

# Diversity in root apoplastic barrier deposition in salt treated wild and domesticated barley seedlings

Muhammad Hisyam<sup>1</sup>, Rhiannon Schilling<sup>2</sup>, Stefanie Wege<sup>1</sup>, and Caitlin Byrt<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The University of Adelaide

<sup>2</sup>University of Adelaide School of Agriculture Food and Wine - Waite Campus

<sup>3</sup>Australian National University

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## Abstract

Salt stress causes changes in root apoplastic barriers, such as the endodermis and the exodermis, and these changes are associated with variation in abiotic stress tolerance. We explored variation in root apoplastic barrier traits, O<sub>2</sub> consumption and root and shoot Na<sup>+</sup> and K<sup>+</sup> content in a diverse collection of commercial and wild barley accessions subjected to non-saline (control) and saline treatments. Lignin and suberin deposition in endo- and exo-dermal cell walls varied between the accessions and in response to salt treatments. Twenty-two wild barley accessions formed an exodermis in response to salt treatments, whereas the commercial barley cultivar Barke did not develop an obvious exodermis. Accessions with pronounced root barrier deposition tended to have lower O<sub>2</sub> consumption relative to the accessions with less obvious barriers. Treatment with abscisic acid enhanced suberisation and lead to a pronounced formation of an exodermis in wild barley accessions, whereas treatment with an ethylene precursor had no obvious effect on suberisation. Principal component analysis revealed associations between suberin deposition, root and shoot Na<sup>+</sup> and K<sup>+</sup>, and root respiration. The variation in root apoplastic barrier traits within the barley accessions represents a useful resource for future crop breeding to improve environmental stress tolerance.

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