



**Full Length Article**

# Carbohydrate Metabolism and Antioxidant Defense during Diapause Development in Larvae of Oriental Fruit Moth (*Grapholita Molesta*) at Low Temperature

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## Abstract

Oriental fruit moth, *Grapholita molesta* (Lepidoptera: Tortricidae), is a major pest of tree fruits worldwide, overwinters in mature larva diapause. However, little is known about the physiological explanation for diapause development in this pest. In this study, we analyzed the dynamic metabolic processes of carbohydrate, protein and antioxidant enzymes in diapausing larvae, which were maintained at low temperatures of 4 and 10°C under laboratory conditions, and 24°C as control for up to 4 months. After 100 days of maintenance, diapause could be terminated at low temperatures, as indicated by the pupation rate, the larvae were more conducive to complete diapause development at 10°C compared to 4°C. During diapause, total sugar and glycogen content decreased and trehalose content increased at low temperatures; glycerol content significantly increased at 4°C, but not at 10°C; protein content did not significantly changed at low temperature, but slightly decreased during the middle phase of diapause. Additionally, the activities of SOD and CAT increased and POD activities decreased during the middle phase of diapause at low temperatures. Our results indicate that temperature and diapause intensity significantly affected the carbohydrate content and antioxidant enzymes activities of the diapausing larvae, low temperature plays a predominant role in diapause termination, and antioxidant enzymes have a similar role in the regulation of energy metabolism as carbohydrate. © 2013 Friends Science Publishers

**Keywords:** *Grapholita molesta*; Diapause development; Low temperature; Carbohydrate metabolism; Antioxidant enzyme

## Introduction

In insects, diapause is an important survival strategy to escape adverse environmental conditions when metabolic rate depresses significantly and morphogenesis ceases or significantly slows down (Košťál, 2006). Diapause is controlled by more than one environmental condition (Denlinger, 2002); of these importance of temperature on the induction, maintenance and termination of diapause has been well documented (Hondelmann & Poehling, 2007; Yamamura *et al.*, 2008; Terao *et al.*, 2012), especially low temperature can directly affect the occurrence, distribution and reproduction of some insects (Tauber *et al.*, 1986).

In the long-term course of evolution, the insects already have been selected long ago to adapt to low temperature and can successfully survive in extreme environmental conditions. Diapause is a complex adaptive response that involves many-defined physiological, biochemical and endocrinological adjustments in insects (Bale, 2002). Insects during the period of diapause development may have distinct response to low temperature (Denlinger, 1991). Many studies have documented that low molecular weight sugars and polyols are important energy

substance and intermediate metabolites in many insect species during diapause (Storey & Storey, 1991). Metabolic adjustment of these compounds can ensure effective resource utilization, keeping a dynamic balance of nutrition, enhance the level of cold hardiness of diapausing insect and thus increasing the chances of winter survival (Ring & Danks, 1994; Khani *et al.*, 2007). Accordingly, studies of the expression and activity of antioxidant enzymes in insects suggest that the regulation of prooxidant/antioxidant equilibrium affects numerous physiological processes and may impair survival growth, development, fecundity, fertility and adult life span (Felton & Summers, 1995; Pardini, 1995; Šešlija *et al.*, 1999; Jovanović-Galović *et al.*, 2007). Some studies suggest that biochemical mechanisms of cold hardiness and freezing injury may be connected with antioxidative defense (Grubor-Lajšić *et al.*, 1997; Joanišević & Storey, 1998; Stanic *et al.*, 2004; Zhao & Shi, 2010).

Oriental fruit moth, *Grapholita molesta* (Busck), is a key pest of stone fruit worldwide. This moth passes the winter as mature diapausing larvae for about 5 months under natural conditions in Northwest China. Whether the diapausing larvae can successfully overwinter, affects the population dynamics of this species in the following year.

