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A. Leonardo Iniguez  
*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Yuemei Dong  
*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Heather D. Carter  
*Ohio State University*

Brian M. M. Ahmer  
*Ohio State University*

Julie M. Stone  
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln, jstone2@unl.edu*

*See next page for additional authors*

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Regulation of Enteric Endophytic Bacterial Colonization by Plant Defenses

A. Leonardo Iniguez,1 Yuemei Dong,1 Heather D. Carter,2 Brian M. M. Ahmer,2 Julie M. Stone,3 and Eric W. Triplett4

1University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Agronomy, 1575 Linden Drive, Madison 53706 U.S.A.; 2The Ohio State University, Department of Microbiology, 484 West 12th Ave. Columbus 43210 U.S.A.; 3University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Department of Biochemistry, 1901 Vine St., Lincoln 68588-0664 U.S.A.; 4University of Florida, Department of Microbiology and Cell Science, P.O. Box 110700, Gainesville 32611-0700 U.S.A.


Bacterial endophytes reside within the interior of plants without causing disease or forming symbiotic structures. Some endophytes, such as Klebsiella pneumoniae 342 (Kp342), enhance plant growth and nutrition. Others, such as Salmonella enterica serovar Typhimurium (S. typhimurium), are human pathogens that contaminate raw produce. Several lines of evidence are presented here to support the hypothesis that plant defense response pathways regulate colonization by endophytic bacteria. An ethylene-insensitive mutant of Medicago truncatula is hypercolonized by Kp342 compared to the parent genotype. Addition of ethylene, a signal molecule for induced systemic resistance in plants, decreased endophytic colonization in Medicago spp. This ethylene-mediated inhibition of endophytic colonization was reversed by addition of the ethylene action inhibitor, 1-methylecyclopropane. Colonization of Medicago spp. by S. typhimurium also was affected by exogenous ethylene. Mutants lacking flagella or a component of the type III secretion system of Salmonella pathogenicity island 1 (TTSS-SPI1) colonize the interior of Medicago spp. in higher numbers than the wild type. Arabidopsis defense response-related genotypes indicated that only salicylic acid (SA)-independent defense responses contribute to restricting colonization by Kp342. In contrast, colonization by S. typhimurium is affected by both SA-dependent and -independent responses. S. typhimurium mutants further delineated these responses, suggesting that both flagella and TTSS-SPI1 effectors can be recognized. Flagella act primarily through SA-independent responses (compromising SA accumulation still affected colonization in the absence of flagella). Removal of a TTSS-SPI1 effector resulted in hypercolonization regardless of whether the genotype was affected in either SA-dependent or SA-independent responses. Consistent with these results, S. typhimurium activates the promoter of PR1, a SA-dependent pathogenesis-related gene, while S. typhimurium mutants lacking the TTSS-SPI1 failed to activate this promoter. These observations suggest approaches to reduce contamination of raw produce by human enteric pathogens and to increase the number of growth-promoting bacteria in plants.

Additional keywords: food safety, nitrogen fixation.

Corresponding author: Eric W. Triplett; Telephone: 352-392-5430; Fax: 352-392-5922; E-mail: ewt@ufl.edu

Current address of Y. Dong: Johns Hopkins University, Department of Molecular Microbiology & Immunology, 615 Wolfe St., Baltimore, MD 21205 U.S.A.

RESULTS

Four lines of evidence suggest that plant defenses regulate the number of endophytic bacteria within plant tissues: i) ethylene, a signal molecule for induced systemic resistance in plants, decreases endophytic colonization; ii) presence of bacterial extracellular components decreases endophytic colonization; iii) increased endophytic colonization in host genotypes with diminished plant defense responses; and iv) activation of
a promoter that controls an SA-dependent pathogenesis-related gene upon endophyte inoculation.

