

击, 是膨胀素作用的重要位点^[16]。

不同于生长组织中的细胞, 成熟中的果实细胞不再膨大, 它们的代谢特点是细胞壁的解聚。与果实成熟有关的膨胀素可能作用于木葡聚糖与纤维素分子间的非共价键, 如氢键^[16]。它们可能是通过破坏木葡聚糖和微纤丝之间的连结, 使细胞壁结构变得松弛, 水合性增加, 由此增加了细胞壁多聚体与细胞壁降解酶, 如内切-1, 4- β -葡聚糖酶、木葡聚糖内源转糖基酶或糖苷酶等的接触机会, 进而促进了细胞壁大分子的降解和结构网的解聚^[17]。这样, 膨胀素就与其它细胞壁酶类一起协同作用, 提供了一个高度协调的细胞壁降解机制。

3 膨胀素的基因家族

膨胀素有一个非常庞大的基因家族。根据它们核苷酸序列和底物特异性的不同, 将其分为 α 和 β 两大类^[10,18]。 α -膨胀素的分子量为 25~27 kD, 主要存在于双子叶和非禾本科单子叶植物中; β -膨胀素是一类糖蛋白, 主要存在禾本科单子叶植物中, 分子量为 30 kD。

在这两类分子中, 同类分子间具有很高的同源性, 但两类分子间的氨基酸序列大约只有 25% 的同源性。尽管如此, 它们仍然不失为一类具有高度保守结构的蛋白质。因为所有膨胀素分子的 N-端都有 8 个保守的半胱氨酸残基, 而在 C 端有 4 个色氨酸残基。在这两个保守区域中, 半胱氨酸的存在可能与蛋白质结构中二硫键的形成有关, 而一系列色氨酸残基可能在膨胀素与多糖分子的结合中发挥作用^[18,19]。

膨胀素具有组织特异性, 并且受发育阶段的调节^[17,18~21,23]。它们有些存在于生长中的组织和器官中, 有些则多存在于发育中组织和器官中; 有些表达于植物的多种部位, 有些则专一性地存在于某一特定的组织或器官中。同一组织器官中往往含有数种不同的膨胀素分子, 它们的表达时期和表达强度各不相同; 即使是处于某一特定生长发育时期的组织或器官中, 也会有数种膨胀素同时存在^[17,20]。

4 膨胀素在果实完熟中的作用

膨胀素普遍存在于果实中, 番茄、草莓、桃、樱桃果实的膨胀素已有报道^[21~26], 苹果、杏、樱桃、甜樱桃、香蕉、橄榄等的膨胀素在基因库中都有注册。果实中的膨胀素主要是 α -膨胀素。根据表达时期的不同有人将它们分为两类: 一类与果实的生长膨大有关, 另一类与果实完熟有关^[16]。两类蛋白质的一级结构具有很高的相似性, 但它们在序列亲缘关系树状图中的位置及其免疫交叉反应上存在明显差异, 表明它们在蛋白质的高级结构和功能上存在差异^[16]。

番茄 *LeExp3*、4、5、6、7 及草莓 *FaExp3*、4、6、7 主要存在于生长中的果实^[19,20], 与果实的生长、细胞的膨大有关; 而番茄 *LeExp1*、草莓 *FaExp2* 和 *FaExp5*、桃 *PchExp1* 则专一性地表达于完熟的果实中^[20,21,23,24], 它们可能与完熟期间果实细胞壁的修饰有关^[16]。Rose 等^[22]用番茄 *LeExp1* 抗体对多种果实进行 Western 杂交, 发现在所检测的几种果实, 如番茄、甜瓜、鳄梨、柿、猕猴桃、草莓、辣椒、梨和菠萝中都有膨胀素存在。由此可见, 膨胀素普遍存在于果实中, 可能与果实的生长发育有关。

跃变型果实番茄 *LeExp1*、桃 *PchExp1* 专一性地表达于完熟的果实中, 果实成熟激素乙烯诱导、促进它们的表达; 利用反义 RNA 技术抑制番茄果实 ACC 合成酶表达和乙烯生物合成的同时, 也抑制了 *LeExp1* 的表达; 用乙烯作用抑制剂降冰片二烯 (NBD) 处理番茄果实, 降低甚至抑制 *LeExp1* mRNA 的累积。番茄突变体 *rin*、*non* 果实不能完熟软化, *LeExp1* 的含量也很低, 表明 *LeExp1* 与乙烯和果实完熟密切相关^[17,21,24]。

Brummell 等^[12,17]利用转基因技术将番茄 *LeExp1* 的表达量降低到野生型的 3%, 转基因果实在完熟期间的软化程度比对照降低了 15%~20%。相反, 过量表达 *LeExp1* 至野生型的 3 倍, 果实的基质多糖半纤维素在绿熟期就开始发生降解, 果实硬度明显降低。Bennett 研究小组将 *LeExp1* 基因转入 *rin*

