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1 **Untangling the role of ethylene beyond fruit development and ripening: A**
2 **physiological and molecular perspective focused on the *Monilinia*-peach**
3 **interaction**

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5 Núria Vall-Ilaura^{*}, Rosario Torres, Neus Teixidó, Josep Usall and Jordi Giné-
6 Bordonaba

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8 *IRTA, Postharvest Programme, Edifici Fruitcentre, Parc Científic i Tecnològic Agroalimentari*
9 *de Lleida, Parc de Gardeny, 25003 Lleida, Catalonia, Spain.*

10
11 ***Corresponding Author:** Núria Vall-Ilaura (nuria.vall-llaura@irta.cat)

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15
16 **Official email addresses of all authors:** Núria Vall-Ilaura (nuria.vall-llaura@irta.cat),
17 Rosario Torres (rosario.torres@irta.cat), Neus Teixidó (neus.teixido@irta.cat), Josep
18 Usall (josep.usall@irta.cat) and Jordi Giné-Bordonaba (jordi.gine@irta.cat).

19 **Abstract**

20 It is already well known that ethylene plays a crucial role in peach fruit growth and ripening,
21 by triggering an onset of biochemical and physiological changes that finally make the fruit
22 attractive for consumption. This said, ethylene is not only responsible for fruit ripening but,
23 in conjunction with other hormones, or key compounds (ROS, polyamines, etc.) is involved
24 in the plant response to numerous abiotic stresses (drought, salt and heat tolerance) as well as
25 the plant/fruit response against certain pathogens. Among peaches, one of the most
26 devastating pathogens is the brown rot causing fungus *Monilinia* spp. that can affect the fruit
27 both on the field or postharvest. Nonetheless scarce information exists regarding the
28 *Monilinia*-peach interaction from a physiological and molecular perspective. In this sense,
29 recent studies point out to the importance of ethylene during such interaction, which seems
30 to be dependent on the fruit developmental stage and also on the *Monilinia* species or even
31 the strain's virulence. Why the fruit or the fungus reacts different to distinct *Monilinia* species
32 or strains and why such reaction depends on the fruit physiological stage is, however, still
33 elusive. Accordingly, this review aims to shed light on the role of ethylene, alone or through
34 a complex cross-talk with other compounds, not only during peach development and
35 ripening but also during the *Monilinia*-peach interaction. Based on the available literature,
36 it is clear that not only ethylene biosynthesis but ethylene signaling and the activation of
37 ethylene response factors via ROS may play an essential role during this specific host-
38 pathogen interaction.

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42 **Keywords:** hormones, virulence, host-defence, brown rot, ROS, polyamines

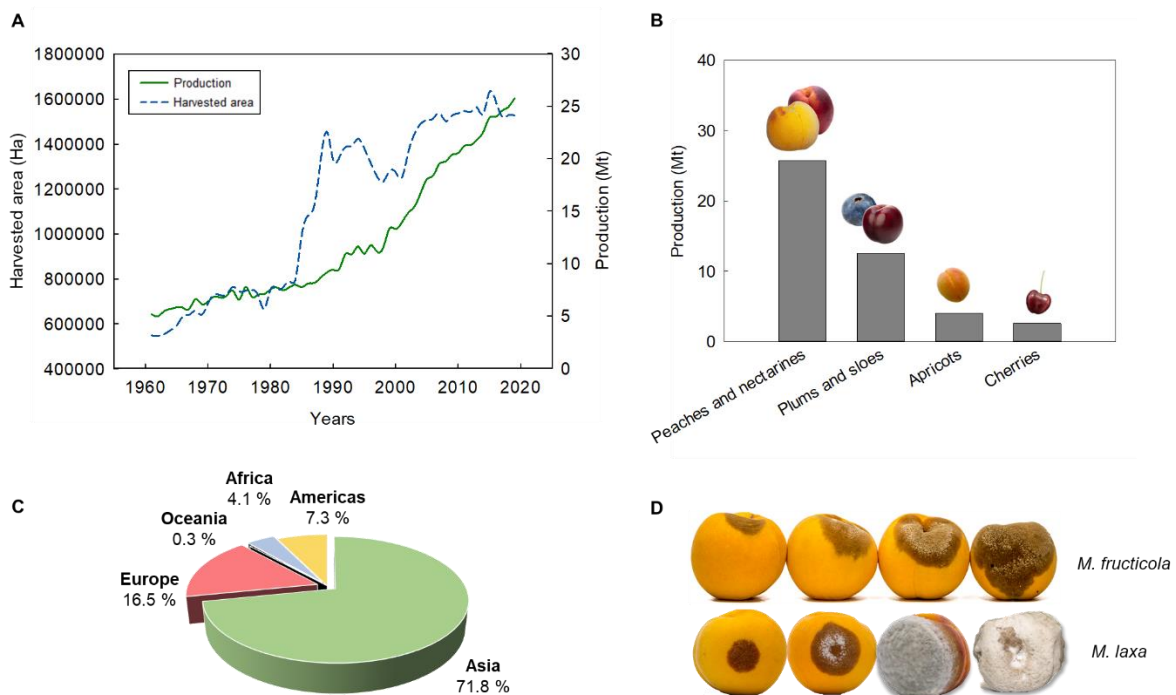
43 1. Background

44 Among the Rosaceae family, peaches are one of the most important crops in Europe and
45 even worldwide. Since official data became available (in 1961), there has been a clear
46 trend towards a higher harvest area and production of peaches all around the world (Fig.
47 1A). Peaches are also the most important species in terms of cultivated volume among
48 other stone fruit (Fig. 1B). In fact, only in Europe, a total of 233,737 Ha were harvested
49 in 2019, accounting for a production of 4.24 Mt. Worldwide, the harvested area within the
50 same period reached 1,527,052 Ha with a production of *ca.* 25.74 Mt and being Asia by
51 far the largest producer (71.8 %), followed by Europe (16.5 %) (Fig. 1C) (FAO, 2021).

52 Peaches are highly appreciated by consumers for their unique flavour, texture, juiciness,
53 and nutritional value. Thus said, once harvested and if compared with other fruit, peaches
54 are highly perishable, in part, due to its climacteric nature as well as their high
55 susceptibility to postharvest decays. In this sense, and from a physiological perspective,
56 ethylene (ET) alone or in combination with other key compounds, such as other hormones,
57 reactive oxygen species (ROS) and polyamines plays an essential role orchestrating the
58 developmental, ripening and senescence stages of peaches but also the fruit response to
59 both abiotic (i.e., cold storage) and biotic stresses (i.e., postharvest rots). Among the latter,
60 it is of special interest brown rot, a wide-spread disease caused by *Monilinia* spp., a
61 necrotrophic fungus belonging to the Ascomycota phylum. This disease, mainly caused
62 by the species *M. laxa* and *M. fructicola*, greatly affects pome but especially stone fruits
63 (Oliveira Lino et al., 2016) such as peaches (Fig. 1D), causing substantial losses both on
64 the field and during postharvest handling (Martini and Mari, 2014).

65 Hence, the aim of this review, with particular interest in peaches and *Monilinia* spp., is to
66 deeply examine: i) the role of ET not only during peach development and ripening but
67 also during the biotic interactions; ii) the role of ET from the point of view of the pathogen;

68 and iii) the importance of polyamines and ROS as signaling molecules interacting with
69 ET during biotic interactions.



70

71 **Figure 1.** Importance of peach fruit. (A) Total world peach and nectarine harvested area
72 (ha) and production (Mt) from 1961 to 2019 (FAO, 2021). (B) Production of the main
73 stone fruit species in the world during 2019 (FAO, 2021). (C) Peach and nectarine fruit
74 production for each region during 2019 (FAO, 2021). (D) Brown rot disease caused by *M.*
75 *fructicola* and *M. laxa* in peach fruit.

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77 2. Ethylene as a key element involved in peach ripening

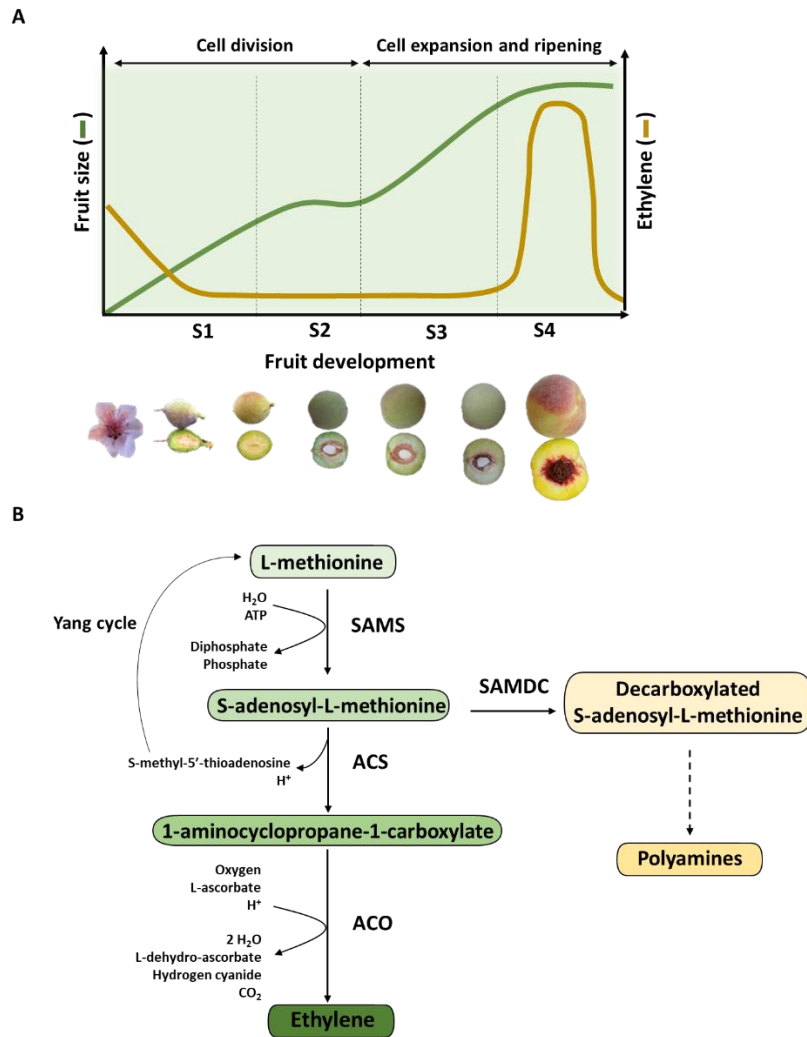
78 Developmental and ripening processes are tightly dependent on a symphony of internal
79 and external stimuli. Among them, the gaseous hormone ET stands out for controlling
80 from seed germination to plant/fruit growth, development, ripening and senescence.

