Transport of DMAA and MMAA into rice (Oryza sativa L.) roots

1 **Transport of DMAA and MMAA into Rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) Roots**

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Abstract:

Arsenate (As(V)) transport into plant cells has been well studied. A study on rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) showed that arsenite is transported across the plasma membrane via glycerol transporting channels. Previous studies reported that the dimethylarsinic acid (DMAA) and monomethylarsonic acid (MMAA) uptake in duckweed (*Spirodela polyrhiza* L.) differed from that of As(V), and was unaffected by phosphate (H_2PO_4). This article reports the transport mechanisms of DMAA and MMAA in rice roots. Linear regression analysis showed that the DMAA and MMAA uptake in rice roots increased significantly ($p \leq 0.0002$ and ≤ 0.0001 for DMAA and MMAA, respectively) with the increase of exposure time. Concentration-dependent influx of DMAA and MMAA showed that the uptake data were well described by Michaelis-Menten kinetics. The MMAA influx was higher than that of DMAA. The DMAA and MMAA uptake in rice roots were decreased significantly ($p \leq 0.0001$ and ≤ 0.0077 for DMAA and MMAA, respectively) with the increase of glycerol concentration indicating that DMAA and MMAA were transported into rice roots using the same mechanisms of glycerol. Glycerol is transported into plant cells by aquaporins, and DMAA and MMAA are transported in a dose-dependent manner of glycerol which reveals that DMAA and MMAA are transported into rice roots through glycerol transporting channels. The DMAA and MMAA concentration in the solution did not affect the inhibition of their uptake rate by glycerol.

Introduction:

Although arsenic contamination in groundwater has been reported in many countries, Bangladesh (Acharyya et al., 1999; Alam and Sattar, 2000; Alam et al., 2002), West Bengal, India (Mandal et al., 1996; Chowdhury et al., 1999), China (Guo et al., 2001; Sun, 2004), and Taiwan (Schoof et al., 1998; Guo et al., 2001) are the mostly affected areas. In Bangladesh and West Bengal (India), the arsenic contaminated groundwater has been used not only for drinking purpose but also for crop irrigation, especially for rice cultivation. Presently, 75% of the total cropped area and 83% of the total irrigated area are used for rice cultivation in Bangladesh (Dey et al., 1996), which are mostly dependent on groundwater irrigation. Survey from Bangladesh show that irrigation with arsenic contaminated groundwater is leading to the elevation of arsenic in paddy soils (Alam and Sattar, 2000). Although the background levels of arsenic in soils of Bangladesh ranged between 4 and 8 mg kg^{-1}, up to 83 mg kg^{-1} soil arsenic has been reported in areas irrigated with contaminated water (Abedin et al., 2002). Irrigation of arsenic contaminated groundwater during dry season rice production has been adding > 1000 metric tons of arsenic to the soil per year in Bangladesh alone (Alam and Sattar, 2000; Meharg and Rahman, 2002). A substantial amount of arsenic is accumulated from soil and irrigation water and is deposited in rice grain, which has the potential to create health disaster for the population in Southeast Asia (Meharg, 2004). Worldwide market surveys show that rice grain contains considerably higher amount of arsenic than that in other food items (Schoof et al., 1999; Roychowdhury et al., 2002; Williams et al., 2007). Therefore, rice could be substantial for the population of arsenic epidemic areas.

Studies on the kinetics of arsenic uptake in plant roots have focused almost entirely on arsenate as this is the dominant form of plant available arsenic in aerobic soils (Meharg and

62 Jardine, 2003). In flooded condition, arsenite becomes the predominant species of arsenic

63 (Takahashi et al., 2004). There is evidence of arsenic methylation in paddy soil systems by

64 microorganisms (Takamatsu et al., 1982). A number of studies have been investigated the

65 mechanisms of arsenic uptake by different plant species (Meharg and Macnair, 1992; Meharg

66 and Macnair, 1994; Rahman et al., 2008a; Rahman et al., 2008c). Plants take up arsenate through

