

Accumulation and transportation of resveratrol in grapevines treated by ultraviolet-C irradiation

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Abstract: Resveratrol (3, 5, 4'-trihydroxystilbene) is distributed in almost every part of grapevines. However, little is known if resveratrol may transport among different organs/tissues in grapevines. In this study, the shoots with two or three mature leaves were cut from 'Beifeng' (a hybrid of *Vitis thunbergii* × *V. vinifera*) grapevines. After one leaf of the shoot was treated by ultraviolet C irradiation for 10 minutes, resveratrol (especially *trans*-resveratrol) was synthesized and accumulated in this leaf. Moreover, resveratrol content in the adjacent untreated leaves increased correspondingly. Resveratrol also accumulated in the xylem of the shoot, while the content of total resveratrol in phloem nearly kept unchanged. This indicates that resveratrol in one tissue could be transported to the other tissues through phloem in both apical and basal direction.

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Key words: resveratrol; grapevine; transportation; accumulation

1 Introduction

Resveratrol, 3, 5, 4'-trihydroxystilbene, is a polyphenol found in tissues of plants in several families, including Vitaceae and Pinaceae (Gambino, 2006). Interestingly, it has a high medicinal value due to its beneficial effects on human health, such as platelet aggregation inhibition (Bertelli, 1995), cancer chemoprevention (Jang, 1997; Schneider, 2000), antioxidant action (Sanchez-Moreno, 1999), anti-viral activities (Docherty, 1999), anti-inflammatory properties (Martinez, 2000), and cardio-protection (Hung, 2000).

Resveratrol exists as *trans*- or *cis*-resveratrol (monomers), but also as piceids and other polymers. Grapevine is the best-known plant that can biosynthesize and accumulate resveratrol. Resveratrol is distributed in the berry, stem, axillary bud, shoot tip, petiole, root and leaf of grapevines (Wang, 2010). However, resveratrol content varies among different organs and among different tissues of the same organ. For example, resveratrol accumulates in grape berry skins and seeds, while it is hardly detected in the berry flesh. Two piceids with glucosylated forms are mostly located in berry skin (Jeandet, 1991; Roggero, 1995). The content of *trans*-resveratrol in grape skin and seeds varies considerably among different genotypes (Li, 2006). However, to date, most studies have been conducted to investigate the biosynthesis of resveratrol, few have been focused on the transportation of resveratrol among tissues or organs. To reveal if the resveratrol exists transportation among tissues or organs, may help understand the mechanism of higher

resveratrol in one organ, and increase resveratrol content in one organ through manipulating the relationship between source and sink.

Ultraviolet C (UV-C) irradiation, fungal infection, ozone, wounds, and some elicitors (methyl jasmonate, salicylic acid) have induced the biosynthesis of resveratrol in berries, leaves and in vitro cultured tissues (Adrian, 2000; Versari, 2001; Chung, 2003; Grimmig, 2002; Belhadj, 2008; Krisa, 1999; Kiselev, 2010). Compared with other abiotic stresses or elicitors, UV-C irradiation is a simple and high efficient treatment for induction of the synthesis of resveratrol in leaves and berries (Cantos, 2001; Bonomelli, 2004). The objective of the present study was to investigate the transportation of resveratrol through using UV-C irradiation to induce resveratrol biosynthesis and accumulation with a high level in grape leaves, focusing on the possibility of exportation and transportation direction.

2 Materials and methods

2.1 Plant materials and treatments

Grapevines of 'Beifeng' (a hybrid of *V. thunbergii* × *V. vinifera*) were used in this study, growing in the experimental vineyard of the Institute of Botany, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, in Beijing, China. Vines were planted in the spring of 2003 and received the same viticultural management practices including irrigation, fertilization, pruning and disease control. Uniform shoots with healthy leaves were harvested in late May for the experiment in 2010. The

treatments were as follows (**Figure 1**): (1) O_{control} : two leaves on the opposite sides of the shoot without UV-C irradiation; (2) O_{upper} : two leaves on the opposite sides of the shoot, the upper leaf was treated with UV-C irradiation; (3) O_{lower} : two leaves on the opposite sides of the shoot, the lower leaf treated with UV-C irradiation; (4) S_{control} : two leaves on the same sides of the shoot without UV-C irradiation; (5) S_{upper} : two leaves on the same side of the shoot, the upper leaf treated with UV-C irradiation; (6) S_{lower} : two leaves on the same side of the shoot, the lower leaf treated with UV-C irradiation; (7) OS_{control} : three leaves were on the shoot, without UV-C irradiation treatment; (8) OS_{middle} : three leaves were on the shoot, the middle leaf treated with UV-C irradiation.