81 Peach development is accomplished through four different stages (Tonutti et al., 1991),
82 which include a cell division and elongation phase (S1), a second phase encompassing
83 the stone formation (S2), and a third phase of exponential growth of the pericarp (S3).

84 Lastly, once the fruit reaches its final size (S4), ripening process understood as changes
85 in fruit colour, enhanced sweetness and the loss of firmness are initiated (Fig. 2A).

86 Based on the ET production and the respiratory profile during ripening, fruit are classified
87 as climacteric and non-climacteric. The regulation of ET biosynthesis is accomplished
88 within two different systems: system 1 and system 2. The system 1 production is typical
89 from non-climacteric or pre-climacteric fruit, consisting of low or basal ET production,
90 and generally its autoinhibited. System 2 operates during ripening and typically entails an
91 autocatalytic ET burst (reviewed by Pech et al. 2012). Peaches are considered climacteric
92 fruit, like tomatoes, apples, pears, or bananas, since they exhibit a synchronization of a
93 respiration burst accompanied by an autocatalytic increase in ET production during
94 ripening.

95 The ET profile during peach development has been widely studied. Some years ago,
96 Tonutti et al. (1991) reported how the kinetics of ET production of ‘Redhaven’ peaches
97 changed depending on the developmental stage. Thus, ET levels were high during the
98 first days after full bloom (DAFB) and decreased thereafter to almost undetectable levels.
99 Finally, levels increased coinciding with the onset of peach ripening. The same ET pattern
100 was later demonstrated for ‘Merrill O’Henry’ peaches (Baró-Montel et al., 2021), and for
101 ‘Diamond Ray’ (Vall-Illaura and Fernández-Cancelo et al., 2022) or ‘Fantasia’ nectarines
102 (Rasori et al., 2010).



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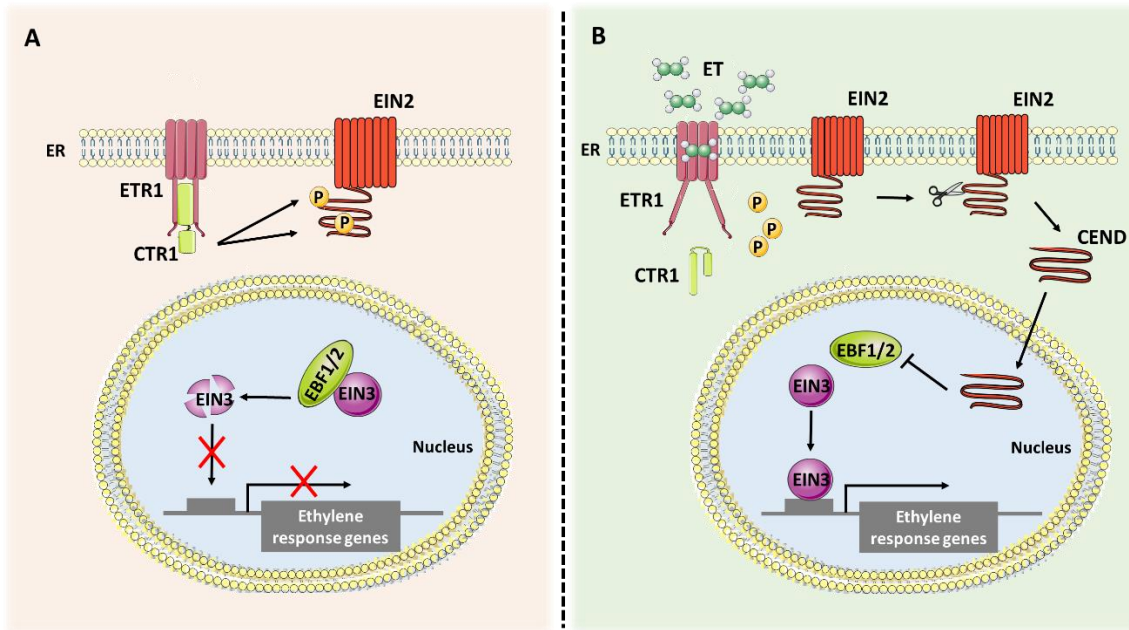
104 **Figure 2.** (A) Schematic representation of the main stages of peach fruit development
 105 characterized by a double sigmoid growth pattern. A typical ethylene profile based on
 106 available literature is given. (B) Ethylene biosynthetic pathway from the precursor
 107 methionine and mediated by the action of S-adenosyl-methionine synthase (SAMS), 1-
 108 aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylic acid synthase (ACS), and 1-aminocyclopropane-1-
 109 carboxylic acid oxidase (ACO). S-adenosyl-L-methionine could also act as a precursor
 110 of polyamines by the action of S-adenosyl-L-methionine decarboxylase (SAMDC).
 111 Further details about the biosynthesis of polyamines are given in section 3.4 and Figure
 112 8.

113 The hormone ET is enzymatically synthesized from the amino acid methionine (Fig. 2B),
114 which is first converted to S-adenosyl-methionine (S-AdoMet) by the action of the S-
115 AdoMet synthase (SAMS). The activity of 1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylic acid
116 (ACC) synthase generates ACC and 5'-deoxy-5'-methylthioadenosine (MTA), which is
117 then recycled to methionine through the Yang cycle, allowing higher rates of ET
118 production without depletion of the endogenous methionine pool (Miyazaki and Yang,
119 1987). ACC is finally oxidised to form ET by the action of ACC oxidase (ACO),
120 generating cyanide and CO₂ as subproducts. Generally, ACS is thought to act as the rate-
121 limiting enzyme in ET biosynthesis for most fruit (Argueso et al., 2007).

122 Both ACS and ACO are encoded by a multigene family. In peaches, at least five ACS
123 with reported ACC synthase activity have been described (*PpACS1*, *PpACS2*, *PpACS3*,
124 *PpACS5*, *PpACS7* and *PpACS8*), while a total of four ACO (*PpACO1*, *PpACO2*, *PpACO3*
125 and *PpACO5*) genes are known to be transcribed (Tadiello et al., 2016). Both ACS and
126 ACO genes are differently regulated depending on the developmental stage (Tadiello et
127 al., 2016), and hence allowing for ET levels to fluctuate along fruit development and
128 ripening.

129 Once generated, ET is perceived by the cells through a series of endoplasmic reticulum-
130 localized receptors (Broekaert et al., 2006) such as ETHYLENE RESISTANT 1 (ETR1),
131 which acts as negative regulator of the ET pathway (Ju and Chang, 2015) (Fig. 3).
132 Specifically, in peach, four receptor genes have been described; *PpETR1*, *PpETR2*,
133 *PpETR3* and *PpERS1* (Tadiello et al., 2016). Once ET binds to ETR1 receptor, the CTR1
134 (CONSTITUTIVE TRIPLE RESPONSE 1) kinase activity is inactivated and
135 consequently, EIN2 (ETHYLENE INSENSITIVE 2) becomes dephosphorylated and its
136 C-terminal domain (CEND) enters the nucleus to attenuate EBF (EIN3 binding F-box
137 protein) E3 ligase function, thereby preventing EIN3 degradation (Ju et al., 2012; Qiao et

138 al., 2012). Finally, EIN3 directly activates a range of transcription factors including
 139 APETALA2/ETHYLENE RESPONSIVE FACTOR (AP2/ERF) and
 140 OCTADECANOIC-RESPONSIVE ARABIDOPSIS 59 (ORA59) (Pré et al., 2008;
 141 Solano et al., 1998) involved in mediating the ET response.



142

143 **Figure 3.** Representation of the ET signaling pathway in (A) the absence or (B) presence
 144 of ET (Adapted from Ji and Guo (2013)).

145

146 A transcriptomic analysis of the ET signal transduction in peaches revealed that the
 147 expression of ETR-like genes increased during ripening concomitantly with ET levels,
 148 while those from the six identified CTR-like genes remained constant in a similar way
 149 that did EIL and EIN-like gene expression (Wang et al., 2017). Regarding to the AP2/ERF
 150 family, a total of fifteen genes were proved to be differentially regulated upon 1-
 151 methylcyclopropene (1-MCP) treatment, a well-known inhibitor of ET perception, and
 152 during ripening in a species-specific manner (Wang et al., 2017). In fact, a comprehensive
 153 study of the peach transcriptome during ripening revealed that at least five ERFs were

154 induced in melting flesh peaches (those generally presenting a sharp increase of ET
155 production during the ripening process) while not in stony hard ones (those that barely
156 softens and sustains low ET production levels) (Wang et al., 2017). These ERFs,
157 responsible for the final steps of ET signaling, contain a highly conserved DNA-binding
158 domain (AP2 domain) which binds to the GCC box of the promoter regions of a series of
159 genes involved in the ripening process (Zhou et al., 2020). All the genes involved from
160 ET biosynthesis to ET perception/transduction and signaling, and described in this
161 manuscript, are listed in a Supplementary Table S1.

162 The onset of fruit ripening is characterized by a set of changes that include fruit softening,
163 colour changes, and alterations on the fruit texture, sugar metabolism, and the volatile
164 composition. Extensive literature has somehow related all these changes to ET. For
165 instance, Ziliotto et al. (2008) detected 106 differentially expressed genes, some of which
166 were involved in ripening-related events such as softening, colour development and sugar
167 metabolism, in nectarine upon 1-MCP treatment (Zhang et al., 2020). Specifically, and
168 also upon 1-MCP treatment, Cai et al. (2019) also detected an inhibition of peach-like
169 volatiles and a decrease in their precursors (fatty acids). Earlier studies also demonstrated
170 that ET is required for initiation and progression of peach softening by regulating cell
171 wall-metabolism related genes such as endopolygalacturonase (*PpPG*), alpha-L-
172 arabinofuranosidase/beta-xylosidase (*PpARF/XYL*), or an expansin (*PpExp3*) (Hayama et
173 al., 2006). Nonetheless, recent evidence for other fruit suggest that ET does not act alone,
174 but rather in a tightly coordinated manner with other hormones (Iqbal et al., 2017).

175 In spite of the action of ET alone or in conjunction with other hormones, it is well accepted
176 that ripening-related changes along fruit development, and especially over ripening,
177 render peach fruit to be more susceptible to *Monilinia* (Guidarelli et al., 2014; Mari et al.,
178 2003). Whether enhanced fruit susceptibility in ripe fruit may be driven by the action of

179 ET is to date still partially unknown. However, recent studies (Baró-Montel et al. 2021)
180 observed that the ET production, together with the respiratory activity and the content of
181 specific compounds, were correlated with the fruit resistance to *Monilinia* spp. at the
182 different peach developmental stages.