67 the phosphate transporters (Meharg and Hartley-Whitaker, 2002; Wang et al., 2002). Although

68 the exact mechanisms of arsenite uptake in higher plants has not been identified, physiological

69 studies suggests that arsenite is transported in rice by aquaporins (Abedin et al., 2002; Meharg

70 and Jardine, 2003). A recent molecular study explained more clearly that arsenite is transported

71 into rice roots by nodulin 26-like intrinsic membrane proteins (NIPs), one of the major

72 subfamilies of aquaporins transporter that facilitates the transport of neutral molecules such as

73 water, glycerol, and urea (Ma et al., 2008).

74   Uptake of organoarsenic species by plants is lower than that of inorganic species

75 (Odanaka et al., 1987; Rahman et al., 2007). Marin et al. (1992; 1993) observed high uptake of

76 inorganic arsenic species, dimethylarsinic acid (DMAA) and monomethylarsonic acid (MMAA),

77 in rice plant in hydroponic culture. Whatever the amount was, previous studies confirmed the

78 uptake of organoarsenic species (DMAA and MMAA) in rice and other plant species. Although

79 the uptake mechanisms of inorganic arsenic species such as arsenate and arsenite in rice have

80 been studied (Abedin et al., 2002; Meharg and Jardine, 2003; Ma et al., 2008), the uptake

81 mechanisms of organoarsenic species are overlooked. Rahman, et al. (2008a) observed that the

82 DMAA and MMAA uptake in duckweed (*Spirodela polyrhiza* L.) was much lower than that of

83 As(V) and As(III), and the uptake was not influenced by phosphate. This might be because the

84 mechanisms of organoarsenic species uptake in plants differed from that of inorganic arsenic

85 species, and the physicochemical adsorption would be one of the possible mechanisms of

86 DMAA and MMAA uptake in aquatic plants. Robinson, et al. (2003) also proposed

87 physicochemical adsorption as an alternative mechanism for DMAA and MMAA uptake in New

88 Zealand watercress (*Lepidium sativum*).

89 Uptake mechanisms of DMAA and MMAA in rice have not studied extensively. Abedin

90 et al. (2002) studied the uptake kinetics of arsenic species in rice, and mostly focused on

91 inorganic arsenic species, arsenate and arsenite. This study investigates the uptake kinetics of

92 DMAA and MMAA into rice roots to observe how these species are taken up into the plant cells.

93 Since plant aquaporins transport neutral molecules such as water, glycerol, and urea (Dean et al.,

94 1999; Ma et al., 2008), and organoarsenic species are not taken up into plants by phosphate

95 uptake pathway; there is a possibility of DMAA and MMAA uptake through the aquaporins

96 water channels. Studies showed that the rice aquaporin Lsi1 mediates uptake of methylated

97 arsenic species (Li et al., 2009). In the present study, we investigated the competition between

98 glycerol and DMAA and MMAA for uptake into rice roots.

99

Materials and Methods:

100

Seed sterilization

101

102 Rice seeds of BRRI (Bangladesh Rice Research Institute) dhan 29 were collected from

103 Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, Gazipur. The seeds were surface-sterilized before using

104 them in the experiment. For sterilization, about 100 g seeds were soaked in 200 mL of 1%

105 methyl-1-butylcarbamoyl-2-benzimidazole carbonate solution for 10 min. After that, the seeds

106 were washed by deionized water (using an E-pure system (Barnstead)) and kept in deionized

107   water at 20 ºC for 24 h. The seeds were then washed and transferred to deionized water of 45 ºC

108   for 2 min, and of 52 ºC for 10 min.

