

Publication

Overexpression of a pectin methylesterase inhibitor in *Arabidopsis thaliana* leads to altered growth morphology of the stem and defective organ separation

JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

ID 2183153

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Year 2013

Title Overexpression of a pectin methylesterase inhibitor in *Arabidopsis thaliana* leads to altered growth morphology of the stem and defective organ separation

Journal Plant signaling & behavior

Volume 8

Number 12

Pages / Article-Number e26464

Keywords *Arabidopsis thaliana*, cuticle integrity, organ separation, pectin methylesterification, stem growth

The methylesterification status of cell wall pectins, mediated through the interplay of pectin methylesterases (PMEs) and pectin methylesterase inhibitors (PMEIs), influences the biophysical properties of plant cell walls. We found that the overexpression of a *PMEI* gene in *Arabidopsis thaliana* plants caused the stems to develop twists and loops, most strongly around points on the stem where leaves or inflorescences failed to separate from the main stem. Altered elasticity of the stem, underdevelopment of the leaf cuticle, and changes in the sugar composition of the cell walls of stems were evident in the *PMEI* overexpression lines. We discuss the mechanisms that potentially underlie the aberrant growth phenotypes.

Publisher Landes Bioscience

URL <https://is.landesbioscience.com/journals/psb/article/26464/>

edoc-URL <http://edoc.unibas.ch/dok/A6183878>

Full Text on edoc No;

Digital Object Identifier DOI 10.4161/psb.26464

PubMed ID <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24675171>

ISI-Number MEDLINE:24675171

Document type (ISI) Journal Article