ON THE COVER

Tracheary element differentiation inhibitory factor (TDIF) peptide signaling plays a crucial role in the maintenance of procambial/cambial stem cells. Hirakawa et al. (pages 2618–2629) show that TDIF functions in the regulation of stem cell proliferation and xylem differentiation by two independent pathways. Activation of the WUSCHEL-related HOMEOBOX4 (WOX4) gene by TDIF is involved only in the enhancement of procambial cell proliferation, whereas TDIF-mediated inhibition of xylem commitment is independent of WOX4. The cover shows a cross section of secondary vascular tissues in a tdr wox4 double mutant hypocotyl, in which the procambial/cambial stem cells adjacent to the phloem cells (green dots) have differentiated into xylem cells (with orange secondary walls), causing premature growth termination of secondary vascular tissues.

IN BRIEF

Regulation of Phospholipid Biosynthesis in Arabidopsis
Kathleen L. Farquharson

Modeling Polar Growth of Plant Cell Walls
Nancy A. Eckardt

Vascular Development: Similar Regulators Function in Shoot, Root, and Vascular Meristems
Nancy R. Hofmann

COMMENTARY

An International Bioinformatics Infrastructure to Underpin the Arabidopsis Community
International Arabidopsis Informatics Consortium

PERSPECTIVE

Setaria viridis: A Model for C4 Photosynthesis
Thomas P. Brutnell, Lin Wang, Kerry Swartwood, Alexander Goldschmidt, David Jackson, Xin-Guang Zhu, Elizabeth Kellogg, Joyce Van Eck

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Structural and Functional Divergence of a 1-Mb Duplicated Region in the Soybean (Glycine max) Genome and Comparison to an Orthologous Region from Phaseolus vulgaris
Jer-Young Lin, Robert M. Stupar, Christian Hans, David L. Hyten, and Scott A. Jackson

Hidden Variability of Floral Homeotic B Genes in Solanaceae Provides a Molecular Basis for the Evolution of Novel Functions
Koen Geuten and Vivian Irish

Finite Element Model of Polar Growth in Pollen Tubes
Pierre Fayant, Orlando Girlanda, Youssef Chebl, Carl-Éric Aubin, Isabelle Villemure, and Anja Geitmann

Phosphoenolpyruvate Provision to Plastids Is Essential for Gametophyte and Sporophyte Development in Arabidopsis thaliana
Veena Prabhakar, Tanja Löttger, Stefan Geimer, Peter Dörmann, Stephan Krüger, Vinod Vijayakumar, Lukas Schreiber, Cornelia Göbel, Kirstin Feussner, Ivo Feussner, Kay Marin, Pia Staehr, Kirsten Bell, Ulf-Ingo Flügge, and Rainer E. Häusler
Abscisic Acid Increases Arabidopsis ABIF5 Transcription Factor Levels by Promoting KEG E3 Ligase Self-Ubiquitination and Proteasomal Degradation

Christin A. Albus, Stephanie Ruf, Mark Aurel Schöttler, Wolfgang Lein, Jean-Marc Neuhaus, and Nadine Paris

Nonspecific Phospholipase C NPC4 Promotes Responses to Abscisic Acid and Tolerance to Hyperosmotic Stress in Arabidopsis

Bruno Saint-Jean, Emilie Seveno-Carpentier, Carine Alcon, Ruth De Groodt, Riet De Rycke, Jürgen Kleine-Vehn, and Jiří Friml

Characterization of the Molecular Mechanism Underlying Gibberellin Perception Complex Formation in Rice

Elena Feraru, Tomasz Paciorek, Mugurel I. Feraru, Marta Zwiewka, Christian Craddock, Nicolette Adams, and Antoni R. Slabas

The Conserved RNA Trafficking Proteins HPR1 and TEX1 Are Involved in the Production of Endogenous and Exogenous Small Interfering RNA in Arabidopsis

Yuri Yatsubusa, Naizhi Chen, Laurent Blanchoin, Hua Zhang, Xiaolu Qu, and Haiyun Ren