109

Plant growth

111   Sterilized rice seeds were soaked in deionized water for 48 h, and were germinated on

112   moistened filter paper placed within petri dishes. When the germinated seeds produced enough

113   roots and about 2 cm of shoot, the small seedlings were transferred to a 500-mL polystylene

114   beaker filled with 400 mL of distilled water. The seedlings were placed on the water with a

115   support in such a way that only the roots of the seedlings emerged into the water. The rice

116   seedlings were allowed to grow for 1 wk in the distilled water. Nutrient salts and other

117   osmoregulators were not added to the water so that they could not alter the arsenic transporter

118   regulation in an unknown manner (Meharg and Jardine, 2003). Rice seedlings were grown in a

119   plant growth chamber, and the conditions in the chamber were set as 14:10 h light/dark schedule,

120   100-125 μE m^{-2} s^{-1} light intensity, 22($\pm$2) ºC temperatures.

121

Uptake kinetics

123   After 1 wk growth, sufficient numbers of roots were produced from the basal node.

124   Replicated rice seedlings were then transferred to aerated water solution (having no nutrient

125   salts) for 30 min at room temperature. They were then incubated in aerated test solutions

126   (distilled water without nutrient salts) for 1 h with different concentrations (ranged between 0.1

127   and 0.7 mM) of DMAA and MMAA for concentration-dependant uptake experiment. Replicated

128   rice seedlings were incubated in test solution (distilled water without nutrient salts) with 0.1 mM

129   arsenic for time-dependant uptake experiment, and the samples were collected at a 10 min

130   interval. In DMAA and MMAA transport assay, 0.3 mM or 10 μM DMAA or MMAA was

131   added to 10, 50, 100, 500, and 1000 mM glycerol solutions. Replicated rice seedlings were

132   incubated into these solutions for 1 h. The test solution was adjusted to pH 7 using weak

133   solutions of HCl or NaOH. Stock solutions of DMAA and MMAA were prepared from

134   dimethylarsinic acid $((CH_3)_2AsO(OH))$ and $(CH_3AsO(OH)_2)$, respectively. Glycerol was

135   purchased from Kanto Chemical Co., Japan (purity 99.0%).

136

Sample preparation and chemical analysis

138   After the set time, the roots were quickly rinsed in ice cold distilled water, and then

139   placed in aerated ice cold distilled water for 20 min (Meharg and Jardine, 2003). The roots were

140   washed once again with distilled water and blotted dry with tissue papers. Now the roots of the

141   rice seedlings were excised at the basal node, and the fresh weight of the roots were determined.

142   The roots were then taken into 50-mL polyethylene digestion tubes, and 3 mL of 65% HNO_3

143   were added to the samples and allowed to stand for 12 h. The samples were heated on a heating

144   block at 95 ºC for 90 min. After cooling to room temperature, 2 mL of 30% hydrogen peroxide

145   were added, and heated again at 105 ºC for 30 min. On cooling, the residue was taken was

146   diluted to 10 mL with deionized water, and analyzed for total As. At least one reagent blank and

147   two certified standard reference materials (1573a, tomato leaf from National Institute of

148   Standards and Technology (NIST), Department of Commerce, United States of America) were

149   included in the digestion. Chemical analysis for arsenic was performed by graphite-furnace

150 atomic absorption spectrometer (Z-8100, Hitachi, Japan). Certified standard reference material

151 1573a (tomato leaf from NIST, USA) was used to check the accuracy of analysis. Arsenic

152 concentration in certified standard reference materials was 0.112±0.004 µg g^{-1} dry weight while

153 the measured concentration was 0.114±0.002 µg g^{-1}. The concentrations detected in all samples

154 were above the instrumental limits of detection ($\geq$ 0.01 µM in water sample).

155 All chemical reagents used in this experiment were of analytical grade. Glassware and

156 dishes were washed with detergent and 1 N HCl solution, and rinsed with deionized water for

157 eight times before use.

158

159 **Statistical Analysis**

160 Data were analyzed for linear and nonlinear regression using GraphPad Prism (v5)

161 (GraphPad Software, Inc., CA, USA). Kinetic parameters for DMAA and MMAA uptake were

162 calculated from mean arsenic influx ($n = 3$) by linear and nonlinear regression models.