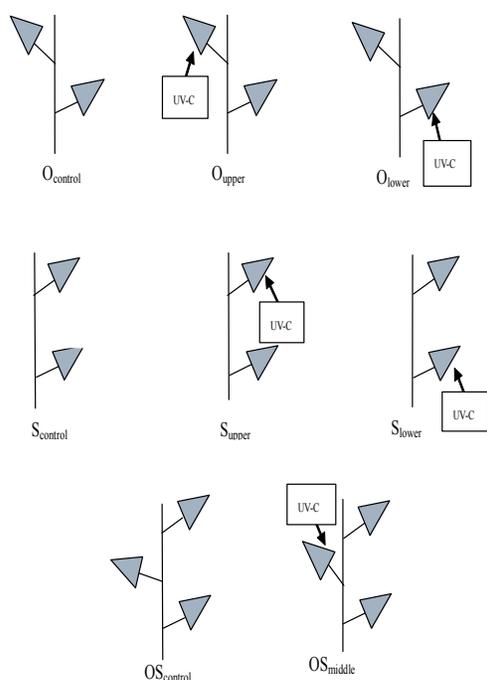


Figure 1. Schematic of the different treatments

Each shoot had two or three leaves. The upper side of an upper, lower or middle leaf of the shoot was exposed for 10 min to $6 \text{ W}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$ UV-C irradiation provided by a UV-C lamp. The shoot except for the treated leaf was covered by black reflective cloth (under the cloth, UV-C intensity is $0 \text{ W}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$).

O_{control} , O_{upper} and O_{lower} indicate that the two leaves are on opposite sides of shoot. O_{control} : no UV-C irradiation; O_{upper} : the upper leaf was irradiated by UV-C; O_{lower} : the lower leaf was irradiated by UV-C;

S_{control} , S_{upper} and S_{lower} indicate that the two leaves are at the same side of shoot. S_{upper} : no UV-C irradiation upper leaf was irradiated by UV-C; S_{lower} : The lower leaf was irradiated by UV-C;

OS_{control} : The three leaves were not UV-C irradiated; OS_{upper} : The middle leaf was UV-C irradiated.

2.2 Method of UV-C irradiation

As shown in Figure 1, the upper, lower or middle leaf of the shoot was exposed for 10 min to $6 \text{ W}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$ UV-C irradiation provided by a UV-C lamp (Model ZW30S26W, Beijing Lighting Research Institute, China). The shoot except for the treated leaf was covered by black reflective cloth for prevented UV-C light (Under the cloth, UV-C intensity is $0 \text{ W}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$), and held in a dark room. After the treatment, the basal end of all shoots was immediately inserted into a container with water in a dark growth chamber at 25°C and relative humidity of 60~80%. The shoots were gently sprayed with tap water every three hours throughout the experiment in order to prevent wilting. Shoots with two leaves were sampled at 0 (sampled immediately after treated), 1, 6, 12, 24, 48 and 72 h after UV-C irradiation treated, and sampled the controls also at the same time, all shoots were divided into four parts including upper leaf, lower leaf, and xylem and phloem of the shoot between two leaves. Shoots with three leaves were sampled at 0, 6, 24, 48 and 72 h after UV-C irradiation treated, and sampled the controls also at the corresponding time, the upper, the middle and the lower leaves were used. Then, all samples were frozen in liquid nitrogen, lyophilized, and stored at -40°C for resveratrol measurement.

