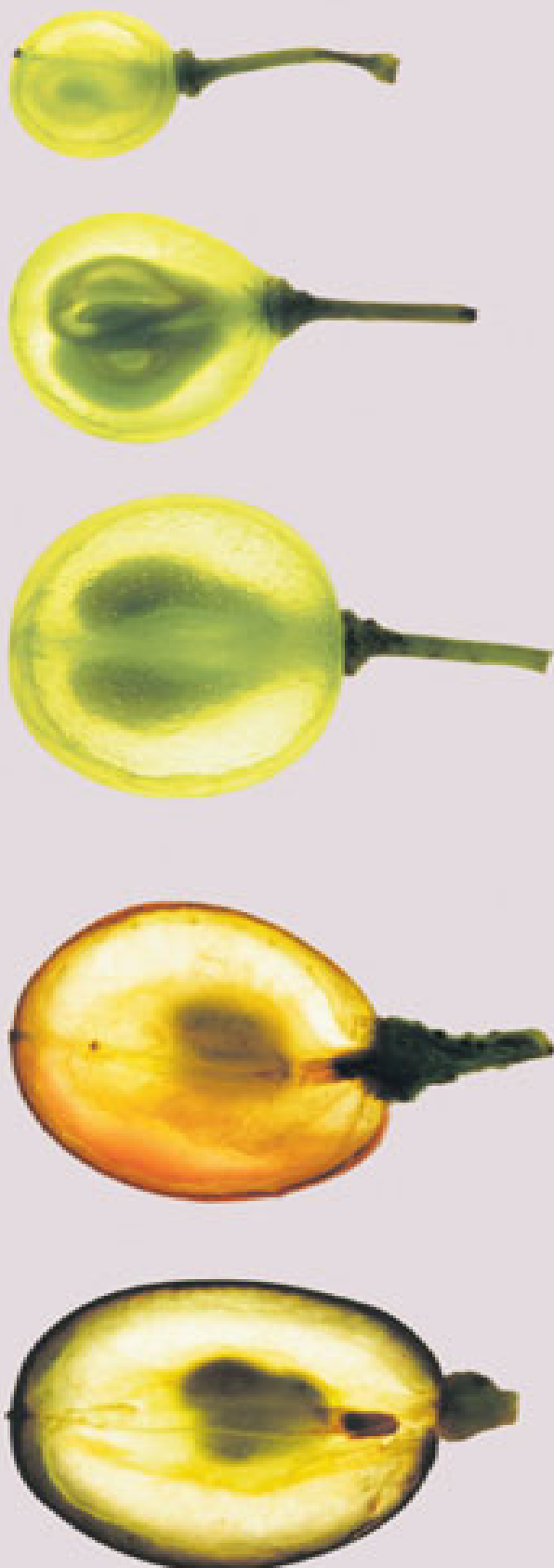


Recent Advances in Polyphenol Research

VOLUME 3

Edited by
Véronique Cheynier,
Pascale Sarni-Manchado and
Stéphane Quideau

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Recent Advances in Polyphenol Research

A series for researchers and graduate students whose work is related to plant phenolics and polyphenols, as well as for individuals representing governments and industries with interest in this field. Each volume in this biennial series will focus on several important research topics in plant phenols and polyphenols, including chemistry, biosynthesis, metabolic engineering, ecology, physiology, food, nutrition, and health.

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To Jean-Jacques Macheix—a board member of Groupe Polyphénols for many years and its President from 1986 to 1990—whose career has been devoted to phenolic compounds in plants.

To Ismail El-Hadrami—an active and enthusiastic member of the Groupe Polyphénols board for many years, and a member of the editorial board of the RAPR series—in memoriam.

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Preface

Plant polyphenolics are secondary metabolites that constitute one of the most common and widespread groups of substances in plants. They are structurally diverse, from rather simple compounds (e.g., anthocyanins, flavonols, isoflavones, catechins, and resveratrol) to highly complex polymeric species, and exhibit a large and diverse array of biological properties, for both plants and humans. Synthesis of polyphenolic compounds, which contribute to the pigmentation of flowers, fruits, leaves, or seeds, and play protective roles against biotic and abiotic stresses, is part of the adaptative strategies of plants. Polyphenolic compounds also contribute to the development of color and taste properties of plant-based foods and beverages, such as tea, wine, or chocolate, and they may play a part in the health protecting effects associated with the dietary consumption of such food products, although the actual benefit and mechanisms involved are yet to be proven. Finally, they are potentially helpful as therapeutic agents against various pathologies.

