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**The Role of Ethylene and Auxin in Responses of
Roots to Phosphate Supply in White Clover
(*Trifolium Repens* L.)**

Phuong Dinh Thi Yen

2009

**The Role of Ethylene and Auxin in Responses of
Roots to Phosphate Supply in White Clover
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Phuong Dinh Thi Yen

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ABSTRACT

Phosphate (P) supply is one of the major determining factors to plant productivity, since the element affects the growth and the development of plants. In response to P-deficiency treatment, plants display alterations in root system architecture caused by changes in primary root (PR) and lateral root (LR) length and LR density. In this thesis, the root growth of the agronomically important legume, white clover (*Trifolium repens* L.) was found to be slightly stimulated in terms of PR length, LR number and total LR length when plants were grown in a P-deficient media (0.01 mM orthophosphate; Pi) when compared with plants grown in a P-sufficient media (1.00 mM Pi) when using a hydroponic growth system.

When plants are grown in a P-sufficient media, treatment with 100 nM exogenous 1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylic acid (ACC) and exogenous auxin (5 nM 1-naphthylacetic acid, NAA) resulted in significant increases in white clover PR length, LR number and LR length. However, when ethylene action or auxin transport were inhibited using 300 ppm 1-methylcyclopropene (1-MCP) and 100 nM 1-N-naphthylphthalamic acid (NPA), respectively, root growth was significantly reduced which suggests roles for ethylene and auxin in mediating white clover root growth.

To examine the effects of these hormones on plants grown in P-deficient media, 100 nM ACC treatment significantly enhanced the stimulatory effects of growth on P-deficient media only, while exposure of plants to P-deficiency alone was sufficient to significantly neutralise the inhibitory effects of 1-MCP on root growth. Hence, exposure to P-deficiency is proposed to increase either ethylene biosynthesis or ethylene sensitivity in white clover roots. In contrast, for plants grown in P-deficient media, treatment with 5 nM NAA significantly abolished the stimulation of white clover root growth observed with P-deficiency so it is proposed that exposure to P-deficiency increases either auxin biosynthesis or auxin sensitivity, but the 5nM NAA concentration used was too high to stimulate root growth. Using *DR5p::GUS* transgenic white clover, auxin activity was found in the root tips and root primordia. Using these plants, it is suggested that P-deficient treatment and ACC treatment influenced white clover root growth through an increase in auxin sensitivity.

Overall, ethylene and auxin are found to be essential in mediating white clover root growth in P-sufficiency, and also in mediating root responses to P-deficiency through changes in terms of the biosynthesis and the sensitivity of these two hormones.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF TABLE.....	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. OVERVIEW	1
1.2. PHOSPHORUS IN PLANT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT	2
1.2.1. The role of Pi in plant growth and development.....	2
1.2.2. The adaptation of plants to Pi limited supply.....	3
1.2.2.1. Biochemical, molecular and physiological responses to P-starvation	4
1.2.2.2. Morphological responses to P-starvation	6
1.3. ETHYLENE	9
1.3.1. Ethylene biosynthesis and signal transduction pathway	9
1.3.2. The role of ethylene in root development, particularly in response to P-stress	12
1.4. AUXIN.....	13
1.4.1. Auxin biosynthesis and transport.....	13
1.4.2. The role of auxin in root development	16
1.5. CROSS-TALK BETWEEN ETHYLENE AND AUXIN IN ROOT DEVELOPMENT	17
1.6. PHOSPHATE DEFICIENT RESPONSE IN WHITE CLOVER	19
CHAPTER TWO: MATERIALS AND METHODS	21
2.1. PLANT MATERIALS	21
2.2. CHEMICALS	21
2.3. TREATMENTS.....	22
2.3.1. Hydroponic experimental system	22
2.3.2. P-deficient treatments	24

