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Promotion of Seedling Growth of Seeds of Rice (*Oryza sativa* L. cv. Hitomebore) by Treatment with H_2O_2 before Sowing

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Abstract: High germinability of seeds and establishment of young seedlings in rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) are necessary for direct seeding in paddy fields. We investigated whether germinability and seedling growth were promoted by treatment of rice seeds (cv. Hitomebore) with hydrogen peroxide solution (H_2O_2) during the imbibition for 24 h. H_2O_2 treatment with 50 mM H_2O_2 promoted seed germination, and seedling growth (shoot length, root length and shoot fresh weight) in agar culture under a low temperature condition $(18^{\circ}C \text{ day}/14^{\circ}C \text{ night})$. Seedling growth was promoted by H_2O_2 treatment not only under the low-temperature condition but also under a normal $(23^{\circ}C \text{ day}/18^{\circ}C \text{ night})$ temperature condition. Furthermore, H_2O_2 treatment promoted seedling growth under a flooding condition in a greenhouse. These results suggest that H_2O_2 treatment of rice seeds during the imbibition is advantageous for direct seeding. We discussed the relation between the promotion of the seed germinability and the seedling growth under a low-temperature condition, and the expression of some genes encoding ROS scavenger enzymes induced by H_2O_2 treatment.

Keywords: Ascorbate peroxidase, Growth of young seedling, Hydrogen peroxide treatment, Reactive oxygen species, Rice cultivar

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