BIOLOGIA PLANTARUM 52 (3): 413-422, 2008

REVIEW

Production of reactive oxygen species and development of antioxidative systems during *in vitro* growth and *ex vitro* transfer

P. BAŤKOVÁ[1,2], J. POSPÍŠILOVÁ[1]* and H. SYNKOVÁ[1]

Institute of Experimental Botany, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Na Karlovce 1a, CZ-16000 Prague, Czech Republic[1]
Charles University Prague, Faculty of Science, Viničná 5, CZ-12844 Prague, Czech Republic[2]

Abstract

Ex vitro transfer is often stressful for *in vitro* grown plantlets. Water stress and photoinhibition, often accompanying the acclimatization of *in vitro* grown plantlets to *ex vitro* conditions, are probably the main factors promoting production of reactive oxygen species (ROS) and in consequence oxidative stress. The extent of the damaging effects of ROS depends on the effectiveness of the antioxidative systems which include low molecular mass antioxidants (ascorbate, glutathione, tocopherols, carotenoids, phenols) and antioxidative enzymes (superoxide dismutase, ascorbate peroxidase, catalase, glutathione reductase, monodehydroascorbate reductase, dehydroascorbate reductase). This review is focused on ROS production and development of antioxidative system during *in vitro* growth and their further changes during *ex vitro* transfer.

Additional key words: ascorbate, ascorbate peroxidase, carotenoids, catalase, dehydroascorbate reductase, glutathione, glutathione reductase, malondialdehyde, peroxidase, superoxide dismutase.

Introduction

Within the last four decades plant micropropagation has developed from a laboratory curiosity to a real industry. Nevertheless, its widespread use is restricted by the formation of plantlets of abnormal morphology, anatomy and physiology induced by special conditions during *in vitro* culture, *e.g.*, high air humidity, decreased air turbulence, low irradiance, low CO_2 concentration during light period, cultivation media supplemented with sugars and growth regulators (for review see, *e.g.*, Pospíšilová *et al*. 1992, 1997, 2005, 2007, Buddendorf-Joosten and Woltering 1994, Desjardins 1995, Kozai and Smith 1995, Kubota *et al*. 1997). After *ex vitro* transfer, these plantlets might be easily impaired by sudden changes in environmental conditions. Low air humidity and high irradiance belong to the most harmful ones.

A common feature of the imposition of environmental stresses is the increased rate of production of reactive oxygen species (ROS; *i.e.* hydrogen peroxide, superoxide radicals, singlet oxygen, hydroxyl radicals). The most important sources of ROS are chloroplasts, mitochondria, peroxisomes, and the cytosol (*e.g.* Miszalski *et al*. 2007). In chloroplasts, one of the sources of ROS production is direct electron flow to oxygen (Mehler reaction). Moreover, during photorespiration H_2O_2 generation occurs at the step of glyoxylate formation from glycolate (Levine 1999). In mitochondria, ROS production occurs mainly at two sites of the electron transport chain: NAD(P)H dehydrogenases and the cytochrome bc_1 complex (Ślezak *et al*. 2007). Although ROS are inevitable byproducts of aerobic metabolism, they cause lipid peroxidation and consequently membrane injuries, protein degradation, enzyme inactivation, damage of DNA. Therefore their production and removal must be controlled (*e.g.* Hernández *et al*. 2006, Hadži-Tašković

Received 7 December 2007, *accepted* 31 January 2008
Abbreviations: ABA - abscisic acid; APX - ascorbate peroxidase (EC 1.11.1.11); Car - carotenoids; CAT - catalase; DHAR - dehydroascorbate reductase (EC 1.8.5.1); GA_3 - gibberellic acid; GR - glutathione reductase (EC 1.6.4.2); LOX - lipoxygenase (EC 1.13.11.12); MDA - malondialdehyde; MDHAR - monodehydroascorbate reductase (EC 1.6.5.4), PEG - polyethylene glycol; POX - peroxidase (EC 1.11.1.7); ROS - reactive oxygen species; SA - salicylic acid; SOD - superoxide dismutase (EC 1.15.1.1).
Acknowledgements: The authors acknowledge the financial support of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (grant No. 522/07/0227)
* Corresponding author; fax: (+420) 224310113, e-mail: pospisilova@ueb.cas.cz