2.3.3. 1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylate (ACC) treatments	24
2.3.4. Auxin treatments.....	26
2.4. ROOT MORPHOLOGY MEASUREMENT.....	26
2.4.1. The mean length (cm) of the primary roots.....	26
2.4.2. The mean of lateral root numbers	27
2.4.3. The mean of lateral root total lengths (cm)	27
2.5. WHITE CLOVER TRANSFORMATION.....	29
2.6. POLYMERASE CHAIN REACTION (PCR) METHOD.....	32
2.6.1. DNA extraction (following the protocol from Keb-Llanes et al. (2002))...	32
2.6.2. PCR	32
2.6.3. Agarose gel electrophoresis	33
2.7. GUS STAINING HISTOCHEMICAL ANALYSIS	33
2.7.1. Staining method adopted from Chen and McManus (2006).....	33
2.7.2. Modified method adopted from Jefferson et al. (1987)	33
2.8. SOUTHERN BLOT ANALYSIS.....	34
2.8.1. Genomic DNA extraction	34
2.8.2. Restriction digestion of genomic DNA	34
2.8.3. Agarose gel electrophoresis	35
2.8.4. DNA blotting on the Hybond TM – N+ membrane	35
2.8.5. DNA purification from agarose gel	36
2.8.6. DIG-labelling	38
2.8.7. Hybridisation	38
2.8.8. Washing and detection.....	38
2.9. MICROSCOPY METHODS	39
2.10. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS.....	39
 CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS	40
3.1. CHANGES IN ROOT MORPHOLOGY IN WILD TYPE WHITE CLOVER.....	40
3.1.1. Changes in root morphology in response to P-deficiency.....	40
3.1.1.1. Responses of the third – node roots to P-deficiency	41
3.1.1.2. Response of roots emerging from the fourth nodes to P-deficiency	44

3.1.2. Effects of plant hormones on root morphology of wild type white clover	46
3.1.2.1. <i>Effect of ethylene on root morphology</i>	46
3.1.2.1.1. Initial studies with added 1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylate (ACC) ...	46
3.1.2.1.2. Effects of a lower concentration of added ACC on root morphology	48
3.1.2.1.3. The effect of added 1-MCP on root morphology.....	50
3.1.2.2. <i>Effect of auxin on root morphology</i>	52
3.1.2.2.1. Exogenous auxin treatments	52
3.1.2.2.2. The effects of the inhibition of auxin transport on white clover root morphology	56
3.1.2.3. <i>Ethylene interacts with auxin</i>	59
3.1.2.3.1. Interaction between ACC and NPA in mediating white clover root growth	59
3.1.2.3.2. Interaction between 1-MCP and NAA in mediating white clover root growth	61
3.1.3. The effects of plant hormones on root morphology of wild type white clover in response to P-deficiency	64
3.1.3.1. <i>Ethylene</i>	64
3.1.3.1.1. The effect of ethylene (as added ACC) on root morphology in roots exposed to P-deficiency	64
3.1.3.1.2. The effect of the ethylene action inhibitor (1-MCP) on root morphology in plants maintained in P-deficiency	67
3.1.3.2. <i>Auxin</i>	70
3.1.3.2.1. The effect of exogenous auxin treatment on root morphology in roots exposed to P-deficiency	70
3.1.3.2.2. The effect of the auxin transport inhibitor (NPA) on root morphology in plants exposed to P-deficiency	72
3.2. TRANSGENIC WHITE CLOVER	74
3.2.1. Transformation and regeneration of white clover lines putatively transformed with the DR5p::GUS construct	74
3.2.2. Screening putative transgenic DR5p::GUS lines of white clover	74
3.2.2.1. <i>The use of the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) for screening</i>	74
3.2.2.2. <i>Screening of putative transformants using GUS staining</i>	76
3.2.2.3. <i>Southern blot analysis</i>	79