Arabidopsis VILLIN1 and VILLIN3 Have Overlapping and Distinct Activities in Actin Bundle Formation and Turnover

Yurong Xie, Yiyan Zheng, Naizhi Chen, Laurent Blanchoin, Hua Zhang, Xiaolu Qu, Chanchan Bao, Parul Khurana, Jessica L. Henty, Shanjin Huang, Andrew M. Staiger, Laurent Blanchoin, and Christopher J. Staiger

Arabidopsis VILLIN5, an Actin Filament Bundling and Severing Protein, Is Necessary for Normal Pollen Tube Growth

Hua Zhang, Xiaolu Qu, Chanchan Bao, Parul Khurana, Qiannan Wang, Yurong Xie, Yiyan Zheng, Naizhi Chen, Laurent Blanchoin, Christopher J. Staiger, and Shanjin Huang

Dysfunction of Chromatin Assembly Factor 1 Induces Shortening of Telomeres and Loss of 45S rDNA in Arabidopsis thaliana

Iva Mozgová, Petr Mokroš, and Jiří Fajkus

Tobacco GTBP1, a Homolog of Human Heterogeneous Nuclear Ribonucleoprotein, Protects Telomeres from Aberrant Homologous Recombination

Yong Woo Lee and Woo Taek Kim

PHOSPHATIDIC ACID PHOSPHOHYDROLASE1 and 2 Regulate Phospholipid Synthesis at the Endoplasmic Reticulum in Arabidopsis

Peter J. Eastmond, Anne-Laure Quettier, Johan T.M. Kroon, Christian Craddock, Nicolette Adams, and Antoni R. Slabas

The AP-3 adaptor Mediates the Biogenesis and Function of Lytic Vacuoles in Arabidopsis

Elena Feraru, Tomasz Paciorek, Mugurel I. Feraru, Marta Zwiewka, Ruth De Groodt, Riet De Rycke, Jürgen Kleine-Vehn, and Jiří Friml

The Cytosolic Tail Dipeptide Ile-Met of the Pea Receptor BP80 Is Required for Recycling from the Prevacuole and for Endocytosis

Bruno Saint-Jean, Emilie Seveno-Carpentier, Carine Alcon, Jean-Marc Neuhaus, and Nadine Paris

Y3IP1, a Nucleus-Encoded Thylakoid Protein, Cooperates with the Plastid-Encoded Ycf3 Protein in Photosystem I Assembly of Tobacco and Arabidopsis

Christin A. Albus, Stephanie Ruf, Mark Aurel Schöttler, Wolfgang Lein, Julia Kehr, and Ralph Bock
Functional Differentiation of the Glycosyltransferases That Contribute to the Chemical Diversity of Bioactive Flavonol Glycosides in Grapevines (Vitis vinifera) by Eiichiro Ono, Yu Homma, Manabu Horikawa, Satoshi Kunikane-Doi, Haruna Inai, Seiji Takahashi, Yosuke Kawai, Masaji Ishiguro, Yuko Fukui, and Toru Nakayama

Network Analysis of Enzyme Activities and Metabolite Levels and Their Relationship to Biomass in a Large Panel of Arabidopsis Accessions by Ronan Sulpice, Sandra Trenkamp, Matthias Steinfath, Bjorn Usadel, Yves Gibon, Hanna Wittucka-Wall, Eva-Theresa Pyl, Hendrik Tschoep, Marie Caroline Steinhauser, Manuela Guenther, Melanie Hoehne, Johann M. Rohwer, Thomas Altmann, Alisdair R. Fernie, and Mark Stitt

Redox Regulation of the NPR1-TGA1 System of Arabidopsis thaliana by Nitric Oxide by Christian Lindermayr, Simone Sell, Bernd Müller, Dario Leister, and Jörg Durner

The Ustilago maydis Cpl1 Protein Orchestrates Pheromone and b-Dependent Signaling Pathways to Coordinate the Cell Cycle and Pathogenic Development by Kai Heimel, Mario Scherer, David Schuler, and Jörg Kämper

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