Šukalović and Vuletić 2007, Shao *et al*. 2008). The extent of the damaging effects of ROS depends on the effectiveness of the antioxidative systems which include low molecular mass antioxidants (ascorbate, glutathione, tocopherols, carotenoids, phenols) as well as several antioxidative enzymes (superoxide dismutase, SOD, ascorbate peroxidase, APX, catalase, CAT, glutathione reductase, GR, monodehydroascorbate reductase, MDHAR, dehydroascorbate reductase, DHAR) (*e.g*. Hernández *et al*. 2006, Zlatev *et al*. 2006). SODs catalyze dismutation of superoxid radical $O_2^{\bullet -}$ to H_2O_2 and O_2 at the site of its production. SODs are distributed in all cellular compartments, FeSOD in chloroplasts, MnSOD in mitochondria and peroxisomes, and Cu/ZnSOD in cytosol and chloroplasts. APX, MDHAR, DHAR and GR form so-called ascorbate-glutathione cycle which converts H_2O_2 to water and recycle ascorbate and glutathione. CAT also uses H_2O_2 as a substrate in peroxisomes. PODs catalyse various reactions where H_2O_2 is used as one of their substrates including cell wall lignification (*e.g*. Lee *et al*. 2007).

It is well known that many different stresses, for example high irradiance (Hernández *et al*. 2006, Lambreva *et al*. 2006), drought (Sharma and Dubey 2004, 2005, Zhang *et al*. 2004, Agarwal *et al*. 2005, Jain *et al*. 2006, Zlatev *et al*. 2006, Fazeli *et al*. 2007), salinity (Agarwal and Pandey 2004, Koca *et al*. 2006, Mandhania *et al*. 2006, Niknam *et al*. 2006, Xu *et al*. 2007), high temperature (Ali *et al*. 2005a), heavy metals (Gajewska *et al*. 2006, Scebba *et al*. 2006, Qureshi *et al*. 2007, Sharma and Dubey 2007, Romanowska *et al*. 2008), or aluminum (Liu *et al*. 2008, Shamshi *et al*. 2008) cause ROS production and promote activities of antioxidative enzymes. Nevertheless, stress-induced activities of antioxidative enzymes are species, cultivar and age dependent (Dertinger *et al*. 2003, Khanna-Chopra and Selote 2007). On the other hand, the effects of elevated CO_2 concentration, limited water supply and temperature during alfalfa regrowth were not related to significant and general changes in oxidative stress or antioxidant capacity (Erice *et al*. 2007). Nevertheless, plants with higher content of antioxidants, either constitutive or induced, are usually better adapted to stress.

However, ROS at low concentrations can be signals that switch on developmental programs or regulate physiological processes as cell wall loosening required for cell elongation, modulation of cytosol Ca^{2+} concentration, senescence, adaptation to abiotic stresses or resistance to pathogens (Papadakis and Roubelakis-Angelakis 2002, Gechev *et al*. 2005, Procházková and Wilhelmová 2007, Ślesak *et al*. 2007, Vilela *et al*. 2007). ROS have been implicated as second messengers in several plant hormone responses (Kwak *et al*. 2006). Signalling mediated by ROS involves G-proteins, MAP kinases and protein Tyr phosphatases (Zhang *et al*. 2006, Shao *et al*. 2008). In addition to concentration, the balance between their positive and negative effects is influenced by the physiological and developmental status of tissues (Obert *et al*. 2005).

Further, ROS induce accumulation of stress hormones, such as salicylic acid and ethylene (for review see, Shao *et al*. 2008). On the other hand, abscisic acid (ABA) can affect ROS production and ROS are secondary messengers in many ABA signalling pathways including antioxidative defence induction (Jiang and Zhang 2002, 2004, Xiong *et al*. 2006, Zhang *et al*. 2006). Cytokinins were also reported to modulate antioxidative system and P*ssu-ipt* transgenic tobacco plants with increased cytokinin content exhibited elevated activities of antioxidant enzymes (Synková *et al*. 2006). The increased activities of SOD, CAT, APX, GPX and DHAR were responsible for the delay of osmotic stress induced senescence in transgenic (P_{SAG12}-*IPT*) gerbera plants (Lai *et al*. 2007).

This review aims to illustrate still fragmentary knowledge about occurrence of oxidative stress and development of antioxidative system during *in vitro* culture and acclimatization to *ex vitro* conditions. The papers dealing with *in vitro* production of antioxidants for pharmaceutical purposes are not included.