**Ethylene, a signal molecule for induced systemic resistance in plants, decreases endophytic colonization.**

Ethylene has been studied extensively as a secondary messenger in the induction of a salicylic acid (SA)-independent plant defense pathway referred to as induced systemic resistance (ISR) (Knoester et al. 1998; Pieterse et al. 1998; Ton et al. 2001, 2002). Kp342 hypercolonized an ethylene-insensitive (sickle) mutant of *M. truncatula* (Fig. 1). This mutant also is hypermodulated following inoculation with the nitrogen-fixing symbiont *Sinorhizobium meliloti* (Pennmetsa and Cook 1997). Consistent with this result, addition of the ethylene precursor, 1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylic acid (ACC), to the growth media significantly reduced endophytic colonization in wild-type *M. sativa* by Kp342 and *Salmonella enterica* serovar *Typhimurium* strain 14028 (*S. typhimurium*) by three and four orders of magnitude, respectively (Fig. 2). The number of Kp342 cells within *M. truncatula* roots does not change significantly with ACC treatment until 4 days after inoculation. This evidence suggests that ACC does not inhibit invasion of Kp342 cells into the plant but triggers a response that can significantly lower the number of Kp342 cells 4 days after ACC treatment (Fig. 3). To test the effects of ethylene on *M. truncatula* before, during, and after inoculation, a time-course experiment was conducted (Fig. 4). In this experiment, gaseous ethylene (C2H4) was used rather than ACC because addition of C2H4 was required each day for up to 6 days during the time course. No difference in endophytic colonization was observed in plants exposed to C2H4 or ACC for the same time period (Fig. 4). This time course experiment showed that ethylene must be applied to the plants prior to or at the time of inoculation for maximal inhibition of endophytic colonization (Fig. 4). These results further corroborate those of Figure 3. That is, the effects of ethylene on endophytic colonization become significant 96 h after ethylene exposure. To determine whether ethylene affects endophytic colonization in monocots, wheat seedlings were exposed to varying amounts of ACC and inoculated with Kp342 and 14028 (Fig. 5). ACC caused a decline in

![Fig. 1. Scanning laser confocal microscopy at ×20 magnification of longitudinal sections of *Medicago truncatula* A, wild-type and B, sickle mutant hypocotyls showing colonization by green fluorescent protein-labeled *Klebsiella pneumoniae* 342 (Kp342). Sections were visualized 9 days after inoculation. The inoculum level was 10⁴ CFU/plant. Bars, 50 µm. C, Numbers of bacterial CFU recovered from interior of *M. truncatula* Gaerten cv. A17 wild-type and sickle mutant plant tissues 7 days after inoculation. Two-day-old seedlings were inoculated with Kp342 at different inoculum levels. Data points represent the means and the bars represent the standard errors about the mean resulting from four replicates with each replicate consisting of four plants.](image-url)
the number of Kp342 and 14028 cells within wheat roots of 1.85 and 1.2 orders of magnitude, respectively (Fig. 5).

To confirm that the effects observed with ACC were specific to ethylene production, a specific inhibitor of ethylene-mediated signaling, 1-methylecyclopropene (1-MCP) (Porat et al. 1999; Serek et al. 1995), reversed the reduction in endophytic colonization of alfalfa observed with ACC (Fig. 2). Also, treatment of plants with 1-MCP resulted in significantly higher endophytic colonization regardless of the presence or absence of exogenous ACC in M. truncatula (Fig. 2).

These results suggest that endogenously produced ethylene limits the extent of endophytic colonization in M. truncatula but not in M. sativa.

Presence of bacterial extracellular components decreases endophytic colonization.

Bacterial extracellular components, such as flagella, are known to induce plant defenses (Felix et al. 1999; Gomez-Gomez and Boller 2000). A Salmonella 14028 mutant lacking both flagellin genes, fliC and fljB, fails to produce flagella in

![Fig. 2. Number of CFU recovered from the interior of Medicago sativa (closed columns) or M. truncatula (open columns) roots and hypocotyls were determined 5 and 7 days, respectively, post inoculation. Seedlings of M. truncatula were inoculated with 10^2 CFU of Klebsiella pneumoniae 342 (Kp342) in the presence and absence of 1 ppm of the ethylene action inhibitor, 1-methylecyclopropene (1-MCP). Seedlings of M. sativa were inoculated with Kp342. Salmonella enterica serovar Typhimurium strain 14028 (14028), the spaS mutant of 14028, the spaS mutant complemented with the spaS gene, the sipB mutant, the sipB mutant complemented with the sipB gene, and the double flagellin mutant with insertions in fliC and fljB. Treatments included an untreated control, application of the ethylene precursor, 5 µM 1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylic acid (ACC), or treatment with the ethylene action inhibitor, 1 ppm 1-MCP. The bars represent the standard errors of the mean resulting from four replicates, each replicate consisting of four plants.](image1)