2.3 Extraction of resveratrol

The lyophilized materials were ground to powder in liquid nitrogen using a grinding machine (A11-b- s25, IKA, China). The resveratrol was extracted according to the methods described by Liu (2013). Each sample was extracted for 24 h in methanol and ethyl acetate (1/1, v/v) (1000 mg samples per 10mL of organic solvent) at 25°C in darkness according to the method of our own laboratory. The suspension was centrifuged at $10,000 \times g$ for 10 min. The supernatant liquid was separated and the resulting residue was extracted another time with 3 ml methanol and ethyl acetate (1/1, v/v). The organic solvent supernatant phases were combined and vacuum-dried with a rotary evaporator (N-1001D-WD, EYELA, Tokyo Rikakikai, Japan) at 40°C . The dried samples were then re-dissolved in 2 mL of pure methanol and stored at -40°C for resveratrol analysis.

2.4 Measurement of resveratrol

Each liquid sample was filtered through a $0.22\mu\text{m}$ PTFE membrane filter, then the analysis of resveratrol were carried out on a Dionex P680 HPLC system (Dionex Corporation, CA, USA) with a Dionex PDA-100 detector. Separation was achieved using a reverse-phase C18 column of Atlantis® T3 (4.6 mm \times 250 mm, $5.0 \mu\text{m}$ particle size, Waters, USA) and a guard column (Atlantis T3, 4.6 mm \times 20 mm, $5.0 \mu\text{m}$ cartridge, Waters, USA) maintained at 30°C with a Dionex TCC-100 thermostatted column compartment, and the injection volume was 10 μL . Separation was

performed at a flow rate of $1.0 \text{ mL}\cdot\text{min}^{-1}$ with the mobile phase consisting of H_2O (A) and acetonitrile (B), according to Liu (2013). The solvent gradient was as follows: 0-5 min from 10% to 17% solvent B; 5-12 min from 17% to 18% solvent B; 12-22 min from 18% to 22% solvent B; 22-30 min from 22% to 33% solvent B; 30-45 min from 33% to 38% solvent B; 45-50 min from 38% to 80% solvent B; 50-53 min from 80% to 10% solvent B; 53-60 min 10% solvent B. For fluorimetric detection, the maximum absorption wavelength of two *trans*-isomers (*trans*-resveratrol and *trans*-piceid) was 306nm, and two *cis*-isomers (*cis*-resveratrol and *cis*-piceid) was 288 nm. Three replicates of each sample were scanned by whole wavelength (from 240 to 600nm) (Figure 2).

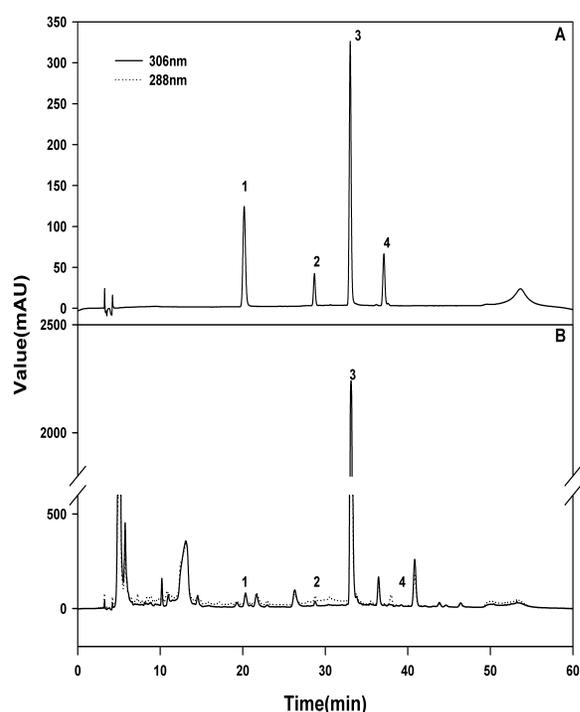


Figure 2. HPLC chromatogram of standards (A), 'Beifeng' leaves (B) at 306 nm (solid line) and 288 nm (dotted line)

The numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the chromatogram indicate *trans*-piceid, *cis*-piceid, *trans*-resveratrol and *cis*-resveratrol, respectively. *Trans*-piceid and *trans*-resveratrol were detected at 306nm, and *cis*-piceid and *cis*-resveratrol at 288 nm.