183

184 **3. The dual role of ethylene in promoting or inhibiting pathogenesis**

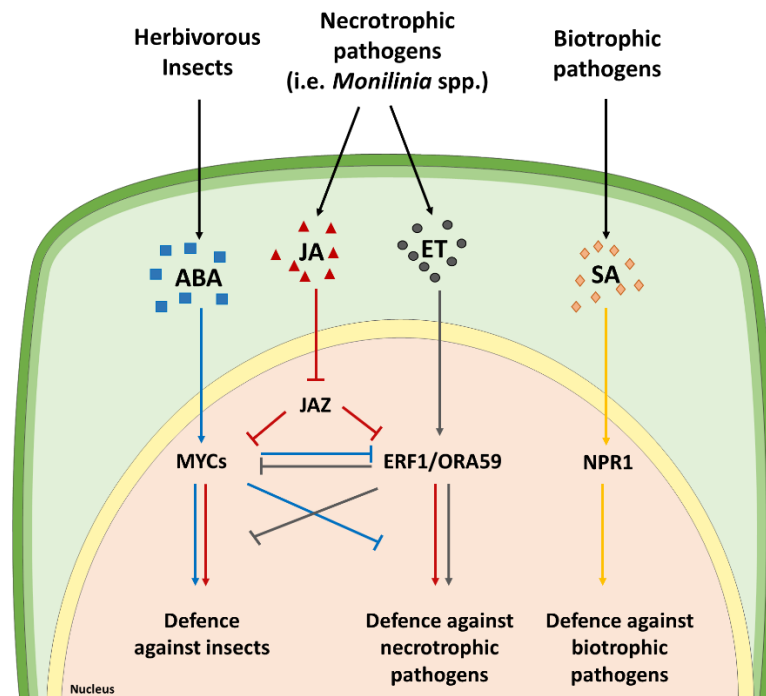
185 Ethylene has not only been associated with the development and ripening of fruits but also
186 as an important molecule during the host-pathogen interactions, especially when referring
187 to necrotrophic pathogens. The role of this hormone on inhibiting or promoting fungal
188 progression is, however, still controversial, and some conflicting results exists in the
189 literature depending on the pathosystem. On one hand, fruit increases its ET production
190 once challenged by a pathogen aiming to activate a defence response. However, the action
191 of this hormone on the fruit itself triggers several changes, as detailed above, including
192 cell wall re-structurisation and ripening that can actually lead to an increased susceptibility
193 to pathogens. Besides, the ability of some pathogens to produce ET and its implication
194 during the host-pathogen interactions is still a matter of debate. In this section, we will
195 further discuss such dual role of ET considering both the host and pathogen players with
196 especial emphasis on the *Monilinia*-peach interaction.

197

198 **3.1. Ethylene production as a host defence response**

199 Once challenged by a pathogen, hosts (i.e., plants in whole or their specific parts (i.e.,
200 fruit)) respond rapidly by activating defence responses to alleviate the biotic stress. Such
201 defence activation is mediated by a complex phytohormone signaling network, mainly
202 involving ET, jasmonates (JA) or salicylates (SA) (Schenk et al., 2000). Thus said, other
203 hormones including auxins, cytokinins, abscisic acid, gibberellins and brassinosteroids

204 are to some extent also involved in mediating the plant defence, either alone or in a well-
 205 coordinated manner (Robert-Seilaniantz et al., 2011).
 206 The defence strategy adopted by the host will be ultimately dictated by the pathogen. Thus,
 207 the type of pathogen, and more specifically, its lifestyle (necrotrophic or biotrophic) will
 208 trigger a different phytohormone signaling cascade (Li et al., 2019). Salicylic acid-
 209 mediated response is typically associated with resistance to biotrophic pathogen infections
 210 (Gaffney et al., 1993; Wildermuth et al., 2001), while both JA and ET are known to trigger
 211 resistance to necrotrophic pathogens (Glazebrook, 2005) (Fig. 4).

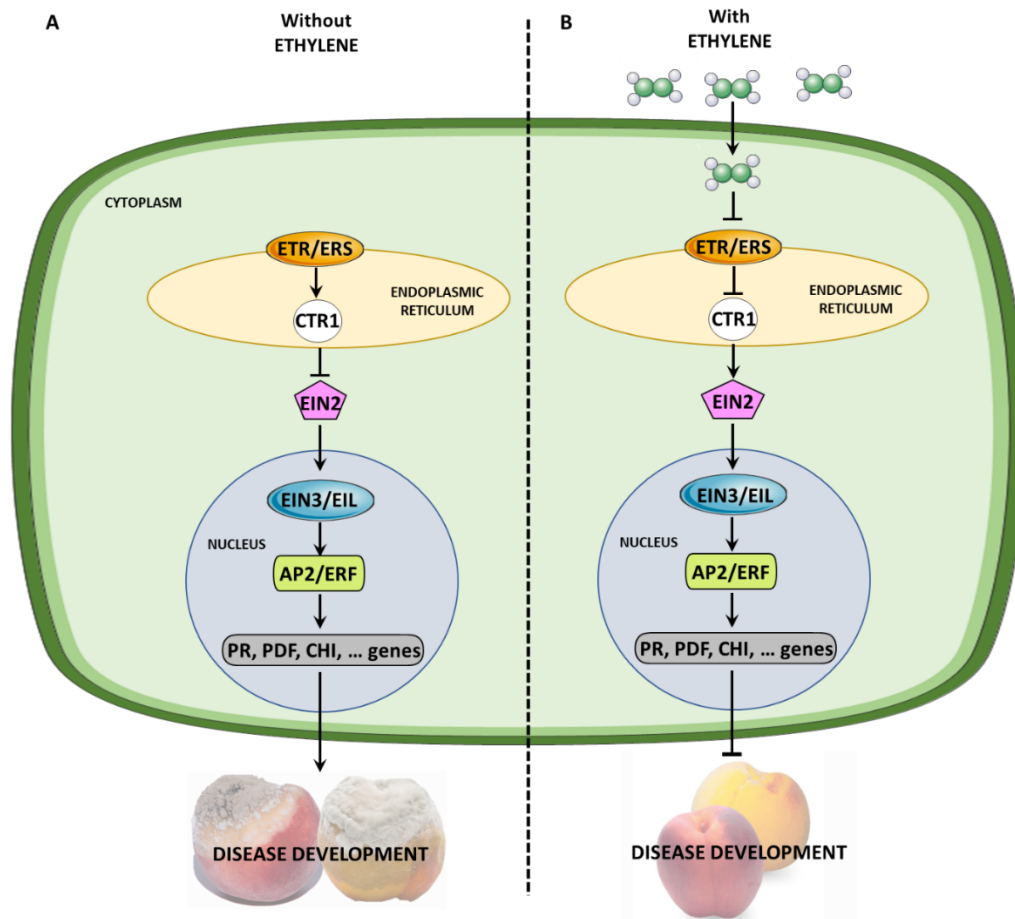


212
 213 **Figure 4.** Schematic representation of the different hormonal cascades triggered
 214 depending on the biotic stimuli. The interplay among them is also represented.

215
 216 There are numerous genes/proteins that respond upon a pathogen attack and many of them
 217 can be directly or indirectly linked to ET. The ET-mediated defence cascade initiates when
 218 host ET accumulates as a response to the pathogen recognition. As afore mentioned, such
 219 increase in ET is perceived by the ETR receptors and initiates the ET signaling cascade in

220 which some ERFs play a pivotal role (Fig. 5). For instance, a study from Berrocal-Lobo
221 et al. (2002) demonstrated that ERF1 is induced in *Arabidopsis* upon infection, and its
222 overexpression was sufficient to confer resistance to *B. cinerea* and *Plectosphaerella*
223 *cucumerina*. Peach fruit also displays a similar profile when facing some pathogens, yet
224 no literature is available specifically focused on peach-fungi interactions. For bacterial
225 diseases, Sherif et al. (2012a) described that a resistant peach cultivar to the bacterial spot
226 disease *Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *pruni* presented a major and more rapid expression
227 of several ERF genes. Besides, such expression was found to be triggered by ET and/or
228 JA. When referring to the *Monilinia*-peach interaction, although no specific studies are
229 available, recent data from Balsells-Llauradó et al. (2020) also suggest a similar activation
230 of specific *PpERF1b* paralogues in response to *M. laxa* infection. Besides, Vall-llaura and
231 Fernández-Cancelo et al. (2022) proved that both *PpERF1a* and *PpERF1b* expression
232 levels decreased to some extent as the fruit develops/ripens, paralleling the increased
233 susceptibility to *Monilinia* (Mari et al., 2003).

234



235

236 **Figure 5.** Schematic representation of the ET signaling pathway in (A) the absence or (B)
 237 presence of ET mediating plant/fruit resistance to pathogens.

238

239 To date, the induction of the ET-induced defence-related effector proteins known as
 240 pathogenesis related (PR) proteins (Chakravarthy et al., 2003; Thomma et al., 1999) is
 241 among the most well-described defence mechanism against pathogens. Within the huge
 242 family of PR proteins (Van Loon and Van Strien, 1999), vacuolar β -1,3-glucanases (PR-
 243 2), vacuolar basic-chitinases (PR-3), acidic hevein-like proteins (PR-4), and plant
 244 defensins (PDFs; PR-12) are known to respond to ET through the GCC-box located in
 245 their promoters. All these PRs act as antimicrobials by targeting β -1,3-1,6-glucans, chitin
 246 or even the microorganisms membrane (Broekaert et al., 2000; Van Loon and Van Strien,
 247 1999). Their activation is, however, not only dependent on ET but also on JA (Lorenzo et

248 al., 2003; Penninckx et al., 1998). For instance, in *Arabidopsis*, both ET and JA act
249 through several AP2/ERF transcription factors such as ORA59, ERF1, ERF2 and ERF14
250 to finally activate a set of defence-related genes including PDF1.2, basic chitinase and
251 agmatine coumaryl transferase (Li et al., 2018; McGrath et al., 2005). Specifically, Sherif
252 et al. (2012b) proved that in peaches, PR genes were more induced in a resistant peach
253 cultivar, and that the expression of some PR was dependent on both ET and JA. Hence,
254 these results pointed out the role of the ET-signaling pathway in mediating the resistance
255 to *X. campestris* pv. *pruni*. Likewise, the PR-1 gene from both mature and immature
256 nectarines was induced in response to *M. laxa* in the transcriptomic study recently
257 published by Balsells-Llauradó et al. (2020).