Studies on the diapause ecology of oriental fruit moth effect of photoperiod and temperature (Dickson & Sanders, 1945; Dickson, 1949) and humidity (Chaudhry, 1956) on diapause have been well documented. However, to our knowledge, very little work has been devoted to investigate the physiological and biochemical mechanisms of diapause in this species. The dynamic biochemical processes that govern diapause of oriental fruit moth can help us understand the physiological adaptation mechanisms of diapause of this pest and provide novel targets for pest control.

The objectives of our study were to (i) assay the changes of carbohydrate content and the activities of antioxidant enzymes and (ii) obtain a dynamic overview of the biochemical metabolic of oriental fruit moth.

## Materials and Methods

### Insects

A colony of oriental fruit moth was maintained at  $24\pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ , 16 h light period, and  $60\pm 10\%$  RH under laboratory conditions. Founder individuals for this colony were collected from the local abandoned pear orchards in August 2009. Larvae maintained on green thinning apples with a method similar to the one described by Pree (1985). After three generations, their progeny were used for the next experiments.

Newly hatched larvae were reared under a 12 h light period at  $24^\circ\text{C}$ , 98-100% mature larvae entered diapause (Dickson, 1949). In our study, 14 days after cessation of feeding, the larvae that had not pupariated were regarded as being in diapause and completed prediapause development (day zero), and then used for the experiments. The diapause larvae were maintained at the following temperature regimes: (1) at  $24^\circ\text{C}$ , 12 h light period to retain the diapause state as controls and (2) exposed to 4 and  $10^\circ\text{C}$  for up to 4 months (30 days as a month) in darkness, respectively. During this stage, the larvae were subsampled every 20 days, part of them were placed under 16 h light period at  $24^\circ\text{C}$  and observed the rate of pupation to determine diapause termination, another part of them were stored at  $-20^\circ\text{C}$  until used for biochemical measurements.

### Estimation of Total Sugar, Glycogen and Protein

Larvae were weighed and dried at  $100^\circ\text{C}$  for 1 h. After cooling, added 100  $\mu\text{L}$  of saturated  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$  and 200  $\mu\text{L}$  of methanol and crushed with a glass rod. The rod was rinsed with 100  $\mu\text{L}$  of water and then with 3 mL of methanol: chloroform (1:1 v/v). If two layers formed, 300  $\mu\text{L}$  of methanol were added and centrifuged, the precipitate was extracted twice with 1 mL, 500  $\mu\text{L}$  of 66% respectively of ethanol saturated with  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$  and centrifuged. The pooled supernatant was taken for measurement of total sugars. The precipitate was kept at  $55^\circ\text{C}$  for 5 min and dissolved by adding 500  $\mu\text{L}$  of 30% KOH, then the mixture boiled for 20

min. After cooling, extracted twice in 1 mL of 95% ethanol, 0.5 mL of water and 1 mL of 95% ethanol, respectively, and then centrifuged. The pooled supernatant was taken for measurement of protein, the precipitate was dissolved in 2 mL water, taken for measurement of glycogen (Zhou et al., 2004).

**Total sugar assay:** A 300  $\mu\text{L}$  sample of total sugar was diluted to 500  $\mu\text{L}$  with water were mixed with 2 mL of 0.2% anthrone solution, then boiled for 15 min. After cooling, absorbance of the reaction mixture was taken at 620 nm and compared with the calibration curve obtained by analysis of glucose standards.

**Glycogen assay:** A 500  $\mu\text{L}$  sample of glycogen was mixed with 2 mL of 0.2% anthrone solution and then boiled for 15 min. After cooling, absorbance of the reaction mixture was taken at 620 nm and compared with the calibration curve obtained by analysis of glucose standards (Moghadam et al., 2011).

**Trehalose assay:** A 500  $\mu\text{L}$  sample of total sugar added 1 mL 0.15 M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  and boiled for 10 min. After cooling, added 1 mL 30% KOH and boiled for 10 min. After cooling, the mixture was mixed with 2 mL of 0.2% anthrone solution and boiled for 15 min. After cooling, absorbance of 620 nm was read and compared with the calibration curve obtained by analysis of glucose standard (Wu et al., 2004).