In vitro culture

***In vitro* growth and development:** For cultivation of plantlets *in vitro*, addition of phytohormones into media is often essential. The role of ROS in plant growth and development is therefore further substantiated by the interplay of ROS with a number of phytohormones (Gechev *et al*. 2005). Therefore the study of the ROS production, oxidative stress and the efficiency of antioxidants during different stages of direct organogenesis or somatic embryogenesis is of increasing interest.

It was hypothesized that plant recalcitrance might be associated with ROS production and oxidative stress during *in vitro* culture (*e.g*. Benson 2000, Papadakis and Roubelakis-Angelakis 2002, Dutta Gupta and Datta 2003/4). This suggestion was confirmed by experiments with *Daucus carota* where application of lipid peroxidation products 4-hydroxy-2-nonenal or malondialdehyde (MDA) inhibited proliferation and embryogenesis (Adams *et al*. 1999). Further, addition of antioxidants polyvinylpolypyrrolidone and dithiotreitol to *Pinus virginiana* cultures inhibited tissue necrosis and improved callus formation, shoot differentiation and growth, and rooting (Tang *et al*. 2004a). ROS formation during *in vitro* cultivation of flax was dependent on concentrations of naphthalene acetic acid and benzylaminopurine and the number of embryo-like structures was positively correlated while number of roots was negatively correlated with ROS formation. Moreover, both anti-oxidative compound desferrioxamine (inhibitor of Fenton reaction) and pro-oxidative compound 4-hydroxy-2-nonenal inhibited the formation of shoots

and roots (Obert *et al*. 2005). Also in *Gladiolus*, an addition of natural antioxidants such as glutathione, α-tocopherol and ascorbate stimulated shoot organogenesis. However, these antioxidants inhibited somatic embryogenesis in the same plant species, the frequency of somatic embryogenesis was even increased by addition of H_2O_2. In the same cultures, SOD activity decreased while CAT and POX activities increased during shoot formation while SOD activity increased and CAT and POX activities decreased during somatic embryogenesis (Dutta Gupta and Datta 2003/4). CAT and SOD activities were twofold higher in *Quercus robur* plantlets than in seedlings. Further, their activities and occurrence of different isoforms varied in different plantlet organs and in particular CAT-2 isoform was activated in the basal callus of rooted microshoots (Racchi *et al*. 2001). In *Pinus strobus* direct adventitious shoot formation induced by thidiazuron was connected with gradual decrease in activities of POX and CAT (Tang and Newton 2005). Application of polyamines recovered browning tissue of *Pinus virginiana* into normal callus by increasing the activities of APX, GR and SOD and by decreasing lipid peroxidation (Tang *et al*. 2004b). The lower POX activity in combination with higher auxin/cytokinin ratio made *Schlumbergera* more recalcitrant for adventitious shoot formation than *Rhipsalidopsis* (Sriskandarajah *et al*. 2006). On the other hand, difficult-to-root species *Grevillea petrophioides* showed higher total POX activity at the time point of adventitious root formation than easy-to-root species *Grevillea rondeu*. In addition, basic POX isoforms were more prominent in *G. petrophioides* while acidic isoforms in *G. rondeu* (Ludwig-Muller 2003).

In vitro culture can be a convenient tool to study switch from vegetative to reproductive phase. Gibberellic acid (GA_3) and sucrose in appropriate concentrations were essential for *in vitro* flowering of *Spathiphyllum*. Flowering plants had higher content of glutathione and GR, APX, MDHAR and POX activities in comparison with non-flowering plants (Dewir *et al*. 2007). The authors suggested that oxidative stress during period of GA_3 treatment promoted glutathione synthesis and *Spathiphyllum* flowering.

SOD isozyme markers have been successfully used to determine the genetic stability of tissue cultured *Cordyline terminalis* clones (Ray *et al*. 2006).