Trans-resveratrol and *trans*-piceid standards were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis, MO, USA) and the Chinese Standards Research Institute, respectively. The mixed solution of the two *trans*-isomers (*trans*-resveratrol and *trans*-piceid) standards were partly transferred to the two *cis*-isomers (*cis*-resveratrol and *cis*-piceid) after UV-C irradiation at

$6 \text{ W}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$ and a distance of 30 cm for 30 min. Conversion coefficients were computed from the two *trans*-isomers, respectively, and standard curves of the four isomers were made. The total content of resveratrol was obtained by the sum of the four isomers.

2.5 Graphs and data analysis

The content of each compound was plotted over sampling periods from three replications, and experimental data was subjected to analysis of variance using the SPSS 13.0 program (SPSS, USA.). Means were separated by independent-samples T-Test at $P < 0.05$ and $P < 0.01$. All figures were produced by SigmaPlot 10.0.

3 Results

3.1 Resveratrol content in the mesophyll of leaves treated by UV-C irradiation and adjacent untreated leaves

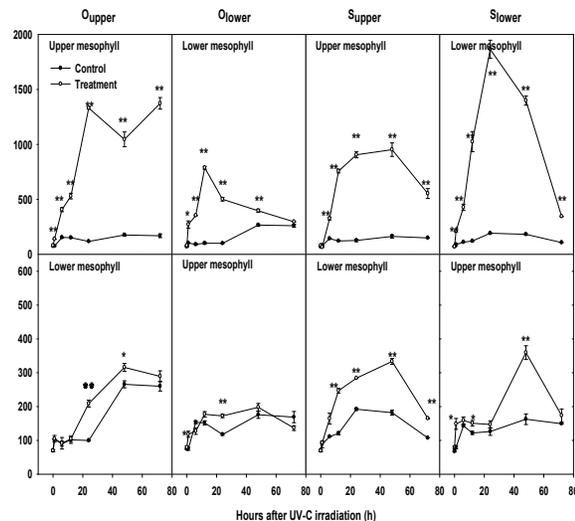


Figure 3. Total resveratrol content of the leaf mesophyll of shoots with two leaves

The first row presents results for control and treated leaves, and the second row presents results for control and corresponding untreated leaves. * indicates difference at $P < 0.05$ between control and treatment, ** indicates difference at $P < 0.01$ between control and treatment.

As shown in Figure 3, for the shoot with two leaves, whether the upper or lower leaves were treated by UV-C irradiation, and whether the two leaves were on the opposite or same side of the shoot, the total resveratrol of treated mesophyll increased significantly

in most samples by 100 fold. Notably, when the total resveratrol in treated mesophyll increased, that in untreated mesophyll also increased correspondingly, especially when the two leaves were on the same side of the shoot. The change trend of *trans*-resveratrol content in the mesophyll was similar to that of total resveratrol (**Figure 4**). For the shoot with three leaves, the total resveratrol in the mesophyll of the middle leaf increased significantly after UV-C irradiation, and those in the mesophyll of upper and the lower leaves also increased correspondingly (**Figure 5**). However, the incremental change in the lower leaves was more than in the upper leaves.

3.2 Resveratrol content changed in the phloem and xylem

It was shown in Figure 6 that the total resveratrol in phloem was almost unchanged in all the treatments compared with the controls for shoot with two leaves. Although the total resveratrol in xylem was relatively high before UV-C irradiation, almost $18.82 \mu\text{g}\cdot\text{g}^{-1}$ FW (fresh weight), the total resveratrol content in the xylem still increased significantly whether the leaf treated by UV-C irradiation was on the opposite side or the same side of the shoot. Moreover, when the upper leaf was treated by UV-C irradiation (Figure 6 O_{upper} and S_{upper}), the total resveratrol in the corresponding xylem accumulated more. And when the upper leaf on the opposite side was treated by UV-C irradiation (Figure 6 O_{upper}), resveratrol in the corresponding xylem accumulated more and reached a maximum at 48 h after UV-C irradiation. While when the upper leaf on the same side was treated (Figure 6 S_{upper}), resveratrol in the corresponding xylem reached a maximum at 12 h after treatment. However, whether UV-C irradiation treated the lower leaf on the opposite or same side of the shoot (Figure 6 O_{lower} and S_{lower}), resveratrol content in the corresponding xylem increased continuously, but the increment was less.