**Protein assay:** A 50  $\mu\text{L}$  sample of protein was diluted to 1 mL with water, added 5 mL of Coomassie brilliant blue G-250 solution. After 2 min, absorbance was read at 595 nm and compared with the calibration curve obtained by analysis of bovine serum albumin standard (Bradford, 1976).

**Glycerol assay:** Larvae were weighed and homogenized with 500  $\mu\text{L}$  water and centrifuged for 10 min at 5,000 g, the precipitate was dissolved in 500  $\mu\text{L}$  water and centrifuged again. The pooled supernatant was used for measurement of glycerol. A 300  $\mu\text{L}$  sample of glycerol was diluted to 1 mL, added oxidant (325 mg sodium periodate dissolved in 125 mL of water, added with 20 g of ammonium acetate & 15 mL of glacial acetic acid followed by dilution of mixture was diluted to 250 mL with water) 2 mL and chromogenic reagent (1 mL acetylacetone diluted to 250 mL with isopropyl alcohol) 2 mL at  $60^\circ\text{C}$  for 15 min. After cooling, absorbance was taken at 420 nm and glycerol content was calculated from the standard (Wu & Yuan, 2004).

**Antioxidant enzyme assay:** Superoxide dismutase (SOD), peroxidase (POD) and catalase (CAT) activities were determined using assay kits (Nanjing Jiancheng Bioengineering Institute, Nanjing, China). Larvae were weighed and homogenized in 10 volumes of ice-cold 50 mM phosphate buffer (pH 7.0), then centrifuged for 10 min at 12,000 g at  $4^\circ\text{C}$ , the supernatant was taken as the enzyme source.

SOD activity was measured by inhibition of superoxide radical production in a xanthine-xanthine oxidase reaction. One unit of SOD activity was defined as the amount of enzyme required to inhibit the rate of SOD by

50% per mg protein in 1 mL reaction mixture at 37°C. POD activity was measured by measuring change in absorbance at 420 nm, according to the principle of POD catalyzed H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. One unit of POD activity was defined as the amount of enzyme that converted 1 µg of substrate per mg protein per min at 37°C. CAT activity was determined by measuring the disappearance of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> at 240 nm. One unit of CAT activity was defined as the amount of enzyme required to degrade H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in the reagent at the absorbance of 0.5–0.55 per g protein per second at 25°C. The enzyme protein concentrations were measured with the method of Bradford (1976) with bovine serum albumin as a protein standard.

### Statistical Analysis

All experiments were replicated three times for each treatment with two larvae. The values were expressed as the mean ± SEM. All data were analyzed by one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Tukey's multiple comparison test, using SPSS version 19.0 for Windows.  $P < 0.05$  was considered significant.

## Results

### Effect of Cold Exposure on Diapause Termination

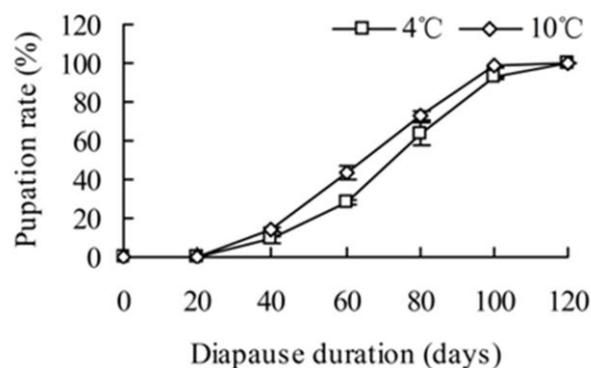
The pupation rate of diapause larvae was significant differences at 4 and 10°C, 10°C acted to terminate diapause more quickly ( $P < 0.01$ ). Diapause larvae could not pupate at 24°C until day 120 (Fig. 1).