3.2.3. Morphological root responses of transgenic white clover to P-deficiency	81
3.2.3.1. <i>Morphological root responses of Grasslands Huia to P-deficiency</i>	81
3.2.3.2. <i>Morphological root response of TR 29 to P-deficiency</i>	83
3.2.4. GUS expression patterns in DR5p::GUS white clover transformants in response to P-deficiency and to hormone treatment	86
3.2.4.1. <i>The effects of P-deficiency and ACC on GUS expression in PR tips</i>	86
3.2.4.2. <i>The effects of P-deficiency, NPA in combination with either NAA or ACC on GUS expression in PR tips</i>	90
 CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION	94
4.1. WHITE CLOVER ROOT MORPHOLOGY IN RESPONSE TO P-DEFICIENCY	94
4.2. THE EFFECTS OF PLANT HORMONES ON ROOT MORPHOLOGY OF WILD TYPE WHITE CLOVER WHEN SUBJECTED TO P-DEFICIENCY	97
4.2.1. <i>Ethylene</i>	97
4.2.2. <i>Auxin</i>	100
4.3. THE INTERACTION BETWEEN ETHYLENE AND AUXIN IN MEDIATING WHITE CLOVER ROOT GROWTH	105
4.4. GUS EXPRESSION PATTERNS IN DR5p::GUS WHITE CLOVER TRANSFORMANTS IN RESPONSE TO P-DEFICIENCY AND TO HORMONE MANIPULATED TREATMENTS	107
4.4.1. <i>GUS expression levels in different transgenic lines</i>	107
4.4.2. <i>The effects of P-deficiency, ethylene and auxin on GUS expression in PR tips</i>	109
 CONCLUSIONS	112
 FUTURE WORK	114
 REFERENCES	115

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1-MCP	1-methylcyclopropene
6-BAP	6-Benzylaminopurine
ACC	1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylate
ACO	1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylate oxidase
ACS	1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylate synthase
AVG	Aminoethoxyvinylglycine
BCIP	5 bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl phosphate
BFA	Brefeldin A
bp	base pair
<i>ca.</i>	approximately
Cef ³⁰⁰	Cefotaxime (300 µg.mL ⁻¹)
cm	centimetre
CTR	CONSTITUTE TRIPLE RESPONSE
DAT	day after treatment
DMF	Dimethylformamide
DMSO	Dimethyl sulphoxide
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
EDTA	Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
EIN	ETHYLENE INSENSITIVE
ERF	ETHYLENE RESPONSE FACTOR
ERS	ETHYLENE RESPONSE SENSOR
ETR	ETHYLENE TRIPLE RESPONSE
FAA	Formalin acetic acid
<i>g</i>	acceleration due to gravity (9.8 m.s ⁻²)
<i>g</i>	gram
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GUS	β-glucuronidase
HCl	Hydrochloric acid
IAA	Indole-3-acetic acid
Kan ¹⁵⁰	Kanamycin sulfate (150 µg.mL ⁻¹)
°C	Degrees in celsius

Kb	kilo base pair
kPa	kilo Pascal
L	Litre
LR(s)	lateral root(s)
M	moles L ⁻¹
mg	milligram
MgSO ₄	Magnesium sulfate
min	minute
mL	millilitre
mM	millimoles L ⁻¹
MQ water	water purified by a Milli-purification system
MS	Murashige and Skoog base media
NAA	1-naphthyleneacetic acid
NaCl	Sodium chloride
NaOH	Sodium hydroxide
NBT	Nitro-blue tetrazolium chloride
ng	nanogram
nM	nanomoles L ⁻¹
NPA	1-N-naphthylphthalamic acid
P	P value from <i>t</i> -test
P	Phosphate
P _{adj}	adjusted P value from Tukey's test
PAT	polar auxin transport
PC2	Physical Containment 2
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
PGU	Plant Growth Unit
pH	- log [H ⁺]
Pi ⁻	P-deficient treatment
Pi	inorganic phosphate, orthophosphate
Pi ⁺	P-sufficient treatment
ppm	parts per million
PR(s)	primary root(s)
QC	quiescent centre
RAM	root apical meristem

RH	Relative humidity
RNA	ribonucleic acid
Rnase	Ribonuclease
RO	reverse osmosis
rpm	round per minute
RSA	root system architecture
RT	room temperature
SAM	<i>S</i> -adenosyl methionine
SDS	Sodium dodecyl sulfate
SE	standard error of the mean
SSC	Sodium citrate – sodium chloride buffer
TAE	Tris-Acetate-EDTA
TFs	transcription factors
TIBA	2,3,5-triiodobenzoic acid
Tris	Tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethylamine
Trp	Tryptophan
TY	Tryptone-yeast extract
UV	ultra violet light
V	volts
v/v	volume per volume
w/v	weight per volume
w/w	weight per weight
WT	wild type
X-GLUC	5-Bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl β -D-glucuronide
μg	microgram
μL	microlitre
μm	micrometre
μM	micromoles L^{-1}