Hyperhydricity: High air humidity has been considered as the most important factor responsible for reduced transpiration, CO_2 and O_2 exchange, and excessive water accumulation. To explain anatomical and physiological disorders accompanying hyperhydricity in *in vitro* cultures, a research has been also addressed on relationship between hyperhydricity and oxidative stress. The time course of H_2O_2 generation in hyperhydric tissues of carnation microshoots confirmed narrow connection between hyperhydricity and oxidative stress in this species (Saher *et al*. 2004). In hyperhydric carnation leaves, increased MDA content and total POX activity was also observed (Olmos *et al*. 1997, Saher *et al*. 2004). However, this increase in POX activity was due to increase in the activity of basic isoforms while activity of acidic isoforms and in consequence lignification was reduced (Olmos *et al*. 1997). An oxidative stress characterized by markedly increased content of MDA and activity of lipoxygenase (LOX) were found in hyperhydric shoots of *Euphorbia millii*. At the same time, these plantlets reduced oxidative stress by increased activities of SOD, POX and CAT. The activities of enzymes of ascorbate-glutathione cycle (APX, GR, MDHAR and DHAR) were also increased indicating a crucial role of elimination of H_2O_2 from plant cells (Dewir *et al*. 2006). Increased SOD and CAT activities in hyperhydric tobacco leaves were observed by Piqueras *et al*. (1998). Similarly, higher activities of SOD, CAT, APX and GR were found in hyperhydric leaves than in healthy leaves of apple regenerants grown in bioreactor (Chakrabarty *et al*. 2006). In contrast, a hyperhydricity in liquid-cultured *Narcissus* induced by growth retardant ancymidol was connected with decreased activities of APX and CAT and increased initiation of meristematic centers (Chen and Ziv 2001). In hyperhydric shoots of *Prunus avium*, H_2O_2 was accumulated due to increased SOD activity and decreased activities of POX, APX, CAT, DHAR, MDHAR and GR (Franck *et al*. 1995). In micropropagated *Dianthus*, the prevention of hyperhydricity by bottom cooling decreased H_2O_2 production, lipid peroxidation (MDA content), and SOD and CAT activities (Saher *et al*. 2005b). Addition of rare earth elements La, Ce and Nd into medium reduced hyperhydricity in *Lepidium meyeni* shoots and enhanced activities of POD, CAT, APX, SOD, MDHAR, and GR (Wang *et al*. 2007).

In contrast, Saher *et al*. (2005a) found induction of the oxidative pentose phosphate and fermentative pathways in carnation hyperhydric leaves. According to their opinion, hypoxia stress was the main factor affecting metabolism of hyperhydric leaves.

***In vitro* selection of NaCl tolerant plants:** *In vitro* selection is one of the recent methods applied to speed up development of tolerant crops. Among many papers determining survival and growth of calli or regenerants during their adaptation to osmotic or salt stress, few focused also on co-occurring oxidative stress. For example, increase in NaCl concentration from 150 to 250 mM resulted in significant increases in superoxide radical production in cotton callus tissue. This triggered increase in activities of antioxidative enzymes CAT, POD, APX and GR (Vital *et al*. 2008). However, when the cotton calli were pre-treated with superoxide radical scavenger N-acetyl L-cysteine upregulation of enzyme activities was inhibited. Therefore the authors suggested that ROS are involved in "turning on" antioxidative defence (Vital *et al*. 2008). Both ABA-dependent and ABA-independent pathways in the upregulation of antioxidative enzymes during NaCl stress were suggested (Bueno *et al*. 1998, Bellaire *et al*. 2000).

Increased activities of antioxidative enzymes and their

mRNA levels were found in number of cultures subjected to salt stress (Gossett *et al.* 1994, Bueno *et al*. 1998, Molina *et al*. 2002, Ślesak and Miszalski 2003, Molassiotis *et al*. 2006b, Niknam *et al*. 2006, Erturk *et al*. 2007, Lu *et al*. 2007). A significant increase in SOD, CAT, APX and GR activities under 75 or 150 mM NaCl was found in callus of the salt-tolerant cotton cultivar, but not in callus of salt-sensitive cultivar (Gossett *et al*. 1994). NaCl tolerant lines of *Chrysanthemum morifolium* developed *in vitro* through *in vitro* mutagenesis or a stepwise increase in NaCl concentration exhibited significant increase in SOD, APX and GR activities, and the former also higher contents of carotenoids and ascorbate (Hossain *et al*. 2006, 2007). Similarly, increased capacity for ROS scavenging by increased activities of SOD, APX, CAT, GR and glutathione transferase was found in NaCl tolerant tomato calli (Rodríguez-Rosales *et al*. 1999). NaCl and drought tolerance was also increased by over-expression of rice Cu/ZnSOD in chloroplasts of tobacco using *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation (Badawi *et al*. 2004). The increase in content of ascorbic acid was observed in salt tolerant potato cell lines (Queirós *et al*. 2007). Exogenous proline was more effective than glycinebetaine in maintaining the activity of enzymes of ascorbate-glutathione cycle in NaCl-stressed tobacco cell suspension culture (Hoque *et al*. 2007).