### Total Sugar

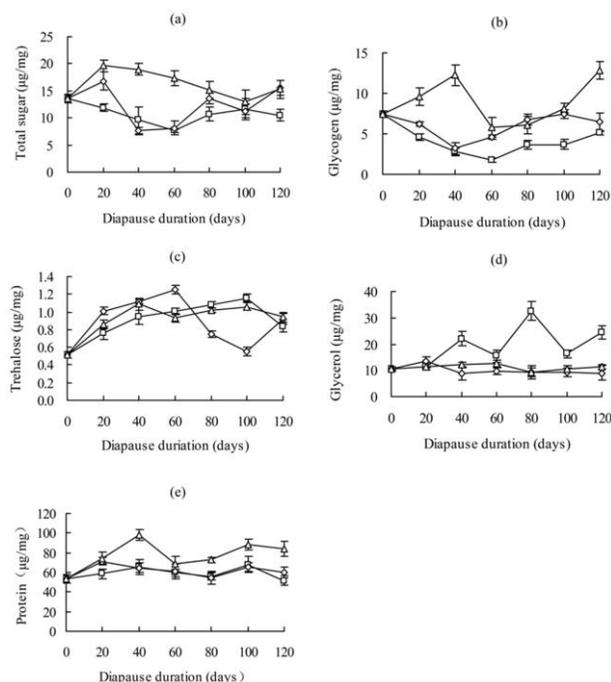
Total sugar content was significantly lower at low temperatures than that of at 24°C ( $P < 0.01$ ). At 4°C, total sugar content continuously decreased until day 60, reached the lowest level of 7.58 µg/mg (decreased by 44.47%). At 10°C, total sugar content significantly increased on day 20 and at day 40, reached the lowest level of 7.65 µg/mg (decreased by 43.96%). At 24°C, total sugar content was significantly increased on day 20, then decreased gradually from days 20 to 100, reached the lowest level of 12.90 µg/mg and decreased by 5.49% (Fig. 2a).

### Glycogen

Glycogen content was significantly lower at 4 and 10°C compared to 24°C ( $P < 0.01$ ). The changes of glycogen were fairly similar by day 100 at 4 and 10°C, initially continuously decreased and then increased. The lowest value of glycogen 1.76 µg/mg was on day 60, decreased by 76.34% at 4°C and 3.18 µg/mg on day 40, decreased by 57.26% at 10°C. At 24°C, glycogen increased significantly until day 40, decreased greatly on day 60, reached the lowest value of 5.79 µg/mg and decreased by 22.18% (Fig. 2b).



**Fig. 1:** Effects of exposure to low temperature on pupation rate in diapause larvae of oriental fruit moth at 24°C. The number of larvae analyzed for each transfer day ranged between 60 and 100



**Fig. 2:** Total sugar (a), glycogen (b), trehalose (c), glycerol (d) and protein (e) contents of diapause larvae of oriental fruit moth during diapause development at three different temperatures 4°C (-□-), 10°C (-◇-) and 24°C (-△-) for up to 120 days

### Trehalose

Trehalose content increased significantly during diapause development at 4 and 10°C, as well as at 24°C ( $P < 0.01$ ). At 4°C, trehalose content consistent increased on day 100, reaching a peak of 1.16 µg/mg and increased 2.23-folds. At 10°C, trehalose content significantly increased by day 60, reaching a peak of 1.25 µg/mg and increased 2.40-folds. At 24°C, trehalose content significantly increased at the first 40

days, then decreased slightly on day 60 and finally remained relatively stable level until day 120 (Fig. 2c).

### Glycerol

Glycerol content was significantly affected by low temperature ( $P < 0.01$ ). At 4°C, glycerol content significantly increased to a peak of 22.10 µg/mg, 32.57 µg/mg, and 24.54 µg/mg on day 40, 80, and 120, respectively, and increased more than two-folds. At 10°C, glycerol content increased on day 20, then decreased greatly on day 40, and finally remained constant level until day 120. At 24°C, Glycerol content slightly increased at the first 60 days, then decreased greatly on day 80 (Fig. 2d).