258 This said, other studies, working with other pathosystems such as *Arabidopsis*, have
259 described to some extent controversial results by showing that JA can also antagonize ET
260 signaling through the inactivation of EIN3 transcription factor by MYC2 (Song et al.,
261 2014; Zheng et al., 2017). In this regard, Díaz et al. (2002) also proposed that ET and SA
262 have a synergistic effect on defence gene expression of tomato plants to *B. cinerea*, but
263 an antagonistic role when referring to resistance.

264 Another defence mechanism, described in carrot roots and triggered by ET, includes the
265 confinement of the pathogen by building-up or reinforcing the cell wall, for instance, by
266 accumulating hydroproline-rich glycoprotein encoding transcripts through an ET-
267 response mechanism (Ecker and Davis, 1987). Lloyd et al. (2011) also demonstrated the
268 importance of the ET-related accumulation of hydroxycinnamates and monolignols at the
269 cell wall of *Arabidopsis* to confine the disease caused by *Botrytis cinerea*. As peach fruit
270 develops, the accumulation of these compounds decreases, as recently shown by Vall-
271 llaura and Fernández-Cancelo et al. (2022), when analysing ‘Diamond Ray’ nectarines.
272 The lower concentration of those hydroxycinnamates in ripe fruit may not be sufficient to

273 confine the disease and hence partially explain the enhanced susceptibility to *Monilinia*
274 in mature fruit (Baró-Montel et al., 2021; Mari et al., 2003). Along these lines, Balsells-
275 Llauradó et al. (2020) also found that phenylpropanoid compounds were enriched in
276 nectarine fruit in response to *M. laxa* inoculation and, although this increase was higher
277 in the mature tissue, the pathogen finally succeeded in the infection process. Similar
278 results have been previously observed in other pathosystems such as grape berries-*Botrytis*
279 *cinerea* (Blanco-Ulate et al., 2015). Hence, it is clear that not specific compounds but
280 rather a coordinated balance among multiple substances accounts for enhanced resistance
281 or susceptibility to pathogens.

282 Lastly, another way to overcome the pathogen attack is through the biosynthesis of
283 antimicrobial secondary metabolites such as phytoalexins. As for other compounds, it has
284 also been demonstrated in carrot cells that some phenylpropanoid-derived phytoalexins
285 are inducible by ET (Ishigaki et al., 2004) thereby further reinforcing the crucial role that
286 ET may have during host-pathogen interactions.

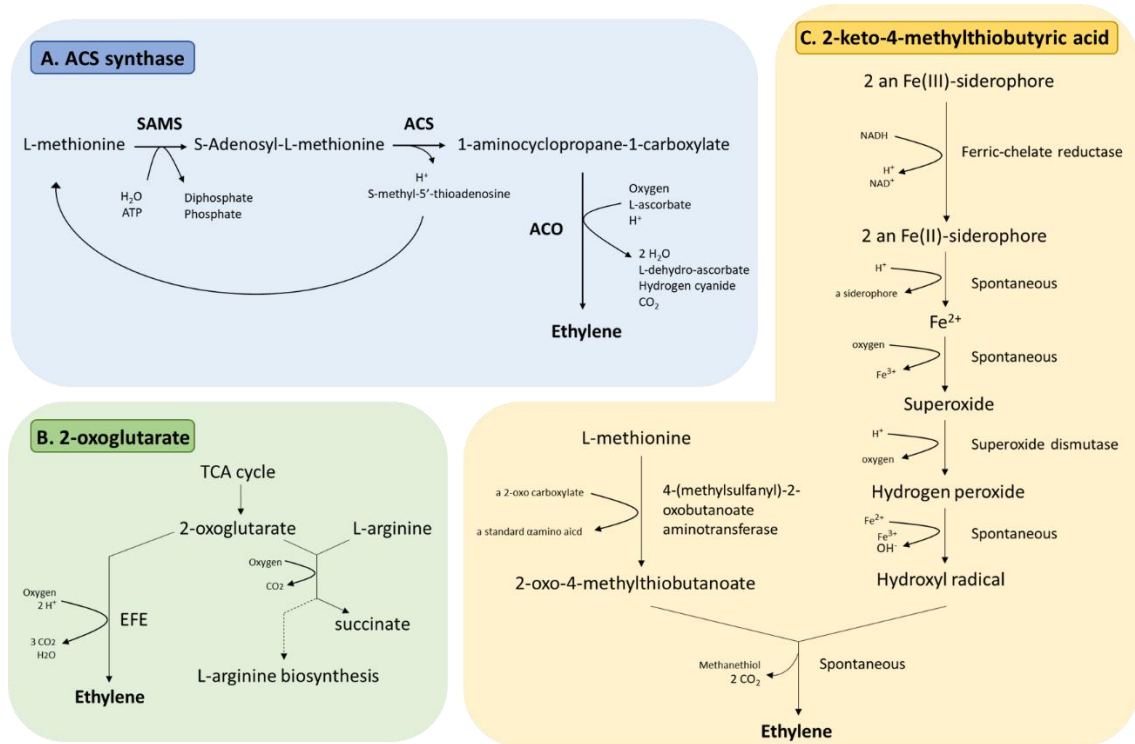
287 What is so far clear is that the activation of all these defence fruit responses aims to prevent
288 or at least to delay the onset and the spreading of the infection. However, the pathogen
289 itself has also the capacity to modulate or escape such host changes, finally accomplishing
290 the infection process.

291

292 **3.2. Pathogens have also the ability to produce ethylene**

293 Not only plants, but also fungi have the ability to produce a wide range of hormones
294 (Chanclud and Morel, 2016), including ET. Just like plants, fungi can biosynthesize ET
295 from methionine by the action of the ACS. However, this pathway is rarely used, and
296 unlike plants, microorganisms have also the ability to produce ET through other pathways
297 (Fig. 6). The first pathway is the 2-keto-4-methylthiobutyric acid (KMBA) pathway, in

298 which methionine is deaminated to produce KMBA, which, in turn, is spontaneously or
 299 enzymatically oxidated to finally give rise to ET (Yang, 1969). In the other pathway, the
 300 2-oxoglutarate is used as a substrate by the ET-forming enzyme (EFE) to produce ET.



301
 302 **Figure 6.** Ethylene biosynthetic pathways. (A) Typical plant ET biosynthesis from
 303 methionine through the action of the ACC synthase. (B) ET synthesis from 2-oxoglutarate
 304 mediated by the EFE enzyme. (C) Non-enzymatically mediated ET synthesis from
 305 methionine through the 2-keto-4-methylthiobutyric acid (KMBA) pathway.

306
 307 The ability to produce ET has been demonstrated in various fungal species with different
 308 lifestyles, including pathogenic but also symbiotic fungi (Chanclud and Morel, 2016).

309 Since the first study demonstrating the ability of *Penicillium digitatum* to produce ET
 310 (Fergus, 1954), many reports have described the same capability in other fungi including
 311 *Aspergillus* spp., *Botrytis* spp., *Fusarium* spp., *Colletotrichum* spp. or *Mucor* spp., among
 312 others (Table 1). For instance, Cristescu et al. (2002) proved that ET generation by *B.*
 313 *cinerea* was dependent on the methionine concentration in which the fungus was grown.

314 Besides, and by using some specific inhibitors, these authors demonstrated that *B. cinerea*
 315 does not produce ET by the ACC pathway but mainly through KMBA. This hypothesis
 316 was further reinforced by Qadir et al. (2011) who demonstrated that this fungus does not
 317 require ACC as a precursor but rather utilises an enzyme similar to ACO from plants.
 318

319 **Table 1.** Example of microorganisms and conditions in which ET production has been
 320 detected.

Microorganism	Growth conditions	Substrate/Precursor	Reference
<i>Alternaria alternata</i>	Liquid medium incubated under light or darkness	Methionine or KMBA	Zhu et al., 2017
<i>Aspergillus nidulans</i>	Solid medium incubated under light or darkness	-	Roze et al., 2004
<i>Aspergillus parasiticus</i>	Solid medium incubated under light or darkness	-	Roze et al., 2004
<i>Botrytis cinerea</i>	Static or shaken cultures incubated in the dark	Methionine	Qadir et al., 1997
<i>Botrytis cinerea</i>	Liquid medium incubated under light or darkness	Methionine	Chagué et al., 2002
<i>Botrytis cinerea</i>	Solid medium	Methionine or KMBA	Cristescu et al., 2002
<i>Botrytis cinerea</i>	Liquid medium	Methionine or KMBA	Qadir et al., 2011
<i>Colletotrichum dematium var. truncatum</i>	Liquid cultures incubated under light	Methionine	Tzeng and DeVay 1984
<i>Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. pini</i>	Liquid media	Methionine	Graham and Linderman 1980
<i>Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. vasinfectum</i>	Liquid cultures incubated under light	Methionine	Tzeng and DeVay 1984
<i>Monilinia fructicola</i>	Solid or liquid media	Methionine	Vall-Iaura et al. unpublished
<i>Monilinia laxa</i>	Solid or liquid media	Methionine	Vall-Iaura et al. unpublished
<i>Mucor hiemalis</i>	Liquid media	Methionine	Lynch and Harper 1974
<i>Penicillium digitatum</i>	Shaken or static cultures	Citric, malic, lactic, or succinic acids	Fergus 1954

<i>Penicillium digitatum</i>	Shaken or static liquid cultures	Methionine	Chalutz and Lieberman 1977
<i>Penicillium digitatum</i>	Static or shaken solid or liquid media	Methionine or 2-oxoglutarate	Yang et al., 2017
<i>Penicillium expansum</i>	Shaken cultures	Methionine or KMBA	Yang et al., 2017
<i>Verticillium dahliae</i> Kleb.	Liquid cultures incubated under light	Methionine or KMBA	Tzeng and DeVay 1984

321

322

323 Chagué et al. (2002) also showed that the ET production by *B. cinerea* through the KMBA

324 pathway in liquid media supplemented with methionine was dependent on the light.

325 Similarly, Roze et al. (2004) showed that both *Aspergillus nidulans* and *Aspergillus*

326 *parasiticus* produce 2-fold higher amounts when growing under light conditions if

327 compared to darkness. In other pathogens such as *P. digitatum* and *Penicillium expansum*,

328 the amounts and the pathway used for ET production *in vitro* seemed to be dependent on

329 both the species and the nutrient availability (Yang et al., 2017). Other fungi including

330 several species of *Verticillium*, *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *vasinfectum* and

331 *Colletotrichum dematium* var. *truncatum* also produce ET either in presence of

332 methionine or in a light-dependent manner (Tzeng and DeVay 1984).