4 Discussion

4.1 Resveratrol accumulated in mesophyll treated by UV-C irradiation

A study showed that the light feeling spectrum of the key enzyme (resveratrol synthesis) of resveratrol synthesis belongs to the UV-C area (Langcake, 1977). Under the natural condition, UV-C irradiation is almost absorbed by the ozone layer. Therefore, in general, resveratrol content in most grape germplasms was lower. So people may use artificial UV-C irradiation to get more resveratrol. Moreover, some authors have reported that the biosynthesis of *trans*-resveratrol in grape leaves could be induced by UV-C irradiation (Langcake, 1976; Fritzeimer, 1981; Jeandet, 1991; Jeandet, 1992; Bais, 2000; Cantos, 2001; Cantos, 2002; Wang, 2010; Tang, 2011). In this study, as shown in Figure 3 and 5 the total content of resveratrol in mesophyll increased over 100 fold after treated by

UV-C irradiation, and the content of *trans*-resveratrol also increased significantly (Figure 4 and 5).

4.2 Resveratrol might be exported from biosynthesis sites and transported bi-directionally through phloem

Though grape leaves and berries could synthesize resveratrol, it was unclear whether resveratrol could be exported from its site of biosynthesis, and if the high resveratrol level in the skin of berries may come from the leaves. In our study, we try to research the problem on the shoot with two leaves or three leaves through UV-C induced high resveratrol biosynthesis. When the total resveratrol in treated leaf (mesophyll) increased after UV-C irradiation, the content of total resveratrol in adjacent untreated leaf increased correspondingly no matter that the untreated leaf was above or below the treated leaf (Figure 3 and 5). Especially, when the two leaves were on the same side of the shoot, the resveratrol content in adjacent untreated leaf increased more. Moreover, when the untreated leaf was below the treated leaf, the resveratrol content in the untreated leaf increased more. The total resveratrol in the mesophyll of upper and lower leaves increased after the middle leaf was treated by UV-C irradiation (Figure 5). These results suggested that resveratrol in grapevines could be exported from a leaf and transported to the other parts in both basal and apical directions, while the main transportation approach was basipetal and ipsilateral. In general, the *trans*-resveratrol content was low in most grapevine genotypes (Li, 2006). After UV-C treatment, *trans*-resveratrol content increased significantly in treated and untreated leaves (Figure 4 and 5). This result indicated that *trans*-resveratrol might be the transportation form for resveratrol in grapevines.

4.3 Phloem was a transportation pathway of resveratrol, while xylem was an accumulation tissue of resveratrol

Phloem had been considered as a pathway of long distance transportation of carbohydrate and nutrient reallocation (Oparka, 1999). In our work, the content of resveratrol in the shoot phloem reached $18.2 \mu\text{g}\cdot\text{g}^{-1}$ FW before UV-C irradiation, but was nearly unchanged after UV-C irradiation. Therefore, for resveratrol, the phloem might just be a transport pathway like for carbohydrate instead of an accumulation tissue.

The content of total resveratrol in shoot xylem increased significantly after leaves were treated by UV-C irradiation (Figure 6). The increased resveratrol of xylem should be from the treated leaves. Wang (2010) showed that resveratrol was distributed among different tissues/organs subject to stresses. Others have thought that secondary metabolites and host defense compounds could be translocated from an infected woody tissue to other parts (Bruno, 2006; Bruno, 2007). Bruno (2006) reported that the xylem sap accumulated phenolics and that the content might change due to fungal infection. As a result, we could conclude that