### Protein

Protein content was significantly lower at cold temperature compared to 24°C ( $P < 0.01$ ). The changes of protein was fairly similar at 4 and 10°C, initially increased, by day 40 at 4°C and day 20 at 10°C, then decreased until day 80. At 24°C, protein content increased significantly by day 40, and decreased greatly on day 60, then gradually increased until day 100 (Fig. 2e).

### SOD

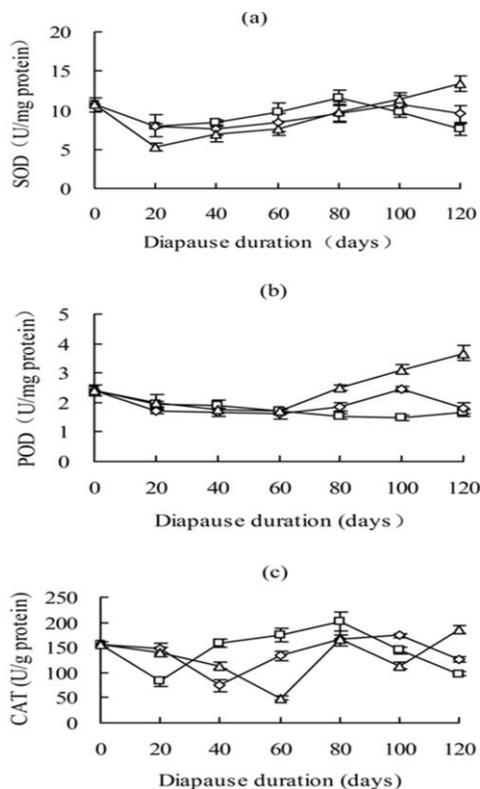
At 4°C, SOD activity decreased on day 20, then continuously increased to the highest level of 11.55 U/mg proteins on day 80 and increased by 45.28%. At 10°C, SOD activity changed followed the same trend as were observed at 4°C, increased to the highest level of 10.73 U/mg protein on day 100, and increased by 34.97%. At 24°C, SOD activity significantly decreased by day 20, then consistent increased to the highest level of 13.41 U/mg protein until day 120 (Fig. 3a).

### POD

At 4°C, POD activity changed insignificantly by day 100, and slightly increased on day 120 ( $P < 0.05$ ). At 10°C, POD activity consistent decreased at a very low rate by day 60, then increased until day 100, and significantly decreased on day 120 ( $P < 0.05$ ). At 24°C, POD activity consistently decreased by day 60, then significantly increased to the highest level on day 120 (Fig. 3b).

### CAT

At 4°C, initially CAT activity decreased on day 20, then rose sharply and reached a peak on day 80. At 10°C, CAT activity decreased greatly on day 40, then significantly increased and reached a peak on day 80 ( $P < 0.01$ ). At 24°C, CAT activity consistent decreased by day 60, then rose sharply on day 80, and significantly decreased on day 100 ( $P < 0.01$ ) (Fig. 3c).



**Fig. 3:** The activities of SOD (a), POD (b) and CAT (c) in diapause larvae of oriental fruit moth during diapause development at three different temperatures 4°C (□), 10°C (◇) and 24°C (△) for up to 120 days

## Discussion

In this study, diapause larvae of oriental fruit moth could be terminated by exposing the larvae to low temperature for a sufficiently long times which responded to 4 and 10°C as an environmental stimulus for the termination of diapause. It seems to be more conducive to complete diapause development at 10°C compared to 4°C. The result indicated that diapause intensity of diapausing larvae at 4°C was higher than that of at 10°C.

During diapause development, the initiation phase of diapause was considered to span a period of approximately 20 days. During this period, large amounts of energy sources (trehalose, glycerol & protein) were stored, and antioxidant enzymes (SOD & CAT) activities decreased simultaneously. During the maintenance phase (>20 days), high levels of cryoprotectants (glycerol) were accumulated in diapause larvae, whilst SOD and CAT activities gradually increased. These phenomena showed that antioxidant enzymes have a similar role in the regulation of energy metabolism as carbohydrate. During diapause, glycogen and protein were converted into other substances, while the activity of SOD and CAT were increased, which enhanced the protective

ability to regulate cold resistance of diapause larvae.