333 All these specific observations revealed that the ET production capability is strictly

334 dependent on the pathogen and both the conditions and the growth media. To date,

335 however, no studies have been published to demonstrate the ability of *Monilinia* spp. to

336 produce ET under *in vitro* conditions, although sharing some common features and

337 lifestyle with *B. cinerea*. However, studies from our team revealed that both *M. fructicola*

338 and *M. laxa* could produce ET when grown in a peach-based media supplemented with

339 different concentration of methionine and under specific photoperiod conditions (Vall-

340 llaura et al., unpublished). These results together with the identification of putative genes

341 coding for ET biosynthetic genes (namely EFE; Vall-llaura et al., unpublished), by means

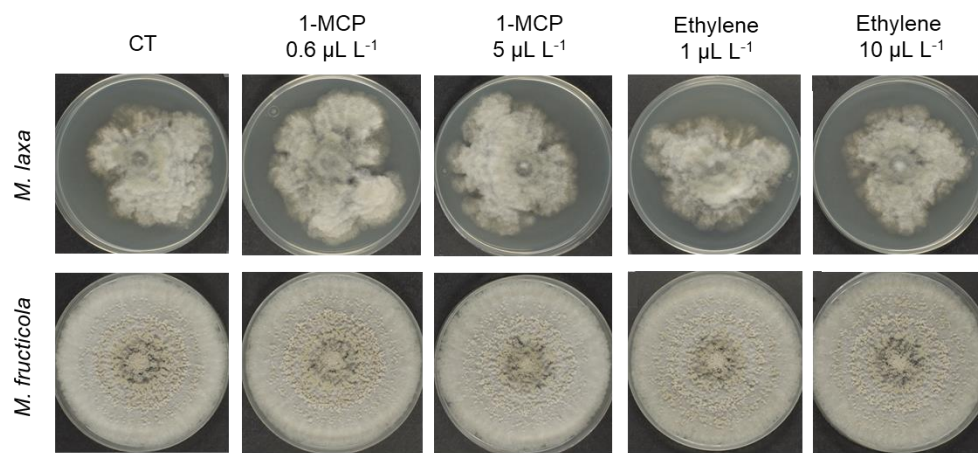
342 of a BLAST analysis on the available genomes of both *M. laxa* and *M. fructicola* species
343 (Naranjo-Ortíz et al., 2018; Vilanova et al., 2021), suggest that ET may have an important
344 role for these fungi under specific growth conditions. Further studies elucidating the
345 capability and the metabolic pathways involved in the biosynthesis of ET by *Monilinia*
346 spp. are warranted.

347

348 Many possibilities exist regarding the rationale for ET production by fungi. Firstly, this
349 hormone has been shown to be necessary for germination and appressoria formation of
350 *Colletotrichum* sp. (Flaishman and Kolattukudy, 1994). In other pathogens such as *B.*
351 *cinerea* and *Alternaria alternata* (Chagué et al., 2006; Kępczyńska, 1994) it has also been
352 associated to development, including spore germination and hyphal growth. Kępczyńska
353 (1989) already demonstrated, many years back, that the treatment with the ET donor
354 ethephon stimulated the germination of *B. cinerea* while treatments with the ET inhibitor
355 2,5-norbornadiene (NBD) inhibited the germination. Similarly, Kępczyńska (1994)
356 demonstrated a similar effect in *A. alternata* in which application of NBD inhibited the
357 mycelial growth of the fungus while the compound aminoethoxyvinylglycine (AVG),
358 greatly inhibited spore germination. Although ethephon and the inhibitor AVG have other
359 effects rather than releasing ET or inhibiting the ACC pathway, respectively, the ET
360 involvement on the development of these fungi seems evident. In this line, Zhu et al., 2017
361 revealed that the ET produced by *A. alternaria* through the KMBA pathway was positively
362 associated with an increased virulence when infecting grapes. The question arises on
363 whether the effects induced by exogenous ET-related treatment benefit or not the fungus,
364 since the effects are apparently dependent on the fungus itself, the development stage, and
365 on the pathosystem being considered.

366

367 Despite the abundant studies available for other fungi, limited information is, once again,
368 available regarding *Monilinia* spp. El-Kazzaz (1983) proved that exposure of *M. fructicola*
369 to ET stimulated spore germination and the germ tube elongation but had little influence
370 on its growth and only under certain concentrations. Similarly, in a more recent study,
371 Vall-llaura et al. (2020) described that the exogenous application of pure ET and 1-MCP
372 had no effect on both *M. laxa* and *M. fructicola* neither on the mycelial growth nor on the
373 colony morphology (Fig. 7).



374
375 **Figure 7.** Colony morphology of *M. laxa* and *M. fructicola* submitted to different 1-MCP
376 and exogenous ET treatments (Images are retrieved, with the permission of Elsevier, from
377 Vall-llaura et al., 2020).

378
379 More in-depth studies are still encouraged to unravel the role of ET on the development
380 and virulence of *Monilinia* spp. Besides, while the mechanisms of ET perception have
381 been deeply studied in plants (the reader is referred to Section 2), no studies on the
382 cascades mediating such effect in fungal species are yet available.

383

384 **3.3. The specific role of ethylene during the host-pathogen interaction**

385 Enhanced ET production is typically observed during plant-microbe interactions,
386 including fungi, bacteria, viruses, and nematodes. As described above, it is clear that both

387 the hosts and fungi can produce ET, although for different purposes. While the host
388 hormone seems to be exclusively synthesized as a defence response, especially when
389 referring to necrotrophic pathogens, the pathogen may synthesize ET in an attempt to
390 make the fruit more susceptible to the infection and/or to modulate the host ET
391 biosynthesis, and thus, the defence response. Biotrophic pathogens are characterized for
392 requiring living cells to accomplish their lifestyle. On the other hand, necrotrophic
393 pathogens kill host cells and feed on them and hence, will manipulate the hormonal
394 crosstalk favouring their lifestyle.

395 What it is well accepted is that during the host-pathogen interaction, ET levels tend to
396 increase (Broekaert et al., 2006), yet not being able to discriminate on whether the
397 hormone is being produced by the fruit or the pathogen itself. Cristescu et al. (2002)
398 demonstrated that the infection of tomato cultivars with *B. cinerea* released 100-fold
399 higher ET levels than when measuring the production by the fungi alone, and that the
400 production was not triggered by the fungal ET but rather synchronized with the growth
401 rate of the fungus.

402 The ET profile has also been examined in other pathosystems. For instance, in apples,
403 Ballester et al. (2017) demonstrated by a transcriptomic analysis that a resistant genotype
404 to *P. expansum* over-expressed ET and JA-related genes if compared to a susceptible
405 genotype when infected with *P. expansum*. Silencing of the *MdACS* gene in apples lead
406 to greater susceptibility to *B. cinerea*, further demonstrating the importance of ET
407 production on resistance to infection (Akagi et al., 2011). Some years earlier, Ellis and
408 Turner (2001) already demonstrated that the Arabidopsis *cev1* mutant, producing higher
409 amounts of ET and JA, was more resistant to several species of powdery mildew. In other
410 hosts (i.e. rice), ET is also required for the resistance to *Magnaporthe oryzae*, and both

411 ET-insensitive or deficient mutants displayed a reduced expression of defence-related
412 genes (Helliwell et al., 2016).

413 In the case of tomato plants, Díaz et al. (2002) showed that plants treated with exogenous
414 ET lead to a major expression of several pathogenesis-related genes and a decreased
415 susceptibility to *B. cinerea*. On the other hand, 1-MCP treatment increased the
416 susceptibility of the tomato plants to the fungus. In citrus fruit, referred to as non-
417 climacteric, ET perception was also shown to be important to prevent *P. digitatum* decay
418 (Marcos et al., 2005). The following section is especially focused on the *Monilinia*-peach
419 interaction for which the available literature is rather scarce.

420

421 **3.3.1 A focus on the peach-*Monilinia* spp. interaction**

422 As described earlier, the debate remains on whether and how *Monilinia* spp. can produce
423 ET, and which is its role during the stone fruit-*Monilinia* spp. interaction. Recently, a
424 transcriptomic analysis from Balsells-Llauradó et al. (2020) highlighted cysteine and
425 methionine, as one of the prevailing metabolisms on nectarine fruits infected with *M. laxa*.
426 Besides, *ACS* and *ACO* genes as well as *ERF1/2* were also upregulated in the infected
427 tissue if compared to the control fruit. Once again, these results further suggest that ET
428 may play a predominant role in explaining the peach resistance or susceptibility to
429 *Monilinia* spp.

430 In this sense, other recent studies have also aimed to unravel the specific ET mechanism
431 underlying the infection process by either *M. laxa* or *M. fructicola* on peach/nectarine.
432 Baró-Montel et al. (2019) demonstrated that the fruit ET biosynthetic pathway and the ET
433 production of the peach-*Monilinia* spp. pathosystem was differently regulated depending
434 on the fruit development stage, the *Monilinia* species inoculated, and even the virulence
435 of the inoculated strain. For instance, the synthesis of ET produced by the fruit at 49 DAFB

436 (when fruit has 35.50 % of the final fruit size) was inhibited once inoculated with the less
437 virulent strain of *M. laxa*, probably as an effort of *Monilinia* to impair the defence response
438 triggered by this hormone. However, the fruit infected with either the more virulent *M.*
439 *laxa* strain or the *M. fructicola* species displayed a reduced ET production during the first
440 hours post-inoculation to peak thereafter once the fruit was completely colonised.
441 Interestingly, a completely opposite tendency was observed when referring to a more
442 mature fruit (126 DAFB; 67.92 % of the final fruit size and at a pre-climacteric stage
443 fruit). In the latter scenario, the interaction of peach fruit with *Monilinia* species displayed
444 an increased ET emission. Specifically, *M. fructicola* or the more virulent *M. laxa* strain
445 rapidly increase the ET production, while the less virulent strain also did it although in a
446 more sluggish manner. Accordingly, it was hypothesized that, at this specific phenological
447 stage, the fungus was promoting the ET emission leading to a cell wall weakening and
448 thus, facilitating the fungal infection. Importantly, these authors described how such effect
449 was strictly species-dependent since the fruit inoculated with one of the *M. laxa* strains
450 (the less virulent) tested was completely unable or had difficulty, depending on the
451 development stage, to alter the fruit ET production. These interesting results were further
452 reinforced by the work from Vall-Illaura et al. (2020) on peach petals. Again, the analysis
453 of the ET metabolism of peach petals infected with *Monilinia* spp. revealed that while the
454 *M. fructicola*-peach petals interaction displayed a huge increase on the ET levels, the ET
455 produced by the *M. laxa*-peach petals interaction was completely inhibited at the initial
456 stages of the interaction. Besides and irrespective of the ET origin, *ERF* gene expression
457 from peach petals, and more specifically *PpERF1b*, *PpERF2a*, and *PpERF2b*, were
458 differentially modulated depending on the *Monilinia* species inoculated. Further evidence
459 of this distinct modulation was obtained by Balsells-Llauradó et al. (2020) who showed

460 that mature nectarines inoculated with *M. laxa* displayed an ET inhibition at the beginning
461 of the interaction.