![Fig. 3. Effect of 1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylic acid (ACC) on endophytic colonization over time. The number of CFU recovered from the interior of Medicago truncatula roots and hypocotyls was determined each day for 6 days after inoculation with 10^2 cells of Klebsiella pneumoniae 342 (Kp342) per plant. Plants were treated with and without ACC (5 µM) at the time of inoculation. The columns represent the mean CFU recovered from the plants, and the bars represent the standard errors of the means resulting from four replicate treatments; gfw = gram (fresh weight). ACC treatments are statistically different from the controls on days 4, 5, and 6 at the 5% level of confidence.](image2)
culture. This mutant showed significantly higher endophytic colonization, consistent with the notion that *Salmonella* flagellar components are specifically recognized and induce plant defenses. Another extracellular component of enteric bacteria, the type III secretion system encoded by *Salmonella* pathogenicity island 1 (TTSS-SPI1), also affects endophytic colonization. The TTSS-SPI1 is a virulence factor that promotes invasion of mammalian cells and elicits fluid secretion and inflammation in animal models (Zhang et al. 2003). The sipB and spaS genes are encoded within SPI1. The spaS gene encodes a structural component of the type III secretion apparatus, whereas the sipB gene encodes a protein with dual functions. SipB is required for translocation of other effectors and has effector properties of its own (Collazo and Galan 1997). Furthermore, secretion of SipB is independent of bacteria–host cell contact and, therefore, is not necessarily concomitant with translocation to host cells (Collazo and Galan 1997). Mutations in spaS and sipB resulted in much higher levels of colonization in alfalfa roots (Fig. 2). When these mutants were complemented with a wild-type copy of the gene, the reduced colonization phenotype was restored (Figs. 2). Similar results were obtained with the sipB mutant on wheat seedlings (Fig. 6).

**Fig. 4.** Endophytic colonization of *Medicago truncatula* roots and hypocotyls treated with C2H4 on successive days. *Medicago truncatula* seedlings were inoculated with 10^2 cells per plant of *Klebsiella pneumoniae* 342 (Kp342). 1-Aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylic acid (ACC) (5 µM) was used as a control on day 0 to show that the effects of ACC and C2H4 are similar. C2H4 (5 µM) was applied to different sets of plants beginning 1 day prior to inoculation (day 1) and continuing each day up to 6 days after inoculation. The columns represent the mean CFU recovered from the plants 7 days post inoculation. The bars represent the standard errors of the means resulting from four replicate treatments; gfw = gram (fresh weight). Asterisks represent differences that are statistically significant from plants treated with C2H4 at day 0 at the 5% level of confidence.

**Fig. 5.** Endophytic colonization of *Triticum aestivum* roots at in the presence of increasing concentrations of 1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylic acid (ACC). Number of CFU recovered from the interior of the roots and hypocotyls of wheat seedlings. Roots of 1-day-old seedlings were inoculated with 10^4 cells of *Salmonella enterica* serovar Typhimurium strain 14028 (diamonds) and 10^2 cells of *Klebsiella pneumoniae* 342 (squares). Plants were harvested 5 days after inoculation. The data points represent the means and the bars represent the standard errors of the means resulting from four replicate treatments.
With the removal of these extracellular components, ethylene-mediated inhibition of endophytic colonization, although still significant, was greatly reduced compared with the wild-type strain (Fig. 2). ACC decreases endophytic colonization by over two orders of magnitude for the wild-type strain (Fig. 2), whereas the ACC-induced decrease is only 0.5 to 1.1 orders of magnitude when the seedlings were inoculated with the spaS or double flagellin mutants, respectively (Fig. 2). The Salmonella sipB and double flagellin mutations also caused an increase of 2.5 and 2.4 orders of magnitude, respectively, in the number of Salmonella cells within wheat roots compared with wild-type Salmonella 14028. Complementation of the sipB mutant completely reversed the increase observed from the sipB mutation (Fig. 2).