xylem was an important tissue of resveratrol accumulation. Besides, some researches proved that resveratrol might combine with other hydrophilic substances to dissolve in water (Dixon, 1999). Adrian (1997) noted that the two piceids were likely a soluble form of resveratrol in the cell, owing to the fact that hydroxystilbenes such as *trans*-resveratrol were scarcely water soluble. It had previously been suggested that *trans*-resveratrol was synthesized in the free form then rapidly glycosylated to *trans*-piceid (Jeandet, 1997), which occurred and accumulated in xylem with the transport of water. And some studies had shown that stilbenes exist as constitutive compounds in the woody parts of Vitaceae (Bavaresco, 1997), to protect wood decay (Hart, 1979) and provide antifungal activity (Jayasinghe, 2004). They may also occur in the heartwood of many plants in the Pinaceae (Schultz, 1990; Zhao, 2005; Shibutani, 2004; Harju, 2009) and Moraceae (Royer, 2010). Other components, such as flavonoids (Han, 2006; Lee, 2009; Jayasinghe, 2008), xanthenes (Jayasinghe, 2008), phenolics and lignin (Gierlinger, 2004; Harju, 2003), hemicellulose and alpha-cellulose (Harju, 2003), and diterpenoids (Zhao, 2005) also exist in the heartwood, all helping to prevent root decay, diseases and insect attack to improve wood durability. So there might be genetic differences that of xylem could accumulate resveratrol.

In addition, the content of resveratrol in xylem increased more when upper leaves were irradiated (Figure 6 O_{upper} and S_{upper}). It was possible that resveratrol was exported from leaves to xylem according to plant biology polarity. The content of total resveratrol increased and accumulated more in the xylem of the shoots with two leaves on opposite sides and the upper leaf was treated (Figure 6 O_{upper}). On the other hand, the resveratrol in the treated leaf on the same side of the shoot may have transported more to the non-treated leaf than the treated leaf on the opposite side (Figure 3).

5 Conclusion

Based on the experiments on the shoots with two or three mature leaves, we can summary that resveratrol in one tissue could be transported to the other tissues through phloem in both apical and basal direction in grapevines.

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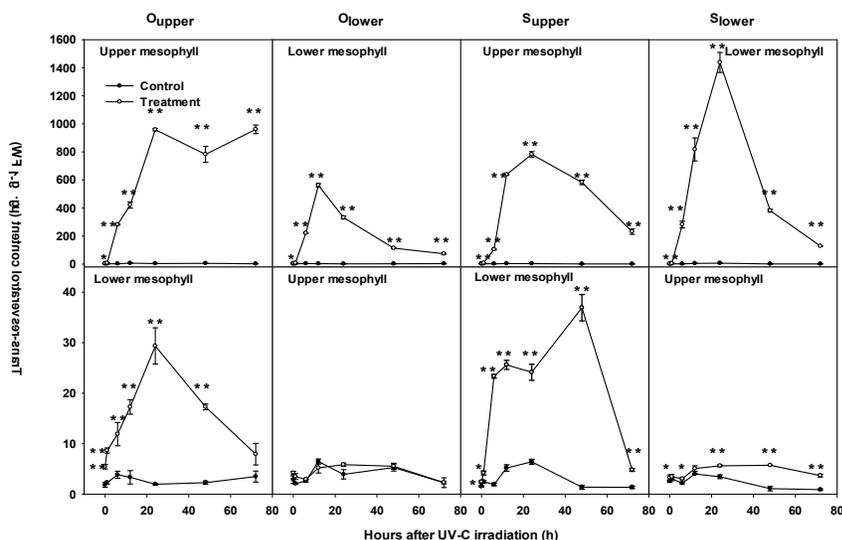


Figure 4. *Trans-resveratrol* content of the leaf mesophyll of shoots with two leaves.

The first row presents results for control and treated leaves, and the second row presents results for control and corresponding untreated leaves. * indicates difference at $P < 0.05$ between control and treatment, ** indicates difference at $P < 0.01$ between control and treatment.