In *in vitro* grown *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*, NaCl induced shift of its carbon assimilation mode from C_3 to CAM pathway, increase in MnSOD, FeSOD and Cu/ZnSOD activities (Ślesak *et al*. 2003), and induction of new MnSODII isoform in roots (Ślesak and Miszalski 2003). Tomato cells adapted to NaCl contained a lower concentration of salicylic acid (SA), and activities of LOX and MnSOD, but higher GR and APX activities than unadapted cells. Moreover, these enzyme activities were differently affected by short-term NaCl stress or SA application in NaCl-adapted and unadapted cells (Molina *et al*. 2002). In tobacco BY-2 cell culture, not only NaCl but also polyethylene glycol (PEG) treatment led to an increase in SOD, CAT and APX activities, whereas GR activity remained unchanged (Bueno *et al*. 1998). PEG treatment increased content of MDA and activity of SOD in calli of two rice genotypes and higher growth in more tolerant genotype was accompanied not only with higher water potential and solute accumulation but also with higher SOD activity (Chandrasekhara Reddy *et al*. 2004). PEG-induced increase in MDA content and activities of SOD, CAT, APX, POX and GR has been found recently in sweet cherry (Sivritepe *et al*. 2008).

In contrast, exogenous H_2O_2 increased salt resistance in calli of *Populus euphratica* by increasing K/Na ratio, which was dependent on the increased plasma membrane H+-ATPase activity (Zhang *et al*. 2007).

Effects of different metals: *In vitro* cultures are also good models for studying effect of different metals from their deficiency to toxicity. In connection with this, oxidative stress and antioxidants were also followed.

In strawberry culture, addition of silver nitrate inhibited ethylene production and increased contents of chlorophyll and soluble protein and activities of SOD, POX and CAT (Qin *et al*. 2005). The addition of calcium was found important for induction of somatic embryogenesis in *Eucalyptus urophylla* connected with increased contents of proteins and sugars and POX activity (Arruda *et al*. 2000). In peach rootstock culture, iron deficiency caused a reduction of chlorophyll and carotenoid content and CAT and SOD activities (Lombardi *et al*. 2003).

Increasing boron concentrations from 0.1 to 6.0 mM in apple rootstocks enhanced LOX activity, lipid peroxidation, H_2O_2 accumulation and SOD and POD activities (Molassiotis *et al*. 2006a).

In *Saccharum officinarum* calli grown under 0.5 or 1 mM $CdCl_2$ a rapid increase of CAT activity was detected (14-fold higher after 15 d) while SOD activity did not exhibit any major variation (Fornazier *et al*. 2002). In sunflower calli, low concentration of Cd (5 μM) increased CAT and POX activities, but higher concentrations (50 and 500 μM) decreased activities of both enzymes. However, in calli which were able to survive at 50 μM Cd for 6 months, CAT and POX activities were higher than in control calli (Azevedo *et al*. 2005). In coffee cell suspension cultures, 0.5 mM Cd induced lipid peroxidation, increased activities of CAT, GR and SOD while decreased APX activity (Gomes *et al*. 2006).

Contents of antioxidants and activities of antioxidative enzymes increased after addition of Hg up to 4 μM concentration and then severely declined at 50 μM Hg (Israr and Sahi 2006).

Exposure of suspension culture of *Panax ginseng* to 50 μM Cu resulted in strong growth inhibition and oxidative stress (accumulation of H_2O_2, MDA, increased LOX activity). Ascorbate and glutathione were oxidized to dehydroascorbate and glutathiondisulfide. SOD activity was increased (mainly due to induction of FeSOD) while CAT and POX activities were inhibited (Ali *et al*. 2006b). On the contrary, *Prunus cerasifera* grown *in vitro* tolerated Cu up to 50 μM concentration. Its ability to tolerate this rather high Cu concentration was partially due to induction of SOD and CAT gene expression and in consequence increased SOD and CAT activities (Lombardi and Sebastiani 2005).

In suspension cultures of *Coffea arabica*, addition of $NiCl_2$ into medium induced rapid accumulation of Ni in cells and increase in activities of SOD, CAT, APX, POX and GR (Gomes *et al*. 2006). Lipid peroxidation and alterations in antioxidative enzymes were the main responses of coffee cell suspension also to application of selenite (Gomes *et al*. 2007).