The list of plant (poly) phenolic compounds is constantly expanding, and, in spite of recent progress in the development of analytical methods, in particular for metabolomics, these molecules still present a considerable challenge to the analyst. Biological studies are aimed at understanding their role and status *in planta*, but also their fate *in vivo* after ingestion from food and beverages. Most of the work is sustained by the analysis of their chemical characteristics and physicochemical properties. There has been much effort over the last years to understand polyphenol biosynthesis and build the knowledge required to engineer or better

harness their production in plants. Alternative strategies rely on organic synthesis to prepare polyphenolic target compounds in sufficient quantities to explore their properties and use them in various applications.

The diversity of structure and activity of (poly) phenolic compounds resulted in a multiplicity of research areas such as chemistry, biotechnology, ecology, physiology, nutrition, medicine, and cosmetics. The International Conference on Polyphenols, organized under the auspices of “Groupe Polyphénols,” every other year, is a unique opportunity for scientists in these and other fields to get together and exchange their ideas and new findings.

The 25th edition of this conference (ICP2010) was held in Montpellier, France, from August 24 to 27, 2010, and organized by the Polyphenols and Interactions group of UMR1083—Sciences pour l’Oenologie (INRA Montpellier), in partnership with UMR47—Diversité, Adaptation et Développement des Plantes (Université Montpellier II). Five topics were covered:

- 1. *Chemistry and physicochemistry:*** structure, reactivity, physicochemical properties, synthesis, ...
- 2. *Biosynthesis, genetics, and metabolomic engineering:*** molecular biology, enzymology, gene expression and regulation, transport, biotechnology, ...
- 3. *Roles in plants and ecosystems:*** plant growth and development, plant-insect relationships, biotic and abiotic stress, resistance, ...
- 4. *Health and nutrition:*** medicinal properties, bioavailability and metabolism, mode of action, nutraceuticals, cosmetics, ...
- 5. *Analysis and metabolomics:*** analytical methods, omics, ...

Some 365 participants, from government institutional research and private business, representing 44 countries from all over the world, attended ICP2010, where 40 oral

communications and 300 posters were presented. The present and third volume of *Recent Advances in Polyphenol Research* (RAPRIII), a series initiated by Groupe Polyphenols in 2008, includes chapters from the 11 guest speakers and some invited contributors. Essential complement to Polyphenols Communications 2010, the proceedings of ICP2010, RAPRIII offers in-depth knowledge on selected aspects of current polyphenol research, pursuing the role of ICP in being a base for debates and exchange on all research topics related to plant polyphenols.

In conclusion, we are pleased to observe that research advances in polyphenol science, enabling progress of our understanding of polyphenols at both the chemical and biological levels, are based on different approaches from different research areas and interactions between them. This would not be possible without the constant involvement of "Groupe Polyphénols" in maintaining ICP and coordinating this book series. So, we wish to thank deeply its Board and the scientific committee of ICP2010 for their contribution to the advancement of polyphenol research worldwide.

This 25th International Conference on Polyphenols would not have been possible without the generous support of public donors such as the French *Région Languedoc Roussillon, Montpellier Agglomération, INRA,* and *Université Montpellier II*. Grants from *Groupe Polyphénols* and from the *Phytochemical Society of Europe* for junior and senior attendees are also gratefully acknowledged. Other sponsors included Agilent Technology, GlaxoSmithKline, Indena, L'Oréal, PhenoFarm, Sanofi Aventis, and Waters.

Last, but not least, ICP2010 and RAPRIII would not be without the members of the local organizing committee, as well as many other "volunteers," whose dedicated

effort and support ensured a smooth and eventless scientific and logistic organization. Our sincere thanks to all of them.