462 One explanation for such results could be provided by the proteomic study performed by
463 Papavasileiou et al. (2020), who demonstrated that *M. laxa* inoculated nectarines
464 displayed higher levels of 1-aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylate deaminase. This enzyme
465 is responsible for the degradation of the ET precursor ACC, and hence, higher levels of
466 this enzyme would result in a reduction of the fruit ET biosynthesis.

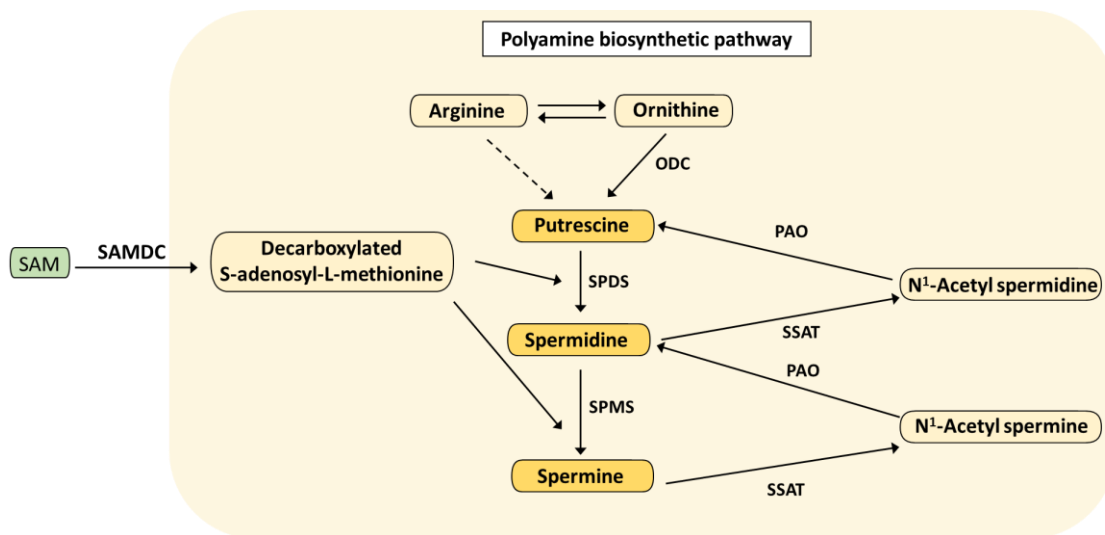
467 Other possible explanations could rely on the ability that some pathogens may have to
468 overcome the defence signaling, either by evading, hijacking, or disrupting the hormonal
469 signaling. As an example, El-Oirdi et al. (2011) described that *B. cinerea* takes advantage
470 of the antagonism between ET/JA and SA to accomplish the infection process in tomato
471 plants. Hence, through the production of an exopolysaccharide, the fungus induces the SA
472 pathway that in turn antagonizes the JA pathway, responsible for controlling the disease
473 triggered by necrotrophic pathogens. Other examples include the secretion of the
474 PsAvh238 effector of *Phytophthora sojae*, which abolishes ET by binding to the soybean
475 ACS and destabilizing its activity (Yang et al., 2019). Excellent reviews already exist
476 describing the many strategies used by different pathogens to mediate with the host
477 hormonal signaling (Han and Kahmann, 2019; Kazan and Lyons, 2014; Robert-
478 Seilaniantz et al., 2011), and some of them may ease to further shed light on the possible
479 role that ET, in conjunction with other hormones, may play during peach-*Monilinia*
480 interaction.

481

482 **3.4 Ethylene does not act alone but in combination with other key metabolites**
483 **during host-pathogen interaction**

484 Besides the complex interaction between ET and other hormones (mentioned in previous
 485 sections), the biosynthesis and signaling mediated by this hormone can also be altered by
 486 other key metabolites, including polyamines and ROS.

487 Polyamines are aliphatic polycationic compounds, often conjugated with phenolic
 488 compounds and molecules such as DNA and RNA, that actively participate in plant-
 489 microbe interactions (Jiménez Bremont et al., 2014). They could be synthesized through
 490 arginine or through the decarboxylation of SAM, a common precursor with the ET
 491 biosynthetic pathway (Fig. 8).



492
 493

494 **Figure 8.** Polyamine biosynthetic pathway from the ethylene precursor SAM and from
 495 the amino acids arginine and ornithine. S-adenosyl-L-methionine decarboxylase
 496 (SAMDC), ornithine decarboxylase (ODC), spermidine synthase (SPDS), spermine
 497 synthase (SPMS), polyamine oxidase (PAO) and spermidine/spermine N¹-
 498 acetyltransferase (SSAT).

499

500 Hence, the tight relation between ET and polyamines implies that promoting one of these
 501 metabolisms impairs the other one (Ziosi et al., 2006). In fact, a transgenic tomato
 502 overexpressing the yeast spermidine synthase presented a down-regulation of genes

503 involved in ET biosynthesis and signaling, which ultimately lead to an increased
 504 susceptibility to *B. cinerea* (Nambesan et al., 2012). Besides, the ability of fungal cells
 505 to produce polyamines should not be underrated (Rocha and Wilson, 2019).
 506 Accordingly, the alteration of the ET biosynthetic or signaling pathway during peach-
 507 *Monilinia* interaction may be also caused, to some extent, by the action of polyamines.
 508 However, and to the best of our knowledge, no information exists about the capability of
 509 *Monilinia* spp. to synthesize polyamines. This said, a BLAST analysis on the *M. laxa* and
 510 *M. fructicola* genomes using polyamine biosynthetic genes (ornithine decarboxylase,
 511 spermidine and spermine synthase and polyamine oxidase) from *S. cerevisiae* reveals the
 512 presence of these biosynthetic genes in both *Monilinia* spp. (Table 2).

513

514 **Table 2.** Identification of *M. laxa* and *M. fructicola* polyamine biosynthetic genes using
 515 *S. cerevisiae* gene templates for *in silico* searches. Gene ID, coverage, and identity of the
 516 BLAST analysis are indicated.

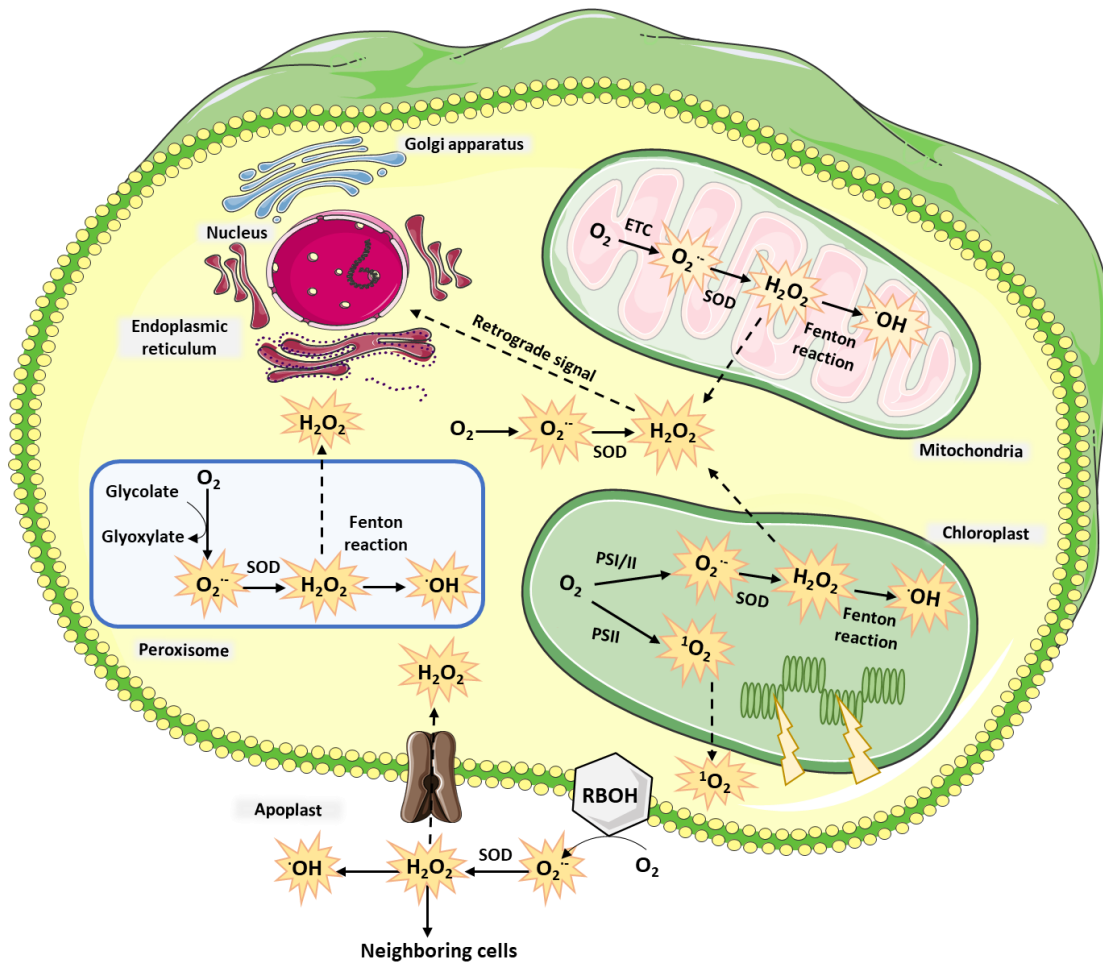
Gene name	<i>S. cerevisiae</i> gene ID	<i>M. laxa</i>			<i>M. fructicola</i>		
		Gene ID	Coverage (%)	Identity (%)	Gene ID	Coverage (%)	Identity (%)
<i>Ornithine decarboxylase</i>	853651	Monilinia__017910	99.27	84.38	MFRU_037g00770.1	99.64	90.51
<i>Spermidine synthase</i>	856182	Monilinia__058590	94.20	79.42	MFRU_008g01000.1	96.93	79.30
<i>Spermine synthase</i>	850838	Monilinia__057060	36.67	25.6	MFRU_021g00430.1	36.67	25.6
<i>Polyamine oxidase</i>	855034	Monilinia__050860	86.81	28.57	MFRU_012g01390.1	86.81	28.38

517

518 Although polyamines are described to be essential on growth, development and
 519 differentiation of fungi (Valdés-Santiago et al., 2012), the controversy exists on the role
 520 of polyamines during the host-pathogen interactions, especially given recent evidence
 521 showing that exogenous application of polyamines reduce fungal rots caused by *A.*
 522 *alternata* in apricots (Li et al., 2019).