Effect of other environmental factors: Sugars in the medium are not only sources of energy and carbon skeleton for *in vitro* grown plants but also signalling molecules. Therefore it is not surprising that they can also affect development of antioxidative systems. It was found

that the SOD activity of *Trifolium repens* was affected by the type of explant as well as presence or absence of sucrose, glucose, fructose and maltose in medium. In cultures derived from cotyledon explants MnSOD activity was highest in medium with sucrose, fructose or maltose, Cu/ZnSODI activity was highest on medium with glucose and fructose while FeSOD and Cu/ZnSODII activities were highest in the absence of sugars. In contrast, in cultures derived from hypocotyl explants MnSOD and FeSOD activities were similar for all tested media and Cu/ZnSODI and Cu/ZnSODII activities were lowest on medium with sucrose (Ślesak *et al*. 2006). Embryo axes isolated from germinating lupine seeds and cultivated *in vitro* on medium without sucrose showed anatomical and physiological features of sucrose starvation. In these cultures SOD activity was higher while CAT and POX activities lower than in cultures with 60 mM sucrose (Morkunas *et al*. 2003). Under chilling stress, the rate of lipid peroxidation and SOD activity in *in vitro* grown potato genotypes were dependent on the content of intracellular sugars (Deryabin *et al*. 2007).

Elevated CO_2 concentration (from 0.03 to 0.5, 1, 2 and 5 %) in bioreactor with root suspension cultures of *Echinacea angustifolia* reduced superoxide anion accumulation, MDA content and LOX activity. Simultaneously, contents of glutathione and ascorbate and activities of APX, DHAR and MDHAR gradually increased while maximum SOD and CAT activities were observed at 0.5 % CO_2 (Ali *et al*. 2006a).

Somatic embryos of *Eleutherococcus senticosus* were grown in bioreactor under different temperature (12, 16, 24 and 30 °C) for 45 d and maximum growth and production of secondary metabolites was achieved at 24 °C. Low and especially high temperature induced oxidative stress (increased production of H_2O_2, MDA content and LOX activity). On the other hand, activities of antioxidative enzymes (SOD, CAT, DHAR, MDHAR, GR, APX) were increased only at low temperatures (Shohael *et al*. 2006b). Somatic embryos of the same plant species were also grown under different light sources. Higher H_2O_2 and MDA contents and LOX, SOD, CAT and MDHAR activities was observed at red radiation compared to dark-grown embryos. On the other hand, maximum APX activity and biomass accumulation was found under fluorescent tubes (Shohael *et al*. 2006a).

Ribes genotypes with different survival response following cryopreservation showed differences in content in antioxidants. Higher accumulation of antioxidants during cold acclimation and their persistence during recovery was found in more tolerant genotypes (Johnston *et al*. 2007).

Ex vitro transfer

Ex vitro transfer of *in vitro* grown plantlets is often accompanied by water stress and/or photoinhibition (*e.g*. Semorádová *et al*. 2002, Carvalho *et al*. 2006). These stresses might be the main factors promoting production of reactive oxygen species and in consequence oxidative stress. Therefore, for successful *ex vitro* transfer, sufficient content of non-enzymatic antioxidants as well as activities of antioxidative enzymes formed during previous *in vitro* growth are very important. No less important are changes in antioxidants induced after *ex vitro* transfer, however, little is still known about these changes.

The extremely short life time of ROS makes the study of their production *in planta* very difficult. Nevertheless, Vilela *et al*. (2007), using diaminobenzidine and nitroblue tetrazolium together with high-resolution imaging, detected ROS accumulation in the first days after *ex vitro* transfer of grapevine followed by gradual decrease to levels comparable in greenhouse grown plants. While superoxide radical was uniformly distributed, H_2O_2 was preferentially accumulated in veins and stomatal guard and surrounding cells. Transient increase in H_2O_2 content together with reversible photoinhibition was observed also in grapevine leaves during *ex vitro* acclimatization under irradiance fourfold higher than during *in vitro* growth. Concomitantly, upregulation of APX, DHAR, MDHAR, GR, SOD and CAT activities and expression of associated genes were observed (Carvalho *et al*. 2006).