**Increased endophytic colonization in host genotypes with diminished plant defense responses.**

The importance of plant defenses on endophytic colonization were examined using Arabidopsis lines impaired in plant defense. Strain 14028, the sipB and double flagellin mutants of 14028, and Kp342 were inoculated individually onto the roots of Arabidopsis wild-type Col-0, a nahG transgenic plant, and an npr1 mutant (Fig. 7). The nahG transgenic plant produces a bacterial salicylate hydroxylase (Friedrich et al. 1995) that prevents the accumulation of SA in plants. The NPR1 protein regulates the DNA binding ability of transcription factors involved in plant defense (Despres et al. 2003; Mou et al. 2003), and the Arabidopsis npr1 mutant is disrupted in both SA-mediated and SA-independent defense responses (Ton et al. 2002).
Colonization by Kp342 was not significantly different on wild-type Arabidopsis spp. compared with the nahG transgenic plants, suggesting that accumulation of SA is not important for restricting colonization by Kp342. However, colonization of the npr1 mutant by Kp342 was 1.5 orders of magnitude greater than in wild-type Arabidopsis spp. These data suggest that SA-independent defense responses (defective in the npr1 mutant) may contribute to reduced colonization by Kp342.

The interior colonization of Arabidopsis roots by 14028 was 1.2 to 2.7 orders of magnitude greater in the nahG transgenic and npr1 mutant, respectively (Fig. 7), compared with wild-type plants, suggesting that both SA-dependent and -independent pathways are involved in restricting colonization. The roles of flagellin and TTSS-SPI1 in colonization were examined by mutational analysis. Both the Salmonella double flagellin mutant (flrCΔflrB) and the TTSS-SPI1 (sipB) mutants colonized the roots of wild-type Arabidopsis spp. in significantly greater numbers than the wild-type strain 14028 (Fig. 7), supporting roles for both of these extracellular components in plant recognition.

Colonization by the flagella mutant was 1.9 orders of magnitude greater in the nahG transgenic and npr1 mutant than in wild-type plants (Fig. 7). For the nahG transgenic plants, these results are consistent with colonization behavior observed for 14028. However, no difference was observed in endophytic colonization of the npr1 mutant by 14028 or the flagella mutant, but the wild-type host was colonized significantly more by the flagella mutant compared with 14028. Equal colonization of the nahG transgenic and the npr1 mutant by the Salmonella flagella mutant imply that endophyte recognition and the subsequent defenses induced by flagella are largely SA-independent. That is, a plant defective in SA accumulation still allows more colonization by a flagella-defective endophyte, whereas a mutant defective in both SA-dependent and -independent responses fails to exhibit super-enhanced colonization (as was observed for wild-type bacteria).

In contrast, data obtained with the TTSS-SPI1-defective sipB mutant suggest that the lack of TTSS-SPI1 effectors permits the avoidance of SA-dependent and -independent responses. Whereas colonization of wild-type plants was enhanced by the sipB TTSS-SPI1 mutation, colonization by sipB was not significantly different in nahG transgenic and npr1 mutants. Therefore, although colonization by a bacterium defective in TTSS-SPI1 was significantly enhanced in wild-type plants, it was unaffected by compromising both SA-dependent and -independent defense pathways in the host plant. These data suggest that sipB-regulated TTSS-SPI1 effectors act downstream of SA and npr1 in this system. As predicted, the increased colonization observed with the sipB mutant was reversed when the mutant was complemented with the wild-type gene.

These data also support the notion that the TTSS-SPI1 of 14028 induces both the SA-mediated and -independent responses, in agreement with 14028 induction of the SA-mediated PRI promoter.