523

524 Other molecules known to interact with ET during host-pathogen interactions are ROS.
525 Reactive oxygen species encompass those molecules generated from a partly reduced or
526 excited forms of oxygen. They include hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2), the singlet oxygen
527 ($^1\text{O}_2$), the superoxide anion ($\text{O}_2^{\cdot-}$) and the radical hydroxyl ($\cdot\text{OH}$). The fruit/plant
528 development and ripening processes are mediated by numerous metabolic pathways that
529 generate ROS due to their aerobic and photosynthetic nature. In fact, well-known
530 examples of ROS-producing metabolisms are the mitochondrial respiration, the
531 peroxisomal photorespiration cycle and the chloroplastic photosynthetic processes
532 (Tripathy and Oelmüller, 2012). In non-photosynthetic tissues such as fruits, the main
533 ROS generation occurs in the mitochondria. However, ROS are also produced in other
534 subcellular locations such as the vacuoles, and the cell wall. The plasma membrane-
535 localized NADPH oxidases (also known as respiratory burst oxidase homologs, RBOHs)
536 are one of the primary enzymes for autonomous ROS production (Figure 9). Due to its
537 charged, uncharged or lipophilic nature, ROS can travel through membranes depending
538 on their stability or remain confined (or scavenged) to specific subcellular compartments.
539 For a detailed description of ROS production and signaling within plants cells, the reader
540 is referred to recent reviews from Waszczak et al. (2018) and Kohli et al. (2019).



541

542 **Figure 9.** Schematic representation of the main sources of ROS in plant cells. To simplify
 543 the figure, some cell structures such as the cell wall have not been represented.

544

545 To avoid an oxidative stress situation, hence impairing the correct functioning of the cells,
 546 ROS levels are tightly regulated by a plethora of either enzymatic (e.g., CAT, SOD) or
 547 non-enzymatic (e.g., GSH, carotenoids) antioxidants, both functioning in a tightly
 548 regulated manner during all the development/ripening of nectarine fruit (Vall-Illaura and
 549 Fernández-Cancelo et al., 2022).

550 However, it is already well-known that ROS are not only considered undesirable products
 551 responsible of generating cellular damage but also involved in many signaling processes
 552 either alone or in conjunction with other molecules such as ET. Specifically, ROS are also
 553 produced by both plants/fruits and pathogens and play a crucial role during biotic

554 interactions. In fact, one of the initial responses of both the fruit and the pathogen resulting
555 from their interaction is the generation of ROS (Fig. 10A). This so-called “oxidative
556 burst”, mainly triggered by H₂O₂ and O₂⁻ production, is a hallmark of a successful
557 recognition. The main goal of this burst is the protection of the cells, the cross-linking of
558 the cell wall to block pathogen entry, and also to act as local and systemic secondary
559 messengers to trigger stomatal closure or activation of protectant and defence genes
560 (Lamb and Dixon, 1997).

561 Interestingly, ROS and hormones tightly cooperate to ensure a correct and efficient
562 response to both abiotic and biotic stimuli. On one hand, hormones activate ROS
563 production through the NADPH oxidases, while ROS act as secondary messengers in the
564 hormonal signaling (Xia et al., 2015). As an example, ROS and ET act jointly to respond
565 to salinity stress (Shin and Schachtman, 2004) but also during fruit/plant development
566 (Steffens and Sauter, 2009). Regarding to biotic stimuli, Arabidopsis mutants impaired in
567 ET sensing presented a significant reduction in the flg22-triggered oxidative burst, thus
568 demonstrating the requirement of ET for the early stage plant immune response
569 (Mersmann et al., 2010). However, the specific mechanisms underlying the ET-mediated
570 enhancement of ROS production remains to some extent still elusive.

571 Rapid systemic responses are crucial for the acclimatation of plants to abiotic/biotic
572 stresses. This cell-to-cell communication is basically performed by the interplay of
573 second messengers such as calcium (Ca²⁺) and ROS (Marcec et al., 2019)(Fig. 10B).
574 Hence, either the perception of abiotic stresses or the recognition of pathogens rapidly
575 activates a ROS burst mediated by RBOHs. In *A. thaliana*, a total of ten RBOHs have
576 been described, being *AtRBOHD* completely essential for ROS production (Wang et al.,
577 2020). RBOHs are synergically activated by Ca²⁺, phosphorylation and modification of
578 their cysteine (Cys) residues (Kärkönen and Kuchitsu, 2015; Marcec et al., 2019). In fact,

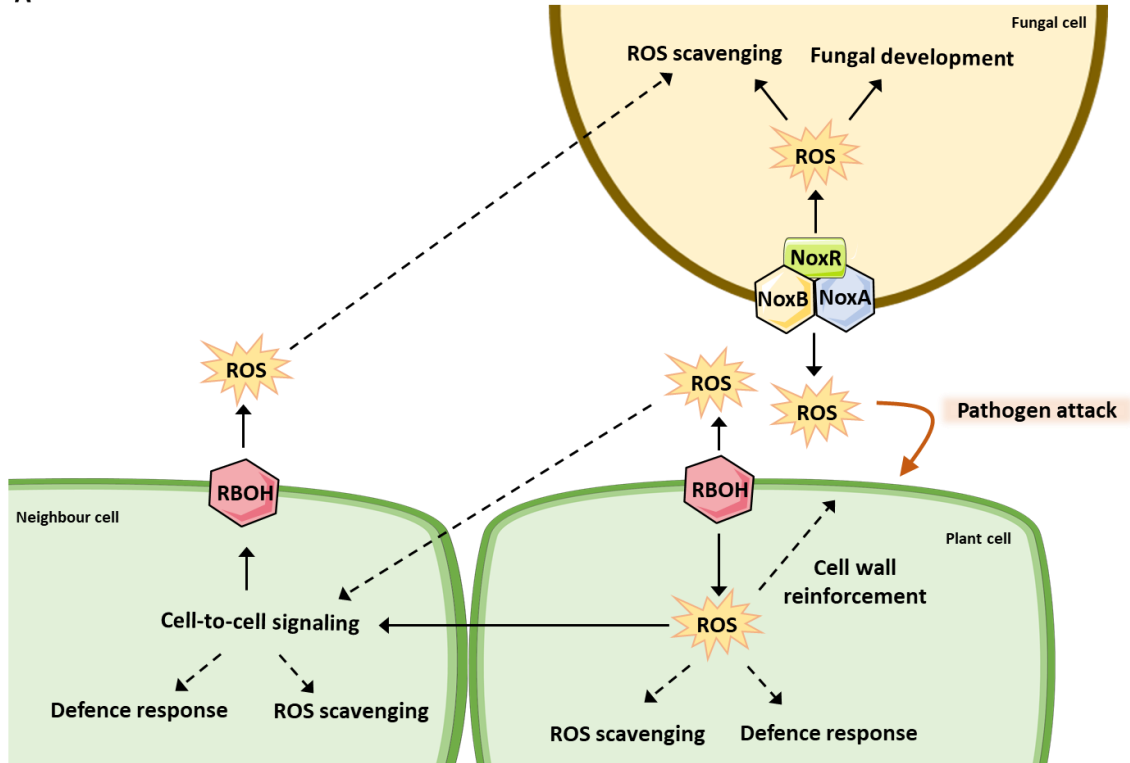
579 such ROS production depends on the receptor-like kinases (RLKs), such as cysteine-rich
580 receptor-like kinases (CRKs) and *BOTRYTIS*-INDUCED KINASE 1 (BIK1), which can
581 interact with RBOHs. Upon ROS perception, they can be directly activated (i.e., direct
582 oxidation of RLK ectodomains through Cys residues) or indirectly (i.e., a ROS sensor
583 conveys the signal to RLKs), triggering phosphorylation events, and finally, the signal
584 transduction (Kimura et al., 2017). In fact, it has been described that upon pathogen
585 perception, BIK1 mediates the phosphorylation of RBOH (Kadota et al., 2014). In
586 parallel, such ROS accumulation can induce calcium channels in a process known as
587 ROS-induced calcium release (RICR), resulting in altered Ca²⁺ levels. Cytosolic Ca²⁺
588 accumulation can, in turn, enhance ROS production through the modulation of RBOH
589 proteins (Gilroy et al., 2014) leading to what is currently known as ROS wave. The ROS
590 wave can then activate the mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK or MPK) cascade.

591 In plants, the activation of the MAPK cascade could occur by a H₂O₂-mediated activation
592 (either directly or through a redox sensor) as described for instance in Arabidopsis,
593 tobacco or rice, or by inactivating the MAPK repressors (Liu and He, 2017). In fact, recent
594 evidence suggest that MAPK can sense ROS (i.e., H₂O₂), likely through the oxido-
595 reduction of their thiol groups. Arabidopsis AtMPK2, AtMPK4, and AtMPK7 are
596 sulfenylated by the action of H₂O₂ (Waszczak et al., 2014), while in *Brassica napus*,
597 BnMPK4 is H₂O₂-dependent aggregated through one of its Cys residues (Zhang et al.,
598 2015). Finally, another possibility of MAPK signaling activation relies on the redox-
599 dependent activation of cell wall integrity (CWI) sensors (Vainonen and Kangasjärvi,
600 2015). Thus, one hypothesis could be that the OOMYCETE SUSCEPTIBILITY1 (IOS1)
601 sense the damage caused by both ROS and pathogens to the cell wall, and consequently,
602 triggers the MAPK activation (Kimura et al., 2017). Alternatively, H₂O₂ could also be
603 imported directly to the cytoplasm through aquaporins (Tian et al., 2016). Once activated,