163

164 **Results and discussions:**

165 **Uptake kinetics of DMAA and MMAA**

166 Time- and concentration-dependent uptake kinetics of DMAA and MMAA were

167 determined to assess the pattern and efficiency of organoarsenic species influx in rice roots.

168 Since the uptake kinetic is calculated from the influx (uptake into the plant cells) across the

169 plasma membrane, it is important to measure the adsorption of arsenic on rice root surfaces. The

170   adsorption of As(V) and As(III) on roots of terrestrial and aquatic plants has been reported by

171   several researchers (Otte et al., 1995; Hansel et al., 2002; Blute et al., 2004; Chen et al., 2005;

172   Rahman et al., 2007; Rahman et al., 2008c). A significant amount of As(V) is adsorbed on Fe-

173   oxides (Fe-plaques) on rice root surfaces (Chen et al., 2005; Rahman et al., 2008b) because of

174   high adsorptive affinity of As(V) to Fe-oxides, while DMAA and MMAA adsorption, either on

175   Fe-plaques or on rice roots, is negligible (Rahman et al., 2007).

176   Even though there was a little chance of chemical adsorption of arsenic on Fe-oxides in

177   the Fe-free experimental solution (distilled water without nutrient salts), Meharg and Jardine

178   (2003) reported significant physical adsorption of As(V) and As(III) on rice roots. Meharg and

179   Jardine (2003) evaluated the desorption of arsenic from rice root surface by ice cold distilled

180   water and NaCl (0.1 M) solution. Since there was no significant differences of these two washing

181   methods in arsenic desorption from rice root surface, they proposed ice cold distilled water

182   washing as the appropriate method. Therefore, rice roots were washed with ice cold distilled

183   water in this study to remove arsenic physically adsorbed on rice roots.

184   Time-dependent uptake showed that the influxes of both DMAA and MMAA were linear

185   upon 60 min. of exposure (Fig. 1). The DMAA and MMAA uptakes were well described by a

186   linear function (r = 0.688 and 0.756 for DMAA and MMAA, respectively), and their uptakes

187   were increased significantly (p = 0.0002 and < 0.0001 for DMAA and MMAA, respectively)

188   with the increase of exposure time (Table 1). Meharg and Jardine (2003) reported that As(III)

189   influx was linear up to 30 min, and further influx did not occurred probably due to the

190   toxicological inhibition as As(III) exhibits phytotoxicity through binding with protein –SH

191   groups. Present result showed that DMAA and MMAA did not show phytotoxicity up to 60 min.

192   Although organoarsenic species are generally considered to be less toxic than inorganic species

193   to a wide range of organisms including aquatic plants, animals and humans (Tamaki and

194   Frankenberger, 1992), long-term arsenic uptake studies showed that the phytoavailability of four

195   arsenic species to *Spartina patens* in hydroponic systems followed the trend: DMAA < MMAA

196    $\cong$ As(V) < As(III), while the order of phytotoxicity was As(V) $\cong$ As(III) < MMAA < DMAA.

197   Studies also suggests that organoarsenicals would be more toxic than inorganic arsenic species

198   (Carbonell-Barrachina et al., 1998). In another study with arsenate, arsenite, and DMAA influx

199   in maize (*Zea mays* L.), Abbas and Meharg (2008) found low toxicity of DMAA compared with

200   arsenate and arsenite, and the relative toxicity of arsenic species on maize was As(V) > As(III) >

201   DMAA. The phytoavailability of arsenic by rice, however, in long-term hydroponic culture was

202   DMAA < As(V) < MMAA < As(III), and the order of phytotoxicity was the same as the order of

203   phytoavailability (Marin et al., 1992). Moreover, short-term uptake of MMAA and DMAA was

204   considerably less than that of As(V) and As(III) in rice (Abedin et al., 2002), which is consistent

205   to the time-dependent DMAA and MMAA uptake in rice roots of present study. Thus, from the

206   above discussions it could be assumed that the uptake and toxicity of arsenic species are related

207   to the plant species as well as to the exposure time depending on their resistance mechanisms.