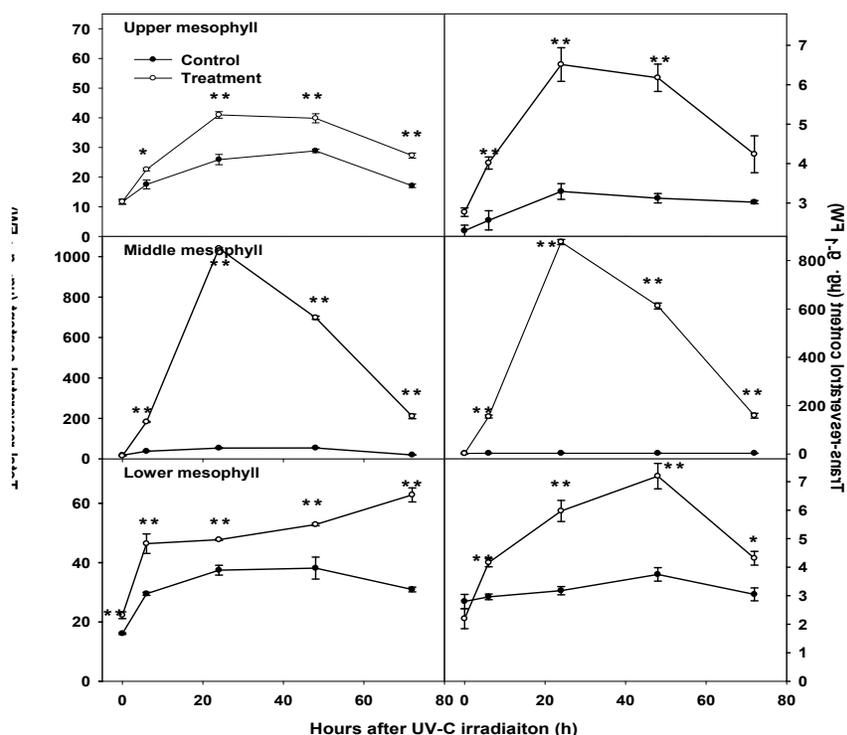


Figure 5. Total resveratrol and *trans*-resveratrol content of leaf mesophyll of shoots with three leaves
 The first row presents results for upper leaves, the second row for treated middle leaves, and the third row for lower leaves. * indicates difference at P<0.05 between control and treatment, ** indicates difference at P<0.01 between control and treatment.

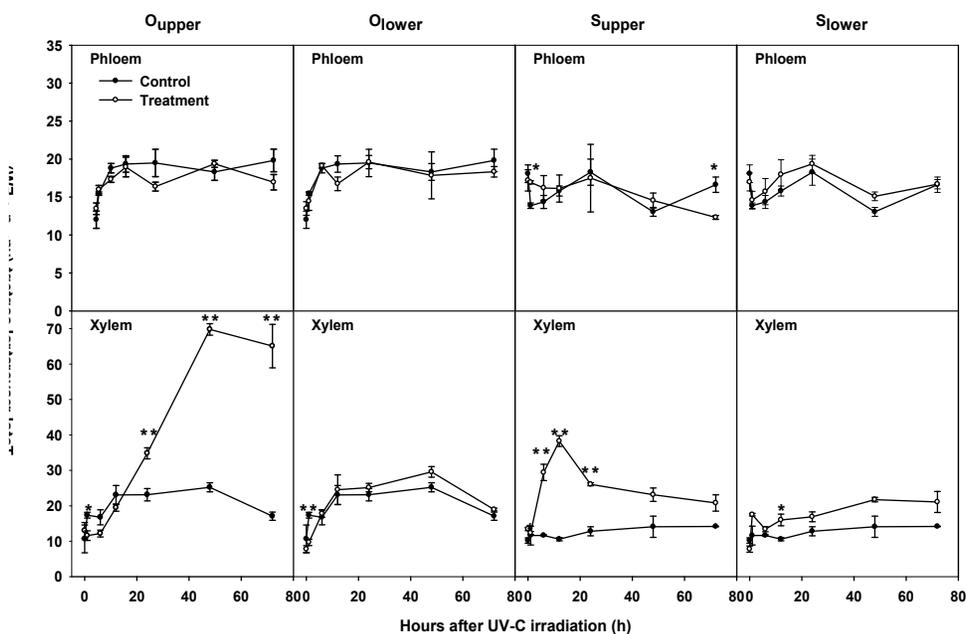


Figure 6. Total resveratrol content of the phloem and xylem between the two leaves of the shoot
 * indicates difference at P<0.05 between control and treatment, ** indicates difference at P<0.01 between control and treatment.