Véronique Cheynier
Pascale Sarni-Manchado
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Chapter 1

Plant Phenolics: A Biochemical and Physiological Perspective

Vincenzo Lattanzio, Angela Cardinali and Vito Linsalata

Abstract: The plant polyphenols are a very heterogeneous group, some universally and others widely distributed among plants, and often present in surprisingly high concentrations. During the evolutionary adaptation of plants to land, the biosynthesis of different phenolics classes in plants has evolved in response to changes in the external environment. Besides a bulk of phenolic substances having cell wall structural roles, a great diversity of non-structural constituents was also formed, having such various roles as defending plants, establishing flower colour and contributing substantially to certain flavours. The accumulation of phenolics in plant tissues is considered a common adaptive response of plants to adverse environmental conditions, therefore increasing evolutionary fitness. In addition, these secondary metabolites may still be physiologically important as a means of channelling and storing carbon compounds, accumulated from photosynthesis,

during periods when nitrogen is limiting or whenever leaf growth is curtailed.

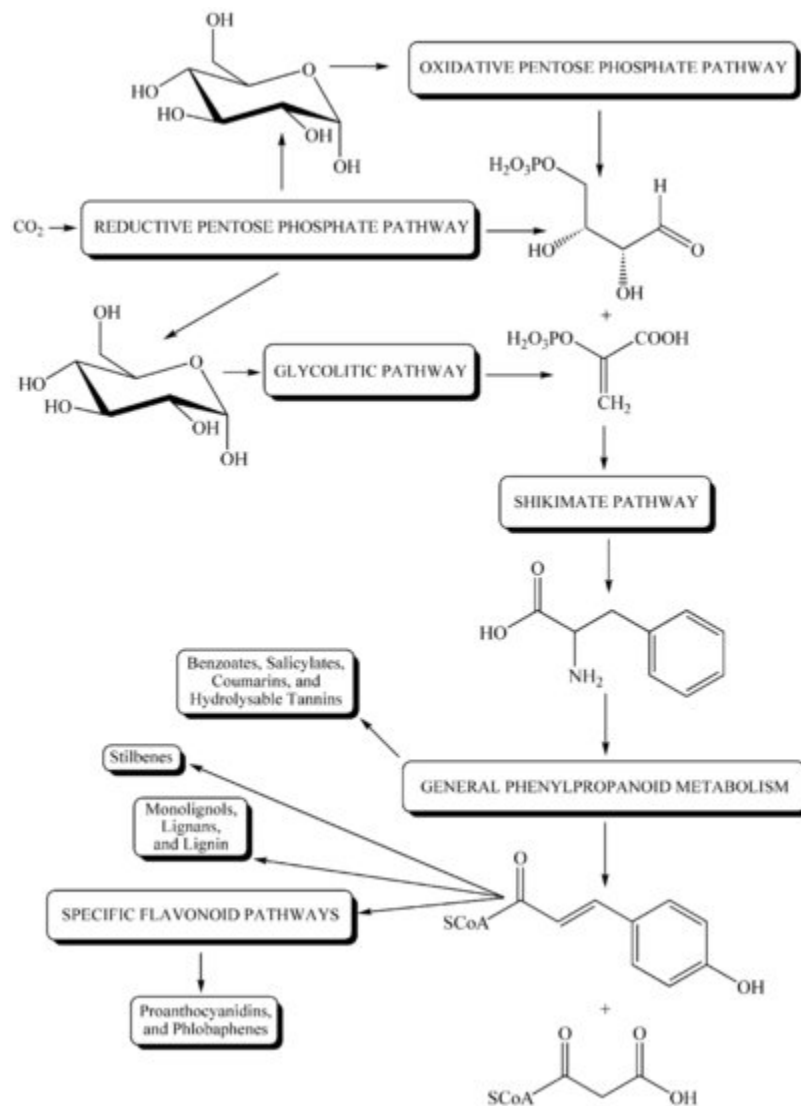
Keywords: phenolics; abiotic/biotic stress; primary/secondary metabolism relationships; metabolic costs of resistance