208   Concentration-dependent influx showed that the DMAA uptake was poorly described by

209   Michaelis-Menten kinetics ($r^2 = 0.688$), but well explained by linear function ($r^2 = 0.837$) (Fig.

210   2; Table 1). On the other hand, MMAA uptake showed a hyperbolic increase with the increase of

211   MMAA in the experimental solution (Fig. 3). The MMAA uptake fitted well to the Michaelis-

212   Menten kinetics ($r^2 = 0.914$) as well explained as linear function ($r^2 = 0.904$) (Table 1). These

213   results are also in consistent with those of Abedin et al. (2002). The MMAA influx was higher

214   than that of DMAA (Figs. 2 and 3). At a substrate concentration of 0.7 mM, the uptake rates of

215   DMAA and MMAA were 1.25 and 1.74 μmol g^{-1} fresh weight h^{-1}, respectively. Kinetic

216 parameters also showed that V_{max} for DMAA and MMAA were 0.757 and 3.619 μmol g^{-1} fresh

217 weight h^{-1} (Table 1). Abedin et al. (2002) also reported similar results for DMAA and MMAA in

218 rice roots.

219

Inhibition of DMAA and MMAA uptake by glycerol

221   Water channels or water channel proteins (WCPs) are transmembrane proteins that have a

222 specific three-dimensional structure with a pore that permeates water molecules (Benga, 2009).

223 The WCPs belong to the superfamily of major intrinsic proteins (MIPs) (over 800 members) that

224 are present in plants, animals, and microorganisms. The WCPs include three subfamilies: i) the

225 water specific aquaporins (AQPs), ii) aquaglyceroporins (permeable to water, glycerol, and/or

226 other small, neutral molecules), and iii) superaquaporins or subcellular AQPs (Agre, 2004;

227 Benga, 2009). In addition to water, some MIPs seem to be specific to other molecules such as

228 urea, glycerol or even CO_2 (Maurel et al., 1994; Baiges et al., 2002).

229   The competition between glycerol and arsenite for uptake into rice (*Oryza sativa* L.)

230 (Meharg and Jardine, 2003) and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (Wysocki et al., 2001) reveal that

231 arsenite is transported across the plasma membrane through WCPs/aquaporins. Previous studies

232 reported that the DMAA and MMAA uptake mechanisms into plant tissues differ from those of

233 arsenate (Mkandawire and Dudel, 2005; Rahman et al., 2008a). In the present study, we

234 investigated the effect of glycerol on DMAA and MMAA uptake in rice roots to understand the

235 uptake mechanisms of theses organoarsenic species. Results showed that glycerol inhibited

236 DMAA and MMAA uptake in rice roots significantly ($p \leq 0.0001$ and 0.0077 for DMAA and

237 MMAA, respectively; Table 2) in a concentration dependant manner (Fig. 4), which is consistent

238 to the arsenite uptake in rice roots (Meharg and Jardine, 2003).

239 Among DMAA and MMAA, the DMAA influx was about two times greater than that of

240 MMAA. DMAA and MMAA influx in rice roots were higher at low glycerol concentrations (10-

241 50 mM) than those at higher concentrations (100-1000 mM) (Fig. 4). Meharg and Jardine (2003)

242 elucidated the possible explanations for the inhibition of arsenite uptake in rice roots by glycerol

243 which can be applicable for DMAA and MMAA too. The explanations are: i) glycerol closes

244 aquaporin channels, ii) glycerol causes general physiological stress disrupting arsenite

245 transporter, and iii) high levels of glycerol rapidly down-regulate aquaporin channels. Since

246 glycerol has been widely used for aquaporins assay (Biela et al., 1999; Dean et al., 1999) and

247 since glycerol has low phytotoxicity (Meharg and Jardine, 2003), the first two explanations do

248 not elucidate adequately. Moreover, the third explanation is also not agreeable because transport

249 activity would be constant for the short exposure time (1 h) (Meharg and Jardine, 2003).