**Activation of a promoter that controls an SA-dependent pathogenesis-related gene upon endophyte inoculation.**

In support of the elicitation of plant defenses during endophytic colonization, the expression of the extensively studied plant defense response gene PRI (Beilman et al. 1992) was tested by inoculation of Arabidopsis thaliana PRI::GUS with our enteric endophytes. As expected, the positive controls, application of SA or inoculation with the plant pathogen Pseudomonas syringae DC3000 PV288, strongly induced a PRI::GUS fusion in planta. The GUS activity of the P. syringae DC3000 PV288 and SA controls were 545 and 139 pmol 4-MU/mg of protein/min, respectively. Inoculation of roots with St14028 also induced PRI::GUS expression in distal leaves, displaying a GUS activity of 42 pmol 4-MU/mg of protein/min (Fig. 8). In contrast, inoculation of roots with the sipB mutant and Kp342 showed no GUS induction with either the qualitative in vivo or the quantitative in vitro assays. Complementation of the sipB mutation restored GUS expression and activity (19 pmol 4-MU/mg of protein/min) (Fig. 8). Negative controls, where plants were sprayed with H2O, leaf infiltration with phosphate-buffered saline (PBS), or root inoculation with PBS failed to induce PRI::GUS expression. Because the PRI promoter is induced by the SA signaling pathway (Stone et al. 2000), these data suggest that the TTSS-SPI1 induces SA-mediated defense signaling. Unlike 14028, inoculation with Kp342 did not result in PRI::GUS expression, suggesting that this endophyte does not induce SA-dependent defense responses (data not shown), consistent with Klebsiella spp. lacking flagella and TTSS-SPI1.

**DISCUSSION**

*S. enterica* serovar Typhimurium strain 14028, a human pathogen that does not cause disease in plants, induced both SA-dependent and -independent plant defenses. Reducing the virulence of the strain by removing TTSS-SPI1 increased endophytic colonization. The effector molecules secreted by this TTSS-SPI1 seem to be deleterious to the bacterium due to their ability to elicit both SA-mediated and -independent plant defenses. Another extracellular component, flagella, which have very little effect on virulence in animals, also induces SA-independent defense responses.

Another aspect of the strain specificity discovered here is that Kp342 is either resistant to SA-dependent responses or fails to induce them. This is based on two lines of evidence. First, nearly equal endophytic colonization of the wild-type and nahG-transformed plants by Kp342 was observed. Second, inoculation with Kp342 did not induce the expression of an SA-dependent gene, PRI. Thus, some strains may be insensi-
tive to SA-mediated responses (such as Kp342) whereas other strains (such as 14028) are sensitive to these responses. This may be a significant component of the mechanism for the strain specificity of endophytic colonization. Based on the results above, both extracellular components studied here elicit SA-independent defense responses. However, only the SA-dependent defense responses elicited by TTSS-SPI1 are effective in reducing colonization.

Fig. 9. Model for the regulation of the endophytic colonization of plants by enteric bacteria. Abbreviations: Kp342 = Klebsiella pneumoniae 342, 14028 = Salmonella enterica serovar Typhimurium strain 14028, SPI1 = Salmonella pathogenicity island 1, TTSS = type III secretion system, SA = salicylic acid, NahG = a bacterial salicylate hydroxylase (Friedrich et al. 1995), 1-MCP = 1-methylcyclopropene, C2H4 = ethylene, NPR1 = protein that regulates transcription factors involved in plant defense (Despres et al. 2003; Mou et al. 2003), and PR1 = pathogenesis-related gene 1.
This work has two significant implications that likely are broadly applicable to monocots and dicots given the similar results obtained with *A. thaliana, M. sativa, M. truncatula,* and *Triticum aestivum.* With regard to food safety and the presence of *Salmonella* spp. and other bacterial pathogens residing within plant tissue, this work suggests a means to eliminate contamination of raw produce. According to the model of Latimer and associates (2001) and based on the number of 14028 cells observed here in alfalfa tissue, human consumption of 10 g of 14028-contaminated, surface-sterilized alfalfa is sufficient to virtually ensure salmonellosis. This estimate assumes that the plant defenses activated by 14028 do not influence the virulence of this pathogen in humans. After induction of SA-independent defense responses with ethylene treatment, the amount of surface-sterilized fresh tissue that must be consumed by a person to cause disease increases to 30 kg. Clearly, the induction of ethylene-mediated defense responses eliminates the possibility of illness from the consumption of contaminated tissue. However, in practice, because ethylene alters plant morphology, a means to induce these responses other than with ethylene treatment would be required in a commercial setting. A solution to this problem may be the overexpression of *npr1,* which is known to confer broad disease resistance in plants (Cao et al. 1998; Chern et al. 2001). Overexpression of this gene in vegetables is likely to reduce the number of enteric bacteria within plants to a level that is harmless to those who consume the raw produce.

