

1 The chemical landscape of leaf surfaces and its 2 interaction with the atmosphere

3 *Rachele Ossola¹ and Delphine Farmer¹*

4 ¹ Department of Chemistry, Colorado State University, 80523 Fort Collins, Colorado (USA)

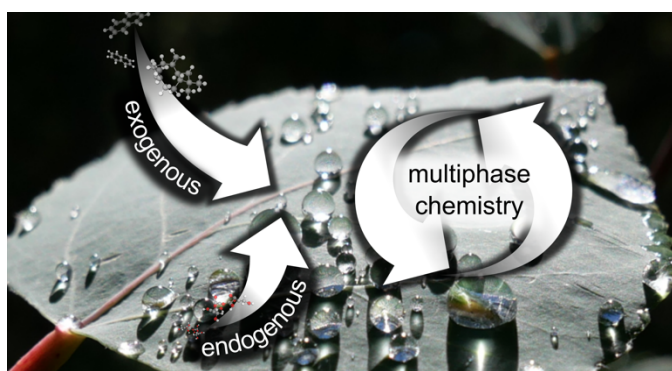
5 * Corresponding authors: Rachele Ossola (rachele.ossola@colostate.edu) and Delphine Farmer
6 (delphine.farmer@colostate.edu)

7 **Abstract**

8 Atmospheric chemists have historically treated plant leaves as inert surfaces that merely emit
9 volatile hydrocarbons through their stomata. However, a growing body of evidence suggests that
10 leaves are ubiquitous substrates for multiphase reactions of atmospheric relevance – implying the
11 presence of chemicals on their surfaces. This Review provides an evidence-based overview of the
12 chemistry and reactivity of the leaf surface’s “chemical landscape”, the dynamic ensemble of
13 molecules and particles that cover plant leaves. We classified chemicals as endogenous
14 (originating from the leaf and its biome) or exogenous (delivered from the environment),
15 highlighting the biological, geographical, and meteorological factors driving their relative
16 contributions. Based on available data, we predicted $\gg 2 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$ of organics on a typical leaf,
17 leading to a global estimate of $\gg 3 \text{ Tg}$ available for multiphase reactions. Our work also
18 highlighted three major knowledge gaps: (i) the key (but still overlooked) role of ambient water in
19 enabling the leaching of endogenous substances and mediating aqueous chemistry; (ii) the role of

20 phyllosphere biofilms in shaping leaf surface chemistry and reactivity; (iii) the paucity of studies
 21 on the multiphase reactivity of main atmospheric oxidants with leaf-adsorbed chemicals. Although
 22 biased towards available data, we hope this Review will spark a renewed interest on the leaf
 23 surface's chemical landscape and motivate the establishment of multidisciplinary collaborations
 24 to move the field forward.

25 **TOC art**



26

27 **Table of contents**

28 1. Introduction..... 4
 29 2. Leaf surface..... 7
 30 2.1 General anatomy of leaves and secretory structures..... 7
 31 2.1.1 Trichomes 8
 32 2.1.2 Hydathodes 9
 33 2.1.3 Resin ducts 10
 34 2.2 Leaf cuticles 10
 35 2.2.1 Chemistry and morphology..... 10
 36 2.2.2 Reactivity 13
 37 3. Chemicals from the plant and its biome 15
 38 3.1 Glandular trichomes..... 16
 39 3.1.1 Chemicals..... 16
 40 3.2.1 Reactivity 17
 41 3.2 Guttation fluids 18