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1. An overview of plant responses to phosphate limitation.....	4
Figure 1.2 An overview of the ethylene biosynthetic pathway.....	10
Figure 1.3. A model for the ethylene response pathway in the regulation of gene expression.....	11
Figure 1.4. Model of the proteins that mediate auxin transport.....	14
Figure 1.5. Auxin transport is polarity in <i>Arabidopsis</i>	15
Figure 2.1. Flow diagram from stolon cutting to the hydroponic experimental system (as shown for the 10F genotype).....	23
Figure 2.2. Experimental system for 1-MCP treatment of hydroponically grown white clover.....	25
Figure 2.3. Experimental white clover stolon with root system.	28
Figure 2.4. Diagrammatic representation of the T-DNA of the pRD-410 vector harbouring the <i>DR5p::GUS</i> transgene used for <i>Agrobacterium</i> -mediated transformation.	31
Figure 2.5. Schematics of the blotting assembly used for the downward capillary transfer DNA from gel to Hybond TM – N ⁺ membrane.....	37
Figure 3.1.1. A four-node white clover stolon explant excised and trimmed all of the full expanded leaves.....	40
Figure 3.1.2 The effects of P-deficiency on the morphology of roots emerging from the third nodes.....	43
Figure 3.1.3. The effects of P-deficiency on the morphology of roots emerging from the fourth nodes.....	45
Figure 3.1.4. The effects of added ACC (1 μ M and 10 μ M) on root morphology.	47
Figure 3.1.5. The effects of added ACC at 100 nM on root morphology.....	49
Figure 3.1.6. The effects of added 1-MCP at 300 ppm on root morphology.....	51
Figure 3.1.7. The effects of added NAA (100 nM) on root morphology.....	53
Figure 3.1.8. The effects of NAA added at 5 nM on root morphology.	55
Figure 3.1.9 The effects of NPA on root morphology.	58
Figure 3.1.10. The interaction between added ACC and NPA in mediating root morphology.....	60
Figure 3.1.11. The interaction between 1-MCP and NAA in mediating root morphology.....	63

Figure 3.1.12. The effects of ACC in mediating root responses to P-deficiency.	66
Figure 3.1.13. The effects of 1-MCP in mediating root responses to P-deficiency.....	69
Figure 3.1.14. The effects of NAA in mediating root responses to P-deficiency.....	71
Figure 3.1.15. The effects of NPA in mediating root responses to P-deficiency.....	73
Figure 3.2.1. Example of screening of putative <i>DR5p::GUS</i> white clover transformants using PCR.	75
Figure 3.2.2. GUS staining intensity in <i>DR5p::GUS</i> transformed white clover.....	77
Figure 3.2.3. Southern analysis of putative <i>DR5p::GUS</i> white clover transformants.	80
Figure 3.2.4. The effects of P-deficiency on specific aspects of root morphology of wild type white clover (Grasslands Huia).....	82
Figure 3.2.5. The effects of P-deficiency on specific aspects of root morphology of the TR29 white clover transgenic line	84
Figure 3.2.6. GUS staining patterns of <i>DR5p::GUS</i> transformed TR29 white clover in response to a P-deficient treatment.	88
Figure 3.2.7. GUS staining of the primary root tips of the <i>DR5p::GUS</i> transformed TR29 line in response to P-deficiency and ACC treatment.	89
Figure 3.2.8.a. GUS staining of the primary root tips of the TR29 line of <i>DR5p::GUS</i> transformed white clover in response to Pi^- deficiency and hormone treatments.....	92
Figure 3.2.8.b. GUS staining of the primary root tips of the TR29 line of <i>DR5p::GUS</i> transformed white clover in response to Pi^- deficiency and hormone treatments.....	93

LIST OF TABLE

Table 3.2.1. Summary of results of screening of putative <i>DR5p::GUS</i> transgenic white clover lines using PCR and GUS staining analysis,	78
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