Conversely, it may be desirable to increase the number of beneficial endophytes that enhance plant growth or nutrition. Here we show that colonization by a nitrogen-fixing endophyte is limited by SA-independent plant defense responses. Colonization of the *Arabidopsis* plant defense mutant (*npr1*) with Kp342 was significantly greater compared with the wild-type, whereas transgenic depletion of SA had no effect. Therefore, a Kp342 mutant resistant to SA-independent plant defense responses should be able to colonize plants in very high numbers.

In keeping with these observations, Kp342 lacks flagella, as do all *Klebsiella* spp., and TTSSs have not been identified in Kp342 (Dong et al. 2001). During the evolution of the Kp342–host plant association, Kp342 may have lost extracellular components that induce SA-mediated plant defense. Alternatively, the *Klebsiella* sp. may have lost these components prior to any association with plants, resulting in it being a common inhabitant of plants.

For a bacterial endophyte to colonize plants in high numbers, it must be able to avoid plant defenses by failing to produce those extracellular components that elicit plant defense. Bacteria that elude plant defenses can be thought of as "stealth bacteria." The data presented here suggest that endophytic colonization may be modulated to reduce levels of harmful bacteria or enhance levels of beneficial bacteria by altering the genotypes of endophytic bacteria and their host plants.

These data suggest a model that, for a bacterial endophyte to colonize plants in high numbers, it must be able to avoid plant defenses by failing to produce those extracellular components that elicit plant defense (Fig. 9). Future experiments may show that an overexpression of plant defenses still may be able to recognize endophytic bacteria that resist wild-type levels of plant defense expression.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Bacterial strains and inoculum preparation.**

The bacterial strains used in this work are listed in Table 1. BA3104 was constructed by sequential P22 transduction into 14028 using a P22HTint lysate grown on the SL3201 *fltC::Tn10 fliC::MudJ* strain kindly provided by Dr. Allison O’Brien (Schmitt et al. 2001). pHC112 was constructed by amplifying the *spaS* gene of 14028 (nucleotides 28 to 1,327 of GenBank accession number AE008832), using Taq DNA polymerase. The *spaS* fragment was cloned into pCR-2.1-TOPO (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA, U.S.A.), removed using EcoRI, and cloned into the EcoRI site of pWSK29 (Wang and Kushner 1991). pHC112 was constructed in the same way except that the *sipB* gene was amplified (nucleotides 18,133 to 20,138 of GenBank accession number AE008831). Bacterial strains were cultured and inoculum prepared as described previously (Dong et al. 2003a and b). In some cases, very low inoculum doses were used. To be confident that we were applying such low doses, each data point consists of a minimum of four plants.
per replicate and four replicates per treatment in those experiments where the inoculum dose size was varied.

**Scanning confocal laser microscopy.**

The methodology used here for scanning confocal laser microscopy (SCLM) was previously described (Dong et al. 2003a and b). Using this methodology, hypocotyls of *M. truncatula* mutant sickle (skl) and *M. truncatula* Jermalong were observed under SCLM with ×20 magnification through z sections ranging from 0.5 to 2 µm in thickness.

**Seed surface sterilization, germination, inoculation, plant culture, and harvest.**

The plants used in this work are listed in Table 2. The manipulation of plants, from seed surface sterilization to plant harvest, were carried out by methods developed previously (Dong et al. 2003a and b).