During *ex vitro* acclimatization of *Spathiphyllum* and *Calathea* plants, CAT activity increased, reaching a maximum 4 weeks after transplantation, while SOD activity reached maximum in the 24th week (Van Huylenbroeck *et al*. 1998). In *Calathea* plants, also activity of GR increased during first 3 weeks of acclimatization while activities of APX and POX later on (Van Huylenbroeck *et al*. 1997). In *Spathiphyllum* leaves, only one band corresponding to MnSOD was detected initially and a second MnSOD band appeared after 12 weeks. *Calathea* leaves showed more SOD isozymes whose relative contribution to the total activity changed with time. Also a new MnSOD band appeared only during the 3rd week of acclimatization (Van Huylenbroeck *et al*. 1998). In the same plant species, the changes in antioxidative enzyme activities after *ex vitro* transfer were dependent on irradiance. SOD activity was not changed at low irradiance while it at first decreased and then increased under high irradiance. CAT activity increased after transplantation more at low than at high irradiance. The highest activity of APX for plants grown at medium and high irradiance was measured at day 14 and 35, respectively. GR activity also increased considerably and DHAR activity decreased but no clear dependences of activities of these enzymes on irradiance were found (Van Huylenbroeck *et al*. 2000). Acclimatization of *Phalaenopsis* plantlets to *ex vitro* conditions was also affected by irradiance (Ali *et al*. 2005b). The highest irradiance used (300 μmol m^{-2} s^{-1}) induced photoinhibition (characterized by reduced variable to maximum

fluorescence ratio) and oxidative stress (increased LOX activity and MDA content). Regarding antioxidative enzymes, SOD and CAT activities in leaves increased during acclimatization more under high than under intermediate (160 μmol m^{-2} s^{-1}) and low (60 μmol m^{-2} s^{-1}) irradiances. In contrast, DHAR and MDHAR activities increased at low and intermediate irradiance but decreased at high irradiance. No significant change in GR activity was found at high and intermediate irradiance, though it decreased at low irradiance (Ali *et al*. 2005b).

Grapevine and chestnut plantlets were acclimatized under four treatments combining two irradiances and two CO_2 concentrations and variation in glutathione pools and parameters of chlorophyll fluorescence were monitored (Carvalho and Amâncio 2002). Grapevine revealed a better adaptation to *ex vitro* conditions without photoinhibition symptoms under high irradiance and both species exhibited benefit from increased CO_2 concentration. Photoinhibition in chestnut under high irradiance was accompanied with increased content of reduced glutathione and increased GR activity.

In tobacco plants, antioxidative enzyme activities were affected by CO_2 concentration during previous *in vitro* cultivation and after *ex vitro* transplantation as well as by ABA application (Synková and Pospíšilová 2002). The highest CAT activity in plants acclimatized to *ex vitro* conditions for 4 weeks was found in those grown *in vitro* under higher CO_2 concentration in ventilated *Magenta* boxes (M-plants) and treated immediately after transfer by ABA. Also SOD activity was higher in M-plants than in plants grown *in vitro* under lower CO_2 concentration in tightly closed glass vessels (G-plants). In contrast, GR activity was double in G-plants in comparison with that in M-plants, but this difference disappeared after ABA application. The POX activity was also mostly higher in G-plants than in M-plants. ABA application caused decrease in activities of GR, MnSOD and POD. Elevated CO_2 concentration during acclimatization increased POX and SOD activities (Synková and Pospíšilová 2002).

For acclimatization of *Spathiphyllum* plantlets *Perlite* with nutrient solution of different osmotic potential was used (Dewir *et al*. 2005) and the moderate osmotic stress induced down-regulation of photosynthesis and increased activities of CAT, APX, POD, GR and MDHAR.

During *ex vitro* acclimatization of *Doritaenopsis* plantlets, POX activity was not affected by relative humidity but increased at low temperature together with decreased chlorophyll content and photosynthetic efficiency (Jeon *et al*. 2006).

For successful *ex vitro* acclimatization another important roles of PODs have been suggested. In connection with their possible participation in lignin formation or auxin metabolism, these enzymes have been proposed as biochemical markers of the rooting (*e.g*. Syros *et al*. 2004). In fact, both *in vitro* or *ex vitro* rooting microshoots of *Gardenia jasminoides* showed a clear relationship between rooting and POX activity: POX activity was lowest in the inductive phase, reached a maximum during root initiation and decreased during further root growth (Hatzilazarou *et al*. 2006).

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