Studies have showed glycogen is used as an energy source material often gradually reduce when insect is overwintering (Goto *et al.*, 1997; Košťál *et al.*, 2004; Bemani *et al.*, 2012); our results also supported this point. At 4 and 10°C, in general, the levels of glycogen had gone through two phases. It degraded gradually in the early stage and continuously increased in the late stage. A lowest value of glycogen appearing at different times indicated that the metabolic rate was different in diapause larvae at different low temperatures. The utilization rate of glycogen at 4°C was significantly higher than that of at 10°C. A total sugar level was also decreased at low temperature with a decrease of glycogen in diapausing larvae. Trehalose, the major insect blood sugar, has previously been considered a cryoprotectant in some insect species (Storey & Storey, 1991; Goto *et al.*, 2001; Košťál *et al.*, 2001). We found, not only at 4 and 10°C but also at 24°C, trehalose content significantly increased and maintained at high level, but the concentrations of trehalose of oriental fruit moth was much lower than the levels reported in other cold hardy insects (Storey & Storey, 1991; Goto *et al.*, 2001; Košťál *et al.*, 2001). This indicated that trehalose may have no real role as cryoprotectant and not closely related to cold hardiness. This phenomenon has also been observed in several other insects (Li *et al.*, 2001; Khani *et al.*, 2007). Glycerol is the most common low molecular weight cryoprotectant found in overwintering insects (Lee, 1991), this is also true in diapause larvae of oriental fruit moth. Glycerol level was significantly increased at 4°C and could stop synthesizing when accumulate to a certain concentration, while at 10 and 24°C, glycerol content did not significantly accumulate. The results show that between glycerol and low temperature have certain relationship, only reach at determinate low temperature, the synthesis of glycerol can be induced. Protein level did not significantly change at low temperature, initially increased, then slightly decline during diapause development. This showed that protein as a structural component and biological function of macromolecules in insect have associated with diapause development (Lee & Denlinger, 1996), and can transform into other substances to enhance themselves protection.

Studies have showed that there are some antioxidant enzymes in physiological and biochemical metabolic of insect, and play an important role in scavenging oxygen free radicals, protect the insect avoiding damage (Trofimov, 1975; Felton & Summers, 1995; Pardini, 1995; Wang *et al.*, 2012). In diapause larvae of oriental fruit moth, SOD and CAT activities were dropped in early diapause, and then gradually increased with the extension of the time of diapause. SOD and CAT activities were significant higher at low temperature compared to 24°C, the results show that temperature and diapause intensity have significant effect on the activity of POD, SOD and CAT, the low temperature can promote the activity while high temperature can decrease it. However, it seems that different temperatures

had no significant effect on the activity of POD by day 60. Diapause larvae in the early stage of diapause, the activities of SOD and CAT decreased, it can be related to metabolic intensity in insects. When insects entered diapause, its metabolic rate declined (Košťál *et al.*, 2004), inducing the ability to synthesis of SOD and CAT was also decline. As other organisms, it has a coordinating role in the activities change of SOD, POD and CAT of diapause larvae, also is a evolved mechanisms of long-term adaptation.

In conclusion, there are different patterns of biochemical changes in diapause development of oriental fruit moth exposed to 4 and 10°C. Accumulation and utilization of carbohydrate were significantly affected by the temperature and diapause intensity, and some biochemical substances could only occur under determinate temperature. Antioxidant enzymes have a similar role in the regulation of energy metabolism as carbohydrate.

### Acknowledgement

We thank some undergraduate students for their help in rearing the oriental fruit moth larvae in our laboratory. This study is supported by the “948” project (2006-G54) of China’s Ministry of Agriculture.

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(Received 27 April 2012; Accepted 24 September 2012)