42	3.2.1 Chemical composition	18
43	3.2.2 Reactivity	19
44	3.3 Resin ducts	19
45	3.3.1 Chemicals.....	19
46	3.3.2 Reactivity	20
47	3.4 Phyllosphere microorganisms.....	21
48	3.4.1 Chemicals.....	21
49	3.4.2 Reactivity	22
50	4. Chemicals from the environment.....	23
51	4.1 Dry deposition.....	25
52	4.1.1 Particulate matter	25
53	4.1.2 Pollen	26
54	4.1.3 Soil particles.....	28
55	4.1.4 Semi-volatile compounds.....	28
56	4.2 Wet deposition	32
57	4.2.1 Hydrometeors.....	32
58	4.2.2 Sprays for agricultural use	37
59	4.3 Deposition facilitated by hydrometeors	38
60	4.4 Reactivity	39
61	4.4.1 Observed leaf-surface reactivity of anthropogenic SVOCs.....	39
62	4.4.2 Expected leaf-surface reactivity of SVOCs and particles.....	42
63	5. Leaf wetness.....	43
64	5.1 Types of leaf wetness and their occurrence	44
65	5.2 Mechanisms of cuticle permeability in the presence and absence of leaf wetness.....	46
66	5.3 Bi-directional exchange of compounds through the cuticle	49
67	5.4. Bi-directional exchange of atmospheric gases through leaf wetness.....	51
68	6. Overview of leaf surfaces' chemical landscape and its reactivity	52
69	6.1 Relative contributions of exogenous and endogenous chemicals.....	53
70	6.1.1 Expected contributions from different compound classes.....	53
71	6.1.2 Case-studies	57
72	6.2 Observed and expected multiphase reactions on leaf surfaces	60
73	6.2.1 General overview of literature findings	60
74	6.2.2 Towards a unified view of leaf surface reactivity.....	63
75	7. Conclusions.....	68

76 **1. Introduction**

77 Vegetation covers much of the Earth's surface, with plant leaves occupying an area comparable to
78 the total land surface of our planet.¹ While the atmospheric chemistry community has long
79 recognized the role of plants as sources of biogenic volatile organic compounds, the potential for
80 their surfaces, including leaves, to act as multiphase reaction sites has been underappreciated. Over
81 the past few years, observational studies indicated that chemical reactions on leaves influence
82 atmospheric concentrations of reactive trace gases, but efforts to confirm the occurrence of these
83 processes and understand their mechanisms have been limited. This Review fills this gap by
84 providing an overview of compound classes present on plant surfaces and their possible role in
85 atmospheric chemistry processes.

86 Four sets of observations indicate that leaf surfaces may act as sites for reactions of atmospheric
87 relevance. First, a few investigations described a large and ubiquitous source of formic acid in
88 forest canopies²⁻⁵ and grasslands⁶ but the origin of this compound has yet to be identified. Recent
89 work showed that aqueous chemistry can mediate formic acid formation in clouds⁷ and some
90 authors suggested that an analogous process involving wet surfaces may occur in terrestrial
91 ecosystems.^{8,9} Formic acid sources are still poorly represented in models, with implications for
92 predicting rainwater acidity, gas-particle partitioning, and aerosol formation.^{10,11} Second, other
93 research groups have observed substantial discrepancies between measured and modeled ozone
94 fluxes on plants at high relative humidity, and posited the presence of a dry deposition mechanism
95 involving ozonation of organic compounds present on leaf surfaces (reviewed by Clifton et al.¹²).
96 Follow-up lab studies generally supported this hypothesis but could identify neither the nature of
97 the compounds involved in this process, nor the factors controlling the large variability among
98 plant species.^{13,14} Third, wet leaf cuticles mediate the bi-directional exchange of ammonia

99 (reviewed by Flechard et al.¹⁵ and others^{16,17}). This process takes place in the presence of leaf
100 wetness and is primarily controlled by its acidity.^{15,17} In current models, only inorganic gas-phase
101 acids (i.e., SO₂) are accounted for in the simulation of leaf wetness pH; aerosols, soil particles, and
102 other exogenous compounds have been pointed out as additional factors controlling the leaf
103 wetness's acidity but thorough evaluations are lacking.^{16,17} Leaf wetness has also been invoked in
104 the bi-directional exchange of HONO in rural forest canopies.¹⁸ Fourth, there has been
105 contradictory evidence on the ability of leaf cuticles to act as sinks of peroxyacetyl nitrate, with
106 field investigations reporting a larger contribution of non-stomatal over stomatal sinks as
107 compared to lab studies.^{13,16,19,20} The different leaf surface chemistry of the species investigated is
108 among the proposed causes of this discrepancy.

