Preharvest salicylic acid and delay ripening of ‘superior seedless’ grapes

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ABSTRACT

The experiment was conducted to study the effect of salicylic acid (SA) treatment (0, 1, 2, 4 mM SA) on Vitis vinifera L. ‘Superior seedless’ which conducted during two seasons 2014 and 2015. The study aims to delay cluster repining during shelf-life at room temperature for four days. The results showed that SA treatments were significantly effective in reducing weight loss. Berry shatter, rachis browning index, while it preserved another quality parameter high such as berry firmness, separation force, total phenol content (TPC) and color hue angle during shelf-life for four days. The previous results were significantly observed with SA at 4 mM compared to control and other SA concentrations. However, total solid content (SSC%), titratable acidity (TAA%), SSC/TA ratio was significantly affected by SA at 4 mM up to end the shelf-life period. In contrast, the lowest values of carotenoid content and membrane electrolyte leakage (IEL%) during shelf-life compared with other SA concentrations. Therefore, SA is effective for delaying fruit ripening and maintain cluster quality of ‘Superior seedless’ grapes.

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1. Introduction

‘Superior seedless’ is one of the earlier seedless table grapes grown under Mediterranean climate and it is well adapted to Egyptian conditions. It harvested at yellow-white flesh and green skin color stage as European market requests [1]. The table grape is a non-climacteric fruit with low physiological activity. Also, it is sensitive to water loss and fungal infection during handling [2]. Even it is one of the major sources of polyphenols among fruit. It being relevant to appearance, test, and flavor as well as to the health maintaining fruit quality [1]. Therefore, it is imperative to develop a compatible strategy that would improve physical and chemical quality features alongside maintaining postharvest quality during subsequent shelf-life [3].

Salicylic acid (SA) is an endogenous plant growth regulator of phenolic nature. It plays some important roles in the regulation of plant growth development and enhances plant vigor under biotic and abiotic stresses [4]. SA plays an essential role in controlling berry quality such as color, flavor, astringency and bitterness [5], and enhance berry size [6], weight [7] and berry firmness [8]. Mainly, SA positively effects on reducing fruit respiration and ethylene biosynthesis [9] weight loss, berry decay and softening rate during storage and shelf-life [8].

The present study was conducted to investigate the effect of preharvest treatment of SA on delaying berry ripening during the marketing of Superior Seedless grapes.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Experimental procedure

The experiment was performed on 9-year-old own rooted grapevines (Vitis vinifera L.) cv. Superior Seedless planted 2 × 3 meter in sandy soil in a commercial orchard near Monufia Gov. Egypt. 36 vines were selected to be as uniform as possible. All vines received the same agricultural practices as productive program design. Triton B as a wetting agent at 0.1% was added to SA solution. Vines were sprayed by SA solution at the first light. Superior seedless vines were treated by SA at four concentrations 0, 1, 2, and 4 mM [10].

This investigation was carried out during two seasons 2014 and 2015. To study the effect of foliar salicylic acid (SA) application on physical and chemical quality attribute of berries of Superior Seedless grapes. Samples were picked when the soluble solid content (SSC%) in berry juice at 17% in average. Cluster samples (220 clusters) were divided into two main patches. The first patch was formed with 120 clusters, each treatment 24 clusters for measuring physical and chemical quality attribute during shelf-life for four days. The second cluster sample patch (100 clusters) for non-distractive measurements such as rachis browning index, water losses%, and berry shattering%. Samples were handled to Pomology depart. Fac. of Agric. Mansoura Univ. and its stored at room temperature (28 ± 1°C and air humidity average during shelf-life period 44 ± 2%).