番茄中,转基因果实采后 4 周的贮藏中,硬度比 rin 果实降低了 25% 左右。这两个试验充分证明了 *LeExp1* 在番茄果实完熟和软化中的作用。

在低温冷藏时,桃果肉组织容易发生脱水和絮败,这种质地的变化与果肉组织中自由水的含量密切相关^[27]。当自由水含量下降到一定量以下时,果肉质开始变得粗糙。但值得注意的是,在质地变化之前膨胀素的含量已经开始下降。即使在同一果实中,不同部位的脱水程度也存在差异,含水量低的部位膨胀素含量也降低,Obenland 等认为膨胀素可能是通过改变果胶酶与底物的相互接触,而间接作用于桃果实的质地变化^[27]。

PchExp1 专一性地存在于完熟的桃果实中^[24],乙烯处理刺激该基因的表达,但它的表达与果实贮藏期间硬度变化没有直接关系。Hayama 等比较了 Akatsuki 和 Yumyeong 两个桃品种果实采后 *PchExp1* mRNA 和蛋白质的变化,发现在采后 8 d 内两品种的 *PchExp1* 都有较高的表达量,品种间没有明显差别,但是果实的软化程度却截然不同。Akatsuki 在采后第 2 天硬度就急剧下降到采收时的 20% 左右,而 Yumyeong 在采后 8 d 内硬度几乎没有变,他们认为 *PchExp1* 可能作用于果实完熟过程,但与桃果实的软化无直接关系。

Bennett 等在研究了甜瓜果实成熟期间细胞壁解聚的先后顺序后,将甜瓜完熟分为早期和晚期两个阶段^[28]。木葡聚糖的降解发生在早期阶段,而果胶降解主要发生在衰老和过熟时期。但有趣的是木葡聚糖水解酶的活性与早期木葡聚糖的解聚并无直接关系,而与膨胀素有关。他们认为利用两种不同的分子遗传学策略控制膨胀素和 PG 的表达,可能在控制甜瓜果实早期和晚期的软化中非常有用。

膨胀素作为一种细胞壁蛋白质,本身不具有酶的催化功能,它们在果实完熟中的作用是间接的,需要借助细胞壁酶来实现。迄今为止有关两者间相互作用的资料还很有限,在今后的工作中应加强此方面的研究。此外膨胀素是多基因家族,克隆分离新的膨胀素基因,比较研究它们的表达特性,及其与其他膨胀素的相互作用,利用转基因技术有目的地抑制或促进某种或某些膨胀素的表达,比较研究它们的表达特性和功能差异,进一步阐明膨胀素在果实完熟中的作用机制是另一值得深入研究的重要内容。植物激素对膨胀素的表达具有调节作用,乙烯可以诱导跃变型果实番茄等膨胀素的表达,而非跃变型果实草莓中膨胀素的表达受生长素的负调节,研究激素等上游调节因子对果实膨胀素的作用机制,将会使人们对果实完熟的生理生化机制有更多新的理解,并将为通过生物技术调控果实完熟衰老过程提供新的思路。

参考文献:

- 1 Taiz L. Expansins: Proteins that promote cell wall loosening in plants. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, 1994, 19: 7387 ~ 7389
- 2 Hager A, Menzle H, Krauss A. Experiment and hypothesis concerning the primary action of auxin in elongation growth. *Planta*, 1971, 100: 47 ~ 75
- 3 Rayle D, Cleland R E. Enhancements of wall loosening and elongation by acid solution. *Plant Physiol.*, 1970, 46: 250 ~ 253
- 4 Rayle D, Cleland R E. The acid growth theory of auxin-induced cell elongation is alive and well. *Plant Physiol.*, 1992, 99: 1271 ~ 1274
- 5 Cosgrove D J. Cell wall loosening by expansin. *Plant Physiol.*, 1998, 118: 333 ~ 339
- 6 McQueen-Mason S, Durachko D M, Cosgrove D J. Two endogenous proteins that induce cell wall expansion in plants. *Plant Cell*, 1992, 4: 1425 ~ 1433
- 7 Li Z C, Durachko D M, Cosgrove D J. An oat coleoptile wall protein that induces wall extension in vitro and that is antigenically related to a similar protein from cucumber hypocotyls. *Planta*, 1993, 191: 349 ~ 356
- 8 Keller E, Cosgrove D J. Expansins in growing tomato leaves. *Plant J.*, 1995, 8: 795 ~ 802
- 9 Wu Y, Sharp R E, Durachko D M, et al. Growth maintenance of the maize primary root at low water potentials involves increases in cell wall extensibility, expansin activity and wall susceptibility to expansins. *Plant Physiol.*, 1996, 111: 765 ~ 772
- 10 Cho H T, Kende H. Expansins in deepwater rice internodes. *Plant Physiol.*, 1997, 113: 1137 ~ 1143
- 11 McQueen-Mason S, Fry S C, Durachko D M, et al. The relationship between xyloglucan endotransglycosylase and in vitro cell wall extension in cucumber hypocotyls. *Planta*, 1993, 190: 327 ~ 331