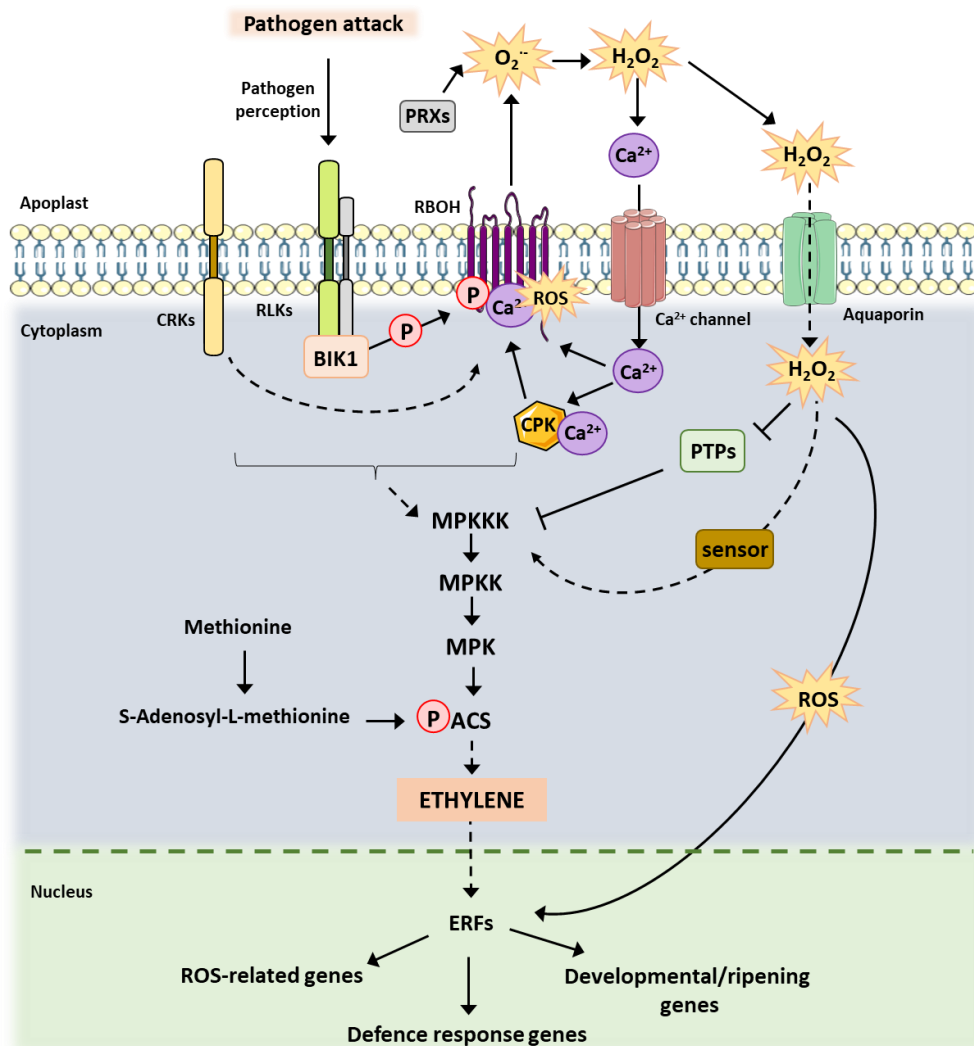
604 this cascade consists of the mitogen-activated protein kinase kinase kinase (MAPKKK)
605 MEKK1, the mitogen-activated protein kinase kinase (MAPKK) MKK4/5 and the
606 mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK) MPK3/6 (Asai et al., 2002). In fact, the
607 kinetics of AtMPK3/AtMPK6 activation parallels those from AtRBOHD-dependent ROS
608 production, although activation of such MAPK could also occur independently of the
609 PAMP-triggered AtRBOHD-dependent ROS production (Liu and He, 2017). Since this
610 is not the main objective of this review, for a detailed information regarding the specific
611 signaling events occurring from stress perception to MAPK activation, the reader is refer
612 to excellent reviews focused on this topic (Kimura et al., 2017; Marcec et al., 2019).

613 Interestingly, ET biosynthesis is also controlled, to some extent, by MAPK signaling
614 through the regulation of the ACS expression (Li et al., 2018) hence reinforcing the link
615 between ROS and ET in fruit. Not only ET biosynthesis, but also ET signaling its
616 mediated by MAPK (Ouaked et al., 2003; Yoo et al., 2008). MPK6 activates the ET
617 biosynthesis pathway (within few minutes after the perception) through phosphorylation
618 of ACS6 (Liu and Zhang, 2004; Meng et al., 2013) and hence, results in the activation of
619 ERFs. Specifically, MPK6-ERF6 regulate ROS-responsive genes through the GCC box,
620 and for such ERF6 expression, RBOHD is essential in Arabidopsis (Sewelam et al.,
621 2013). An excellent work from Müller and Munné-Bosch (2015) exhaustively reviews
622 the role of ERFs in the hormonal crosstalk as well as in mediating the redox signaling.

A



B



624 **Figure 10.** (A) Plant and pathogen-derived ROS production during the plant-pathogen
625 interaction and their role as signaling molecules. (B) ROS-mediated ET signaling
626 pathway. The interplay between ROS, Ca²⁺ and phosphorylation events in response to an
627 external stimulus (e. g. pathogen attack) triggers the MAPK cascade. In turn, ACS results
628 activated through phosphorylation and enhances the ET biosynthesis. Finally, ERF
629 activation would lead to the expression of several response genes. BIK1, BOTRYTIS-
630 INDUCED KINASE1, CRKs, cysteine-rich receptor-like kinases; PRXs, peroxidases;
631 PTPs, protein tyrosine phosphatase; RLKs, receptor-like kinases.

632

633

634 Scarce literature, if not null, exists regarding the cross-talk ET-ROS in fruit but especially
635 in peach. Recently, our group demonstrated the tight relation of ROS and ERF signaling
636 during peach fruit development and ripening (Vall-Iaura and Fernández-Cancelo et al.,
637 2022) suggesting that enhanced ROS was associated to greater fruit respiration at specific
638 fruit developmental stages. Enhanced respiration could result in an increase in ¹O₂ levels
639 which could, in turn, mediate either directly or through the activation of ET biosynthesis,
640 the ERF signaling cascade.

641 Based on the information detailed above, the debate is still active on which are the specific
642 strategies used by pathogens, and specifically by *Monilinia* spp., to evade the peach
643 defence response. Does *M. laxa* deploy a different mechanism from that of *M. fructicola*
644 that could explain the differences on the ET biosynthesis and signaling during the
645 interaction? Besides, further research concerning the complex regulation of ET and ROS
646 in peach fruit and probably also in *Monilinia* spp. is also needed to better understand the
647 host response and the virulence strategy of this brown rot causing agent.

648

649 **4. Concluding remarks and prospects**

650 Peach production is increasing around the world, as does the incidence of some major
651 peach pathogens such as brown rot caused by *Monilinia* spp. However, the studies
652 regarding *Monilinia* -peach interaction are still very scarce and further research is needed
653 to achieve a correct control of the disease. The irruption of new technologies, firstly to
654 obtain the fruit genome (*Prunus persica*) and fungal plant pathogen genomes (*Monilinia*
655 spp.) and, subsequently, to have global transcriptomic analyses, has significantly changed
656 the vision of the studies on the plant-pathogen interactions. The information gathered
657 from these technologies may unravel key genes/metabolisms with a putative role in
658 pathogen virulence and host resistance. Based on the information so far available,
659 ethylene, acting in tight coordination with critical molecules such as polyamines and
660 ROS, seems to be essential in mediating host-pathogen interactions.

661

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668 **Conflict of interests**

669 All authors declare no conflict of interest.

670

671 **Author statement**

672

673 **Núria Vall-llaura:** Conceptualization, Writing original draft, Writing- Reviewing and
674 Editing.

675 **Rosario Torres:** Funding acquisition, Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

676 **Neus Teixidó:** Funding acquisition, Reviewing and Editing.

677 **Josep Usall:** Funding acquisition, Reviewing and Editing.

678 **Jordi Giné-Bordonaba:** Conceptualization, Supervision, Funding acquisition, Writing
679 original draft, Project administration, Writing- Reviewing and Editing

680

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1076 **SUPPLEMENTARY TABLE**

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1078 **Supplementary Table S1.** Peach genes involved in ethylene biosynthesis,

1079 perception/transduction, and signaling, and their corresponding accession numbers.

Ethylene biosynthesis		Ethylene perception/transduction		Ethylene signaling	
Gene	Gene ID	Gene	Gene ID	Gene	Gene ID
<i>PpSAMS1</i>	Prupe.3G004000.1	<i>PpETR1</i>	Prupe.1G556000.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.5G061800.1
<i>PpSAMS2</i>	Prupe.6G306200.1	<i>PpETR2</i>	Prupe.1G034300.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.7G194400.1
<i>PpSAMS3</i>	Prupe.7G128500.1	<i>PpETR3</i>	Prupe.6G348000.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.3G240000.1
<i>PpSAMS5</i>	Prupe.1G107000.1	<i>PpERS1</i>	Prupe.8G265200.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.1G037700.1
<i>PpACS1</i>	Prupe.2G176900.1	<i>PpCTR1</i>	Prupe.7G117700.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.2G289500.1
<i>PpACS2</i>	Prupe.5G106200.1	<i>PpCTR1</i>	Prupe.5G231800.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.1G545700.1
<i>PpACS3</i>	Prupe.7G213900.1	<i>PpCTR1</i>	Prupe.6G337600.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.3G062800.1
<i>PpACS5</i>	Prupe.1G417800.1	<i>PpCTR1</i>	Prupe.1G412200.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.5G090800.1
<i>PpACS6</i>	Prupe.2G283100.1	<i>PpCTR1</i>	Prupe.1G533900.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.3G096000.1
<i>PpACS7</i>	Prupe.6G214400.1	<i>PpCTR1</i>	Prupe.3G117600.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.4G051200.1
<i>PpACS8</i>	Prupe.7G213800.1	<i>PpCTR1</i>	Prupe.1G022600.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.4G176200.1
<i>PpACO1</i>	Prupe.3G209900.1	<i>PpEIN2</i>	Prupe.6G235600.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.5G062000.1
<i>PpACO2</i>	Prupe.4G013800.1	<i>PpEIN3/EIL1</i>	Prupe.6G018200.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.6G165700.1
<i>PpACO3</i>	Prupe.7G212000.1	<i>PpEIN3/EIL2</i>	Prupe.2G058400.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.1G418600.1
<i>PpACO5</i>	Prupe.1G490000.1	<i>PpEIN3/EIL3</i>	Prupe.2G058500.1	<i>PpERF</i>	Prupe.4G051400.1
		<i>PpEIN3/EIL4</i>	Prupe.6G181600.1		
		<i>PpEIN3/EIL5</i>	Prupe.2G070300.1		
		<i>PpEBF1/2</i>	Prupe.1G480700.1		
		<i>PpEBF1/2</i>	Prupe.7G244300.1		

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