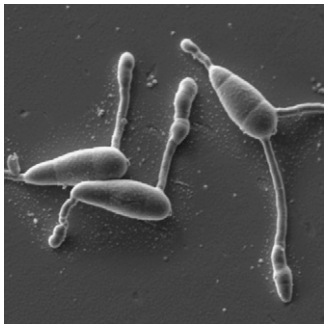
THE
PLANT
CELL

Volume 19 Number 8 August 2007

The electronic form of this issue, available at www.plantcell.org, is the journal of record.

ON THE COVER



The rice blast fungus *Magnaporthe grisea* is the most destructive pathogen of cultivated rice and infects more than 50 grass species, including wheat and barley. *M. grisea* infects its host by forming a specialized infection structure called the appressorium. Upon landing on a host leaf, a short germ tube emerges from the spore and attaches to the substrate, initiating appressorium formation. Turgor pressure generated within the appressorium drives an emerging penetration peg through the plant cuticle. Skamnioti and Gurr (pages 2674–2689) present genetic evidence that the *M. grisea* virulence determinant *CUT2* is essential for germling morphogenesis and successful plant penetration. The *cut2* mutant displays anomalous morphogenesis, forms fewer penetration pegs, and is poorly pathogenic. These defects are restored by synthetic cutin monomers, cAMP and DAG, suggesting that Cut2 is an upstream activator of cAMP/PKA and DAG/PKC signaling pathways. The cover image shows *cut2* mutant germlings, which form near straight germ tubes with small baguette-shaped appressoria. This contrasts markedly with wild-type germlings, which form a single short germ tube with a dome-shaped appressorium.

Publisher
American Society of
Plant Biologists
Executive Director,
Crispin Taylor

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Online at www.plantcell.org

CORRECTIONS

[W] Online version contains Web-only data.

[OA] Open Access articles can be viewed online without a subscription.

The Plant Cell (ISSN 1040-4651, online ISSN 1531-298X) is published monthly (one volume per year) by the American Society of Plant Biologists, 15501 Monona Drive, Rockville, MD 20855-2768, and is produced by Dartmouth Journal Services, Waterbury, VT. The institutional price for the print and online versions is based on type of institution; contact institution@aspb.org. A subscription includes both *The Plant Cell* and *Plant Physiology;* single copies may be purchased for $75 each, plus $7 shipping (U.S.) or $9 (outside U.S.). Members of the American Society of Plant Biologists may subscribe to *The Plant Cell* for $160. Nonmember individuals may subscribe for $325. For matters regarding subscriptions, contact Suzanne Cholwek, ASPB, 15501 Monona Drive, Rockville, MD 20855-2768; telephone 301/251-0560, ext. 141; fax 301/251-6740; e-mail scholwek@aspb.org. Notify ASPB in writing within 3 months (domestic) or 6 months (foreign) of issue date, and defective copies or copies lost in the mail will be replaced. Send all inquiries regarding display advertising to FASEB AdNet, 9650 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20814-3998; telephone 301/634-7791; fax 301/634-7153; e-mail adnet@faseb.org. Periodicals postage paid at Rockville, MD 20850, and at additional mailing offices.

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