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2.2. Physical properties evaluation

Quality elements were determined, berries were randomly removed from several cluster samples and were divided into three replicates to measure soluble solid content (SSC%) using Carleiss hand refractometer, acidity as tartaric acid (TA) was determined by titration with 0.1N NaOH [11], and SSC/TA ratio was calculated as defined maturity index. Berry firmness and separation force were recorded using fruit texture Effegi-penetrometer supplemented with a plunger 2 mm diameter penetrator. Firmness and separation force of berries were expressed as a percentage. Berry shattering percentage and rachis browning index [12]. The color was recorded as described by [13]. Thereafter, all images were analyzed by using software Image Ver. 1.43u USA to get RGB signals to calculate hue angle of clusters according to [14].

2.3. Chemical properties evaluation

Rachis membrane electrolyte leakage was measured using a conductivity meter and the results were expressed as a percentage as described by [15]. Total phenols were determined by Folin-Ciocalteu method, based on colorimetric oxidation/reduction reaction of phenols [16]. Total carotenoids content was spectrophotometrically measured at wavelength 452.5 nm using spectrophotometer [17].

2.4. Statistical analysis

Data for evaluation of parameters in time were analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) when shelf-life time and treatment factors are considered. The means were compared using the least significant differences (LSD) at P < 0.05 level of probability. The statistical software package GenStat Ver. 11 (Lawes Agriculture Trust, Rothamsted Experimental station, UK) was used.

3. Result and discussions

3.1. Physical quality analysis

The physiological water losses of all SA treatments during 4 days of shelf-life, but the weight losses of increase in different among the treatments (Table 1). Both SA treatments 2 and 4 mM exhibited a comparatively lower weight loss compared with 0 and 1 mM SA at end of shelf-life period. It was at 4th day of shelf-life: 0 mM = 26.16%; 1 mM = 27.84%; 2 mM = 14.27% and 4 mM = 14.60% of the initial weight. SA is considering as an electron donor produce free radicals which prevent normal respiration thus leading to lower weight loss [8]. Further SA inhibits ethylene biosynthesis or action by decreasing respiration [9].

The percentage berry shatter was significantly affected by SA treatments (Table 1) increased during shelf-life and decreased with vines treated by 4 mM SA at 4th day (3.06%) compared with all treatments (0 mM = 11.97%; 1 mM = 6.83% and 2 mM = 4.66%). It might be that SA was delayed ripening tissues of pedicels of berries during shelf-life. So, the quality was maintained with a higher level of SA [18]. Moreover, SA treatments increased the activity of antioxidants enzymes capacity in plant cell after harvesting leading to delay fruit ripening process in mango [19] and peach [20].

Rachis quality of bunches has been investigating extensively among producers and exporters because of its high impact on the cluster freshness that determines consumers [21]. SA treatment 4 mM (RBI = 1.90 slight browning incidence) presented a significant reduction in rachis browning during shelf-life up to 4th day compared with 2 mM (RBI = 2.57), 1 mM (RBI = 3.43 Moderate incidence) and 0 mM (RBI = 4 severe incidence). It is clear that SA treatment at 4 mM has a good potential beneficial against rachis browning of detached grape clusters by reducing water loss and suppression of polyphenol oxidase enzymes activity, it might also maintaining rachises healthy [20].

Superior seedless grapes harvested in yellow-white flesh and green skin color which is becoming in high demand to Europe from Egyptian market. Date in Table 1 present the changes in degrees of clusters h° during shelf-life. All SA treatments decreased significantly during the shelf-life period. It was at 0 mM (h° = 49) com-

Table 1
Cluster weight losses, berry shattering%, rachis browning index, Hue angle (h°), Berry firmness (N) and separating force (N) of ‘Superior Seedless’ grapes during four-day shelf-life at 2014 and 2015 seasons.

| Measurements | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Cluster weight losses % | 0.00 | 8.66 | 20.14 | 26.16 | 0.00 | 9.50 | 18.81 | 27.84 |
| Treatments | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| LSD (P < 0.05) | ... | 6.76 | 6.19 | 4.44 | LSD (P < 0.05) | 1.80 | 7.00 | 4.90 | 4.30|
| Berry shattering % | 1.10 | 3.09 | 7.69 | 11.97 | 0.81 | 2.13 | 3.18 | 6.83 |
| Treatments | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| LSD (P < 0.05) | 0.13 | 0.51 | 0.86 | 1.07 |
| Rachis browning index | 1.00 | 1.17 | 2.07 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 1.03 | 1.27 | 2.57 |
| Treatments | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| LSD (P < 0.05) | ... | 0.14 | 0.45 | 0.75 | LSD (P < 0.05) | 1.02 |

