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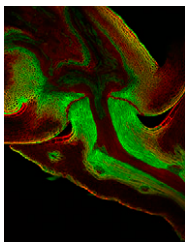
ON THE COVER



The development of the abscission layer plays a determinative role in seed shattering, one of the critical traits affecting grain yield in crops. Fine-tuning the regulation of this process will help to improve grain yield by mitigating seed loss during crop production. Through a series of experiments, Jiang et al. (pages 17–36) show that the plant-specific APETALA2-like transcription factor *SUPERNUMERARY BRACT* modulates seed shattering by promoting the expression of *qSH1* and *SH5* and suppressing lignin deposition in the abscission zone. The cover shows the wild type complete abscission layer, in a confocal microscopy image of a free-hand longitudinal section of a spikelet at the anthesis stage from a wild rice (*Oryza rufipogon*) introgression line. Photo by Liyun Jiang, China Agricultural University.

EDITORIAL

***The Plant Cell* Celebrates 30 Years of Publishing the Best Work in Plant Biology** [OPEN] 1
Sabeeha S. Merchant, Nancy A. Eckardt, and Nancy Winchester

IN BRIEF

The Smell of Transcription: The SlMYC1 Transcription Factor Makes Tomato Plants Smelly[OPEN] 2
Pádraic J. Flood

HOS15 Coregulates Photoperiodic Flowering with the Evening Complex via Transcriptional Repression of *GIGANTEA* [OPEN] 3
Reza K. Hammond

Suspended Animation: A Transcriptional Module Triggers Embryo Formation in Suspensor Cells[OPEN] 5
Jennifer Lockhart

Solving a Cold Case: Identification of Promoter Elements to Complement Medicago *nin* Mutants[OPEN] 7
Sonali Roy

Master MYCs: MYC2, the Jasmonate Signaling "Master Switch"[OPEN] 9
Emily Breeze

A Partnership for ABA Responses[OPEN] 11
Gregory Bertoni

Ferroptosis: A Companion of ROS in Fighting *Magnaporthe* in Rice[OPEN] 13
Céline Caseys

Too Much, Take it Back: PAP Moves from the Cytosol to Plastids and Mitochondria for Degradation via PAPST2[OPEN] 15
Estee E. Tee

RESEARCH ARTICLES

The APETALA2-Like Transcription Factor SUPERNUMERARY BRACT Controls Rice Seed Shattering and Seed Size[CC-BY] 17
Liyun Jiang, Xin Ma, Shuangshuang Zhao, Yanyan Tang, Fengxia Liu, Ping Gu, Yongcai Fu, Zuofeng Zhu, Hongwei Cai, Chuanqing Sun, and Lubin Tan

HOS15 Interacts with the Histone Deacetylase HDA9 and the Evening Complex to Epigenetically Regulate the Floral Activator *GIGANTEA*[OPEN] 37
Hee Jin Park, Dongwon Baek, Joon-Yung Cha, Xueji Liao, Sang-Ho Kang, C. Robertson McClung, Sang Yeol Lee, Dae-Jin Yun, and Woe-Yeon Kim

A Robust Auxin Response Network Controls Embryo and Suspensor Development through a Basic Helix Loop Helix Transcriptional Module[OPEN] 52
Tatyana Radoeva, Annemarie S. Lokerse, Cristina I. Llavata-Peris, Jos R. Wendrich, Daoquan Xiang, Che-Yang Liao, Lieke Vlaar, Mark Boekschoten, Guido Hooiveld, Raju Datla, and Dolf Weijers

A Remote *cis*-Regulatory Region Is Required for *NIN* Expression in the Pericycle to Initiate Nodule Primordium Formation in *Medicago truncatula* 68
Jieyu Liu, Luuk Rutten, Erik Limpens, Tjitse van der Molen, Robin van Velzen, Rujin Chen, Yuhui Chen, Rene Geurts, Wouter Kohlen, Olga Kulikova, and Ton Bisseling

The Role of Abscisic Acid Signaling in Maintaining the Metabolic Balance Required for Arabidopsis Growth under Nonstress Conditions 84
Takuya Yoshida, Toshihiro Obata, Regina Feil, John E. Lunn, Yasunari Fujita, Kazuko Yamaguchi-Shinozaki, and Alisdair R. Fernie

MYC2 Regulates the Termination of Jasmonate Signaling via an Autoregulatory Negative Feedback Loop[OPEN] 106
Yuanyuan Liu, Minmin Du, Lei Deng, Jiafang Shen, Mingming Fang, Qian Chen, Yanhui Lu, Qiaomei Wang, Chuanyou Li, and Qingzhe Zhai

Abscisic Acid Inhibits Rice Protein Phosphatase PP45 via H_2O_2 and Relieves Repression of the Ca^{2+}/CaM-Dependent Protein Kinase DMI3 128
Lan Ni, Xiaopu Fu, Huan Zhang, Xi Li, Xiang Cai, Panpan Zhang, Lei Liu, Qingwen Wang, Manman Sun, Qian-Wen Wang, Aying Zhang, Zhengguang Zhang, and Mingyi Jiang

Arabidopsis Endoplasmic Reticulum-Localized UBAC2 Proteins Interact with PAMP-INDUCED COILED-COIL to Regulate Pathogen-Induced Callose Deposition and Plant Immunity 153
Zhe Wang, Xifeng Li, Xiaoting Wang, Nana Liu, Binjie Xu, Qi Peng, Zhifu Guo, Baofang Fan, Cheng Zhu, and Zhixiang Chen

Binding of the *Magnaporthe oryzae* Chitinase MoChia1 by a Rice Tetratricopeptide Repeat Protein Allows Free Chitin to Trigger Immune Responses 172
Chao Yang, Yongqi Yu, Junkai Huang, Fanwei Meng, Jinhuan Pang, Qiqi Zhao, Md. Azizul Islam, Ning Xu, Yun Tian, and Jun Liu

Iron- and Reactive Oxygen Species-Dependent Ferroptotic Cell Death in Rice-*Magnaporthe oryzae* Interactions 189
Sarmina Dangol, Yafei Chen, Byung Kook Hwang, and Nam-Soo Jwa

Uncoupled Expression of Nuclear and Plastid Photosynthesis-Associated Genes Contributes to Cell Death in a Lesion Mimic Mutant 210
Ruiqing Lv, Zihao Li, Mengping Li, Vivek Dogra, Shanshan Lv, Renyi Liu, Keun Pyo Lee, and Chanhong Kim

PAPST2 Plays Critical Roles in Removing the Stress Signaling Molecule 3′-Phosphoadenosine 5′-Phosphate from the Cytosol and Its Subsequent Degradation in Plastids and Mitochondria 231
Natallia Ashykhmina, Melanie Lorenz, Henning Frerigmann, Anna Koprivova, Eduard Hofsetz, Nils Stührwohldt, Ulf-Ingo Flügge, Ilka Haferkamp, Stanislav Kopriva, and Tamara Gigolashvili

Phosphatidic Acid Directly Regulates PINOID-Dependent Phosphorylation and Activation of the PIN-FORMED2 Auxin Efflux Transporter in Response to Salt Stress 250
Peipei Wang, Like Shen, Jinhe Guo, Wen Jing, Yana Qu, Wenyu Li, Rongrong Bi, Wei Xuan, Qun Zhang, and Wenhua Zhang

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31 (1)
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