**Determination of microbial population within surface-sterilized plant tissue.**

With the exception of the *M. truncatula* sickle experiment, where the whole plant tissue was used to determine microbial populations, only the root and hypocotyl were examined for bacterial colonization. The procedures used for surface sterilization, determination of endophytic microbial populations, and statistical analysis were done as described previously (Dong et al. 2003a and b).

**Assurance of endophytic colonization results.**

To ensure that the endophytic colonization numbers presented reflect only the number of cells within the interior of plant tissue, previously developed methods were followed (Dong et al. 2003a and b). Furthermore, day 0 of the time course experiment (Fig. 3) served as a control to ensure that the endophytes did not enter the plants through wounds caused during harvesting or through the root surface as a result of the surface sterilization procedure. Data 0 day show that no Kp342 cells were recovered from the interior of alfalfa seedlings within 1 h after inoculation. This suggests that the methods used here to estimate microbial population within plants do not contribute to endophytic invasion of the apoplast.

**Induction of ethylene response in seedlings.**

To induce ethylene responses, seedlings were cultured in growth medium as described previously (Dong et al. 2003a) supplemented with 5 µM ACC. ACC was dissolved in water and filter sterilized prior to its addition to autoclaved plant growth media. In most experiments, seedlings were exposed to media containing ACC for 12 h prior to inoculation.

In the ethylene time course experiments, gaseous ethylene was added to the plants cultured in closed tubes to a final concentration of 5 µM. The stopper on these tubes was removed each day, flushed with fresh air, stopped, and re-treated with sufficient ethylene to bring to a final concentration of 5 µM.

**Preparation and use of 1-MCP.**

The gaseous ethylene action inhibitor, 1-MCP, was prepared and stored as described by Hall and associates (2000). 1-MCP was generated from EthylBloc, which was provided by A. B. Bleecker (University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, U.S.A.). The concentration of 1-MCP in EthylBloc is 0.14%. A stock of 1-MCP of 100 ppm was prepared in a serum bottle 121.5 ml in volume. This was accomplished by adding 19.44 mg of EthylBloc and 0.5 ml of hot H2O to the serum bottle and setting it to rest for 15 min. The stock was used to dispense 0.3 ml of headspace gas to 30-ml stopped test tubes where the plants were cultured, resulting in a final concentration of 1 ppm per tube.

The plant cultures were placed under conditions described previously (Dong et al. 2003a and b), with the exception of a rubber stopper used to conceal 1-MCP. The stoppers were removed daily, flushed with air, stopped again, and, finally, freshly prepared 1-MCP was added to the desired final concentration.

**GUS histochemical staining and GUS fluorogenic assay.**

Roots of transgenic *A. thaliana* Col-0 harboring a pathogenesis-related 1 (PR1) gene promoter fused to the bacterial uidA (β-glucuronidase) reporter gene (PR1::GUS) were inoculated with 107 CFU of *S. enterica* 14028, the 14028 sipB mutant, and the complemented sipB mutant. Exogenous application of SA (5 mM) and infiltration of leaves with 107 CFU of an avirulent strain of *P. syringae* DC3000 carrying the avrRpo2 on plasmid PV288 were used as positive controls (Kunkel et al. 1993; Ton et al. 2002). The histochemical assay was performed as described by Sundaresan and associates (1995) with slight modifications (Sundaresan et al. 1995). Plants were immersed in staining buffer (50 mM sodium phosphate, pH 7, 10 mM EDTA, 0.1% Triton X-100, chloramphenicol at 100 µg/ml, 5 mM potassium ferricyanide and 5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl-β-D-glucuronide (X-Glc) at 0.5 mg/ml. Plants then were vacuum infiltrated, incubated overnight at 37°C, and destained with 70% ethanol.

To conduct the quantitative GUS fluorogenic assay, whole plants were flash-frozen in liquid N2 and crushed. The fluorogenic assay and protein extraction were done as described by Jefferson and associates (1987). Protein concentration of the samples was determined using a BCA protein assay kit (Pierce, Rockford, IL, U.S.A.). GUS activity was measured as pmoles of 4-methylumbelliferyl produced per milligram of protein per minute, abbreviated as pmol 4-MU/mg protein/min.

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**LITERATURE CITED**


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