250 Therefore, inhibition of DMAA and MMAA influx by glycerol indicates that they are

251 transported across the plasma membrane via same transporter such as MIPs/aquaglyceroporins.

252 Inhibition effect of glycerol on arsenic uptake at low (10 µM) and high (0.3 mM) DMAA

253 and MMAA concentration was investigated. Results show that the rates of DMAA and MMAA

254 influx were almost similar for both concentrations, and the uptake of both arsenic species was

255 linear rather than hyperbolic (Figs. 4 and 5). Linear regression analysis of mean arsenic influx in

256 rice roots reveals that the mean r^2 values for DMAA and MMAA at 0.3 mM concentration were

257 0.891 and 0.525, respectively. The values were 0.509 and 0.354 for DMAA and MMAA at 10

258 µM concentration, respectively (Table 2). Thus, it can be revealed that the aquaglyceroporin

259 channels facilitate DMAA uptake more frequently compared to that of MMAA.

260

Conclusions

262   Uptake of organoarsenic species in plants is lower than those of inorganic species.

263 Although several reports have been described the uptake mechanisms of arsenate and arsenite in

264 plants, little is known about uptake mechanisms of organoarsenic species. The results of this

265 study show that the DMAA and MMAA follow the uptake mechanisms of glycerol in rice roots.

266 The glycerol transporter in plasma membrane (aquaglyceroporins) facilitates DMAA and

267 MMAA uptake in rice roots indicating that these arsenic species are transported in rice via

268 MIPs/aquaglyceroporins.

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407   Table 1: Kinetic parameters for time-dependent DMAA and MMAA uptake in rice roots. Kinetic

408   parameters were calculated from mean As influx ($n = 3$) by Michaelis-Menten function

409   (nonlinear regression) and linear regression model using the GraphPad Prism (v5)

410   (GraphPad Software, Inc., CA, USA).

As Species	Nonlinear Regression			Linear Regression			
	V_{max} (μmol g^{-1} f. wt.)	K_m (mM)	r^2	a	b	r^2	p
Time-dependent							
DMAA				0.007±0.001	0.119±0.045	0.688	0.0002
MMAA				0.002±0.000	0.014±0.007	0.756	< 0.0001
Con.-dependent							
DMAA	0.757	0.140	0.688	0.644±0.116	0.253±0.048	0.837	0.0014
MMAA	3.619	0.762	0.914	2.399±0.318	0.186±0.133	0.904	0.0003

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419   Table 2: Kinetic parameters for the uptake inhibition of DMAA and MMAA in rice roots by

420   glycerol. Kinetic parameters were calculated from mean As influx ($n = 3$) by linear

421   regression model using the GraphPad Prism (v5) (GraphPad Software, Inc., CA, USA).