109 These lines of evidence challenge the idea of leaves as clean, inert, glass-like surfaces, implying
110 the presence of compounds that can participate in multiphase reactions. (In this work, we follow
111 the definition of Abbatt and Ravishankara²¹ and use “multiphase” to indicate reactions occurring
112 between two phases, either gas-solid, gas-liquid, or liquid-solid.) In principle, these compounds
113 can be produced *in situ* and excreted onto the surface of leaves or can be deposited from the
114 atmosphere via wet or dry deposition. The leaf's surface morphology, the chemical composition
115 of the cuticle, and the presence and type of liquid water (i.e., surface wetness) define which
116 compounds get adsorbed on the leaf and their subsequent reactivity. Given the high number of
117 variables, we use the term “chemical landscape” to indicate the ensemble of chemicals (molecules
118 and particles) present on the surface of a given leaf in a specific moment of time. The complex
119 relationships between surface properties, multiphase chemistry, and surface-air exchange are more
120 established for urban grime^{22–25} and pesticide loss on leaf and soil surfaces^{26–29} but have yet to be
121 thoroughly explored in terms of ecosystem surfaces.

122 In this Review, we provide an evidence-based picture of the chemical compounds most likely to
123 be found on leaf surfaces under natural conditions and provide an overview of known and expected
124 reactivity with atmospheric oxidants. Due to the broad diversity of plant metabolites and the high
125 variability from one plant species to the other and, for the same species, from one individual plant
126 to the other, we concentrate on compound classes rather than individual molecules, and on organic
127 rather than inorganic compounds. For simplicity, we also generally limit our discussion on intact,
128 non-senescent leaves of vascular plants, namely angiosperms (broadleaves) and gymnosperms
129 (conifers), even though many aspects are applicable to ferns, bryophytes, and aerial plant surfaces
130 other than leaves, like branches, fruits, flowers, and cork.

131 The Review is organized into four parts. We first provide a general overview of basic anatomical
132 aspects of leaves (Section 2.1) and discuss morphology and chemical composition of the cuticle
133 (Section 2.2). Second, we provide an evidence-based picture of organic compounds that may be
134 present on leaf surfaces and discuss their observed or potential reactivity. These molecules can be
135 *endogenous*, i.e., plant-derived (Section 3), or *exogenous*, i.e., deposited from the environment via
136 wet, dry, or mixed-type pathways (Section 4). Third, we discuss the effect of water films and drops
137 on cuticles and on the fate of leaf-adsorbed compounds (Section 5). Fourth, we provide a semi-
138 quantitative estimate of the classes of organic compounds most likely to be found on leaf surfaces
139 (Section 6.1) and a unified overview of the dynamic leaf surface reactivity (Section 6.2). We hope
140 this Review will provide new insights into the role of leaves in multiphase atmospheric processes
141 and spur new research into how this system impacts climate, air quality, and ecosystem health.

142 2. Leaf surface

143 2.1 *General anatomy of leaves and secretory structures*

144 The leaves of almost all vascular plants share a similar cellular structure consisting of an external
145 layer of cells, the epidermis, that encloses the mesophyll, the inner leaf region (Figure 1).³⁰⁻³²
146 Stomata, pores that allow gas exchange between the atmosphere and the mesophyll, are also
147 located within the epidermis, either on one or both sides of the leaf depending on the species. The
148 entire epidermis, including eventual surface structures, is covered by a thin waxy layer (0.03 to 30
149 μm)^{33,34} called the cuticle. Besides these general features, leaves of angiosperms and gymnosperms
150 host specific structures involved in the production, storage, and excretion of primary and secondary
151 metabolites that include trichomes, hydathodes, and resin ducts (Figure 1).³⁵ Other secretory
152 structures not described here are latex ducts, gum ducts, salt glands, nectaries, and resin
153 cavities.^{35,36} Thus, to cite Morris, the leaf surfaces are not smooth and featureless but rather are
154 “comparable to a forested island whose surface is replete by burrows and tunnels”.³⁷ The presence
155 of “a forest” of microscopic structures is crucial in defining type and amount of organic compounds
156 that can be found on leaf surfaces and their interaction with the atmosphere – especially if
157 considering that surface hair can increase the effective leaf area up to four orders of magnitude.³⁸