Means in a column are significantly different at (P < 0.05) according to LSD. Each value represent mean of 3 replicates during two seasons of 2014 and 2015.
Table 2: Effect of postharvest salicylic acid (SA) application on SSC%, AT%, SSC/AT ratio, total carotenes, total phenol content and membrane electrolyte leakage of 'Superior Seedless' grapes during four-day shelf-life at 2014 and 2015 seasons.

| Measurements | Shelf-life time (days) | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 |
|--------------|------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| TA (mg %)    |                        | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| TPC (mg GAR 100 g FW) |                  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| SSC/TA ratio |                        | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| Ion leakage percentage |                  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |

Means in a column are significantly different at (P < 0.05) according to LSD. Each value represent mean of 3 replicates during two seasons of 2014 and 2015.

The SSC and TA in berries were significantly affected by SA treatments. The value in the fresh cluster as important flavor and quality parameters. All SA treatments presented lower SSC contents compared to control at harvest time (Table 2). The higher reduction in SSC was with vines treated SA at 4 mM at harvest time. The SSC content increased slightly during the shelf-life period in all treatments. It could be illustrated that increasing water losses during shelf-life [3]. TA content of the berries initially declined during 4 days of shelf-life. Higher two concentration (2 and 4 mM) of SA presented high content of TA at 1st up to 4th day compared to control. SSC/TA ratio was observed higher in 4 mM SA compared to other concentration of SA and control. It might be that SA suppresses the rate of respiration and ethylene biosynthesis [9], which might account for retardation of ripening-related changes.

All berries samples treated and nontreated SA treatment, carotene was increased at 2nd day of and decreased up to 4th day. The highest carotene content was observed in (Table 2) control and decreased with increasing SA concentration it might be explained that SA stimulates synthesis of carotenoids and xanthophylls [23]. Accordingly, SA as a treatment for grapevines berries delayed or inhibited ripening when applied at variation stage [24].

The changes of TPC in grape skins during shelf-life are presented in Table 2. All treatment presented higher TPC at 1st day and it decreased continually up to 4th day of shelf-life. Control treatment presented highly decreases in TPC when vine treated by SA (4 mM) presented higher content of TPC at harvest time (1st day). The different was observed which might be illustrated that higher concentration of SA maintained the highest TPC [25].

One of the common parameter during cold storage and shelf-life is increased membrane permeability which is used as an indicator of membrane damage. SA at 4 mM treated vine clusters presented a significantly lower MEL at 1st day (1.33%) up to a 4th day (2.00%) of the shelf-life period compared to control (3.33% up to 22.33%) and other SA concentrations during shelf-life. SA treatment delayed the respiration, and also inhibited ethylene production [26].

In general, SA experiment showed the effectiveness of all postharvest treatments on the 'Superior seedless' table grapes quality during shelf-life. It improved the physical and chemical characteristics such as berry firmness and separation force possibly through inhibition of ethylene biosynthesis. Chemically, SA treatment maintained TPC amount during shelf-life with a high level of SA. This reaction may decrease the cell wall degradation by decreasing the cell wall hydrolases enzymes during ripening fruits.
and less IL. So, no breakdown of cluster rachis tissue occurred, therefore, browning incidence becomes less (moderate level; browning index) and lower rate water loss during the shelf-life. On the other hand, total phenol decreased slightly according to inhibit PPO by SA during ripening that reflects to increase fruit color quality (\( R^2 \)). Completely, SA treatment can be easily and safe usage to delaying/shifting ripening processes of grape with improving cluster fruits quality during shelf-life.

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