1.1 The general phenolic metabolism in plants

Phenolic compounds are found throughout the plant kingdom but the type of compound present varies considerably according to phylum. Phenolics are uncommon in bacteria, fungi and algae, and few classes of phenols are recorded: flavonoids are almost completely absent. Bryophytes are regular producers of polyphenols including flavonoids, but it is in the vascular plants that the full range of polyphenols is found (Swain, 1975; Harborne, 1980; Stafford, 1991). The plant polyphenols are a very heterogeneous group; some are universally and others widely distributed among plants, and they are often present in surprisingly high concentrations. They are not distributed evenly throughout the plant - either quantitatively or qualitatively - in space and in time. The pattern of secondary metabolites in a given plant is complex because it changes in a tissue- and organ-specific way. Differences can regularly be seen between different developmental stages (e.g. organs important for survival and reproduction have the highest and most potent secondary metabolites), and between individuals and populations and these differences are subject to environmental as well as genetic control (Swain, 1977; Harborne, 1980; Wink, 1988; Osbourn *et al.*, 2003; Wink,

2003; Noel *et al.*, 2005; Singh & Bharate, 2006; Yu & Jez, 2008). Phenolic metabolism in plants is a complex process resulting from the interaction of at least five different pathways. The glycolytic pathway that produces phosphoenolpyruvate; the pentose phosphate pathway that produces erythrose-4-phosphate; the shikimate pathway that synthesises phenylalanine; the general phenylpropanoid metabolism that produces the activated cinnamic acid derivatives and the plant structural component lignin, and the diverse specific flavonoid pathways (Boudet *et al.*, 1985; Hrazdina, 1994; Schmid & Amrhein, 1995; Winkel-Shirley, 2001; Austin & Noel, 2003) ([Fig. 1.1](#)). Phenolic metabolism must be regarded as a dynamic system involving steady-state concentrations of the various phenolic compounds, which during certain phases of growth and development are subject to substantial qualitative and quantitative changes. This turnover may involve three types of reactions: (i) interconversions which are involved in biosynthetic sequences; (ii) catabolic reactions where the products are converted to primary metabolic constituents and (iii) oxidative polymerisation reactions leading to insoluble structures of high molecular weight (Barz & Hoesel, 1975, 1979).

[Fig. 1.1](#) Carbon fluxes towards the phenolic metabolism.



Plants, as sessile organisms, evolve and exploit metabolic systems to produce a vast and diverse array of phenolic and polyphenolic compounds with a variety of ecological and physiological roles. The ability to synthesise phenolic compounds has been selected throughout the course of evolution in different plant lineages when such compounds addressed specific needs, thus permitting plants to cope with the constantly changing environmental challenges over evolutionary time (Pichersky & Gang, 2000; Noel *et al.*, 2005). For example, the successful adaptation to land by some higher members of the Charophyceae - which are

regarded as prototypes of amphibious plants that presumably preceded true land plants when they emerged from an aquatic environment onto the land - was achieved largely by massive formation of 'phenolic UV light screens' (Swain, 1975; Lowry *et al.*, 1980; Stafford, 1991; Graham *et al.*, 2000). Regarding the structure of phenolic compounds involved in this photoprotective role of plant phenolics, there was an exciting discussion between Tony Swain and Brian Lowry. Lowry's speculative viewpoint was that 'when plants invaded the land habitat and were exposed to solar-ultraviolet radiation more intense than that found today, an early obvious protective adaptation strategy used by plants would be the accumulation of substituted cinnamic acids from the deamination of aromatic amino acids' (Lowry *et al.*, 1980). Swain's objection to this speculative hypothesis was that 'cinnamic acids absorbing at 310-325 nm do not have the right absorption characteristics to enable them to act efficiently in this way and thus prevent UV photodestruction of either nucleic acids or proteins (λ_{max} ca 260 and 280 nm, respectively)'. Swain's opinion was that flavonoids (λ_{max} ca 260 and 330 nm), cell wall polysaccharide acylation by cinnamic acids and suberin could all presumably have aided in the success of land plants (Swain, 1981). Lowry's reply was that, 'given the presence of even trace amounts of ozone in the atmosphere during the time leading up to the Silurian and early Devonian (starting some 420 million years ago), it is extremely unlikely that terrestrial organisms would have been exposed to UV-C radiation (less than 280 nm)' and that DNA and proteins are both damaged by radiation in the UV-B region (280-315 nm) (Lowry *et al.*, 1983). A wide array of flavones have been reported for *Takakia lepidozoides*, believed to be amongst the most primitive of extant liverworts and the possible