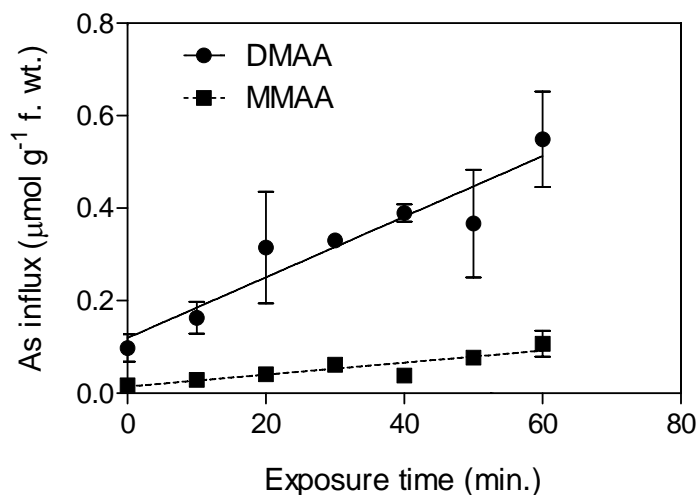| As Species	a	b	r^2	p
Glycerol + As (0.3 mM)				
DMAA	- $3.04 \times 10^{-4} \pm 3.36 \times 10^{-5}$	$3.34 \times 10^{-1} \pm 1.54 \times 10^{-2}$	0.891	< 0.0001
MMAA	- $4.11 \times 10^{-4} \pm 1.23 \times 10^{-4}$	$11.66 \times 10^{-1} \pm 5.68 \times 10^{-2}$	0.525	0.0077
Glycerol + As (10 µM)				
DMAA	- $1.73 \times 10^{-5} \pm 5.38 \times 10^{-6}$	$3.15 \times 10^{-2} \pm 2.46 \times 10^{-3}$	0.509	0.0092
MMAA	- $6.96 \times 10^{-5} \pm 2.97 \times 10^{-5}$	$1.22 \times 10^{-1} \pm 1.36 \times 10^{-2}$	0.354	0.0412

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433   Fig. 1: Time-dependent influx of DMAA and MMAA in rice roots. Arsenic concentration in the

434   solution was 0.30 mM. The graph shows the linear regression lines, and the kinetic

435   parameters are given in Table 1. Each point is the average value of three replicated

436   treatments. Bares represent ± standard error of the mean (SEM) of the replicates.

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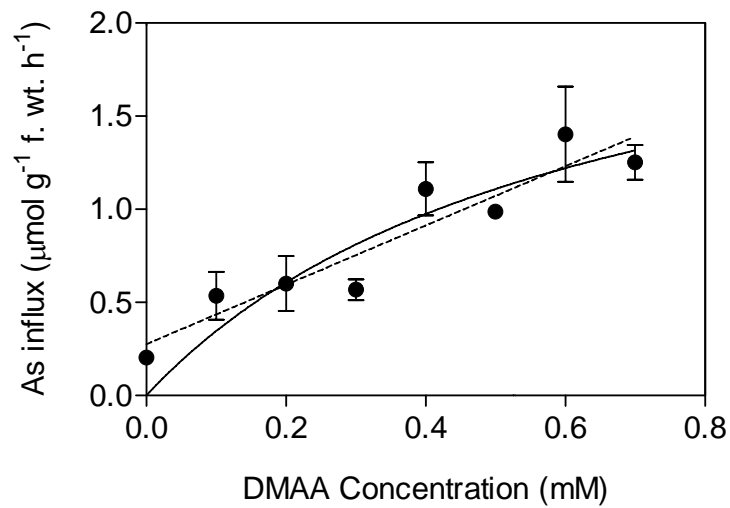438

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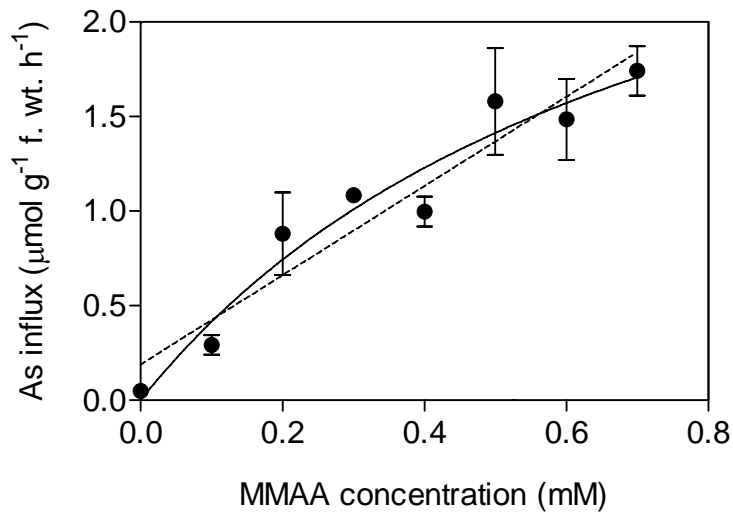
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Fig. 2: Concentration-dependent influx of DMAA in rice roots. The graph shows the Michaelis-

Menten (nonlinear regression) curve and linear regression line, and the fits are given in

Table 1. Each point is the average value of three replicated treatments. Bares represent ±

standard error of the mean (SEM) of the replicates.