- 12 Brummell D A, Harpster M H, Civello P M, et al. Modification of expansin protein abundance in tomato fruit alters softening and cell wall polymer metabolism during ripening. *Plant Cell*, 1999, 11: 2203 ~ 2216
- 13 McQueen-Marson S, Cosgrove D J. Expansin mode of action on cell walls: analysis of wall hydrolysis, stress relation, and binding. *Plant Physiol.*, 1995, 107: 87 ~ 100
- 14 McQueen-Marson S. Expansin and cell wall expansion. *J. Exp. Bot.*, 1995, 46: 1639 ~ 1650
- 15 McQueen-Marson S, Cosgrove D J. Disruption of hydrogen bonding between plant cell wall polymers by proteins that induce wall extension. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, 1994, 91: 6574 ~ 6578
- 16 Rose J K C, Bennett A B. Cooperative disassembly of the cellulose-xyloglucan network of plant cell wall: parallels between cell expansion and fruit ripening. *Trends Plant Sci.*, 1999, 4: 176 ~ 183
- 17 Brummell D A, Harpster M H. Cell wall metabolism in fruit softening and quality and its manipulation in transgenic plants. *Plant Mol. Biol.*, 2001, 47: 311 ~ 340
- 18 Cosgrove D J. New genes and new biological roles for expansins. *Cur. Opin. Plant Biol.*, 2000, 3: 73 ~ 78
- 19 Brummell D A, Harpster M H, Dunsnuir P. Differential expression of expansin gene family members during growth and ripening of tomato fruit. *Plant Mol. Biol.*, 1999, 39: 161 ~ 169
- 20 Harrison E P, McQueen-Mason S J, Manning K. Expression of six expansin genes in relation to extension activity in developing strawberry fruit. *J. Exp. Bot.*, 2001, 52: 1437 ~ 1446
- 21 Rose J K C, Lee H H, Bennett A B. Expression of a divergent gene is fruit-specific and ripening-regulated. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, 1997, 94: 5955 ~ 5960
- 22 Rose J K C, Cosgrove D J, Albersheim P, et al. Detection of expansin proteins and activity during tomato fruit ontogeny. *Plant Physiol.*, 2000, 123: 1583 ~ 1592
- 23 Civello P M, Powel A L T, Sabehat A, et al. An expansin gene expressed in ripening strawberry fruit. *Plant Physiol.*, 1999, 121: 1273 ~ 1279
- 24 Hayama H, Shimada T, Haji T, et al. Molecular cloning of a ripening-related expansin cDNA in peach: evidence for no relationship between accumulation and change in fruit firmness during storage. *J. Plant Physiol.*, 2000, 157: 567 ~ 573
- 25 Hayama H, Shimada T, Ito A. Changes in the levels of mRNAs for putative cell wall-related genes during peach fruit development. *Scientia Horticulturae*, 2001, 91: 239 ~ 250
- 26 Yoo S D, Gao Z F, Wayne L, et al. Expression of several expansins is coordinately regulated with that of other cell wall softening enzymes and is associated with pectin-related changes in the cell wall during ripening of cherry (*Prunus cerasus*) fruit. *Hortscience (abstract)*, 2001, 36: 602
- 27 Obenland D, Crisosto C, Rose J. The relationship between expansin expression and the development of mealiness in peaches. *Hortscience (abstract)*, 2001, 36: 596
- 28 Rose J K C, Hadfield K A, Labavitch J, et al. Temporal sequence of cell wall disassembly in ripening melon fruit. *Plant Physiol.*, 1998, 117: 345 ~ 361

The Role of Expansin in the Fruit Growth and Development

Ma Junlian^{1,2}, Zhang Zide¹, Ann L. T. Powel², and Alan B. Bennett²

(¹ Food Science College, Agricultural University of Hebei, Baoding 071001, China; ² Vegetable Crops Department, University of California, Davis, CA 95616, USA)

Abstract: Many proteins involve fruit ripening, of which a class of protein called expansin is a new discovered member. During fruit ripening modification of the primary cell wall is required. Expansin, without enzyme activity, but has been shown to promote cell wall loosening. There are evidences expansin binding in cellulose microfibrils disrupting the hydrogen bonds formed with xyloglucan during fruit ripening. In order to let more people to know the new area, its current status and developing trends were reviewed. The discovery, mechanism, gene family and function of expansin were introduced. Their role in the fruit ripening was discussed. Correlation with cell wall enzymes of expansin was suggested. New strategies using transgenic technology to regulate fruit ripening were proposed.

Key words: Expansin; Function; Fruit; Ripening; Softening