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459   Fig. 3: Concentration-dependent influx of MMAA in rice roots. The graph shows the Michaelis-

460   Menten (nonlinear regression) curve and linear regression line, and the fits are given in

461   Table 1. Each point is the average value of three replicated treatments. Bares represent ±

462   standard error of the mean (SEM) of the replicates.
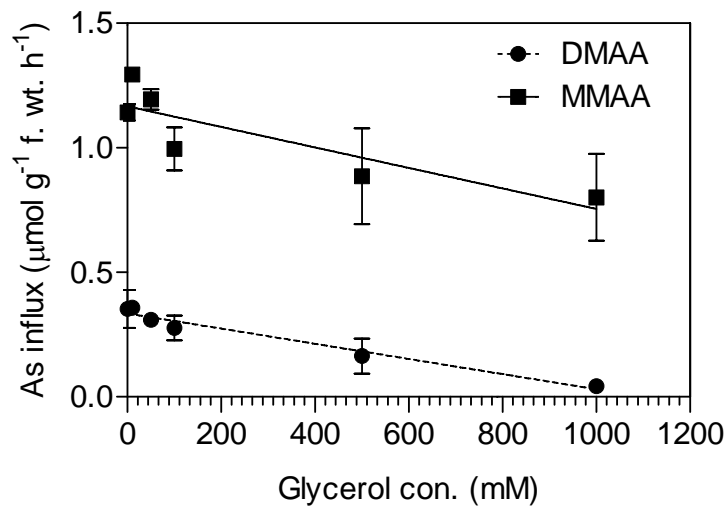
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472 Fig. 4: Inhibition of DMAA and MMAA influx (0.3 mM) in rice roots by different concentration

473   of glycerol. The graph shows the nonlinear regression lines, and the fits are given in

474   Table 2. Each point is the average value of three replicated treatments. Bares represent ±

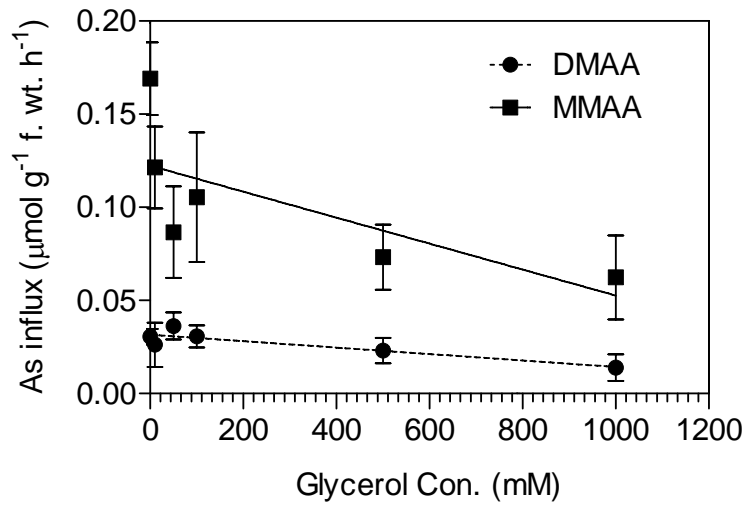475   standard error of the mean (SEM) of the replicates.

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485   Fig. 5: Inhibition of DMAA and MMAA influx (10 µM) in rice roots by different concentration

486   of glycerol. The graph shows the nonlinear regression lines, and the fits are given in

487   Table 2. Each point is the average value of three replicated treatments. Bares represent ±

488   standard error of the mean (SEM) of the replicates.