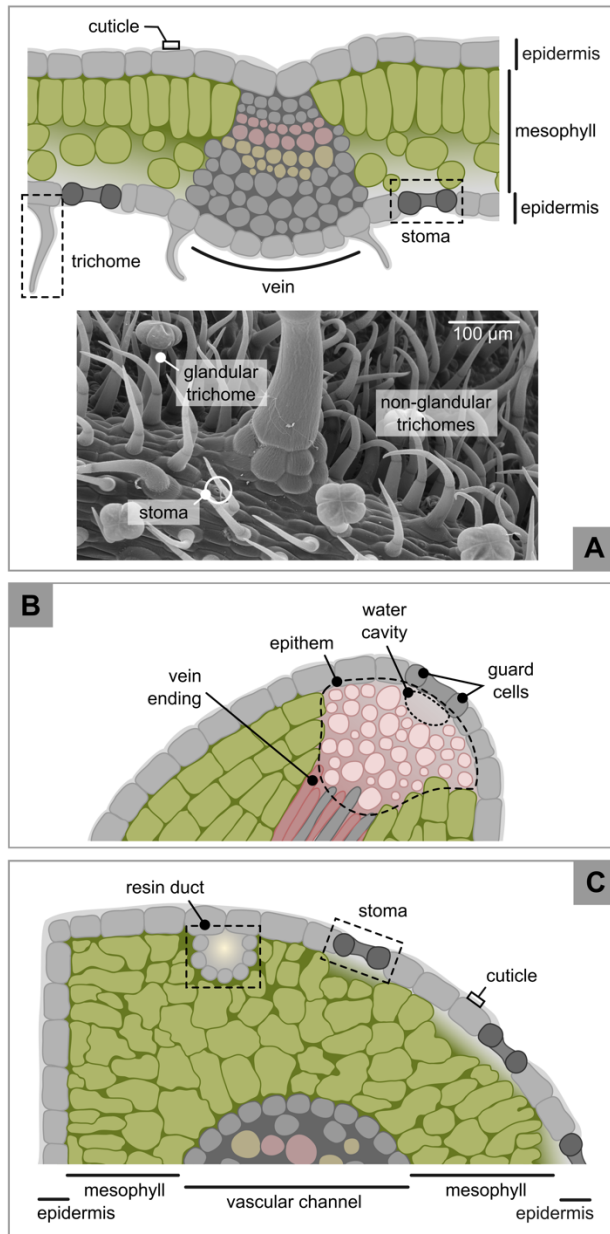


Figure 1 Pictorial representation of angiosperm (A) and gymnosperm (C) leaf sections inspired from photographs of tomato^{39,40} (*Solanum lycopersum*) and mountain pine⁴¹ (*Pino mugo*) leaves, respectively. Panel A includes a scanning electron microscopy photograph of a tomato leaf with highlighted glandular and non-glandular trichomes (type VI and II, respectively, according to the Luckwill's classification scheme⁴²). Panel B illustrates hydathodes, additional structures present in most vascular plants. Micrograph courtesy of M. J. Guinel de France (Dartmouth Electron Microscope Facility).

158 2.1.1 Trichomes

159 All aerial organs of angiosperms, including leaves, can be covered with trichomes, external
 160 appendices that range from a few μm to several cm and provide a protective barrier towards abiotic
 161 and biotic stressors (Figure 1A).^{43–46} Trichomes consist of one or more epidermal cells growing
 162 on top of the leaf epidermis and are generally independent from the plant's vascular system.³⁰

163 Several types of trichomes exist,⁴⁷ but they are typically divided into glandular and non-
164 glandular.⁴⁴ Glandular trichomes have an active secondary metabolism and are often considered
165 the plant's factory of specialized chemicals. The structure of glandular trichomes is dictated by the
166 volatility of their major metabolite.^{44,45} Volatile metabolites are often produced and stored in
167 peltate or biseriate trichomes, whereas less volatile substances are typically associated with
168 capitate trichomes, which are characterized by one or several secretory cells at the top of a stalk
169 (Figure 1A).^{44,45,48} The specific chemicals produced by glandular trichomes are described in
170 Section 3.1. Non-glandular trichomes lack secretory structures and primarily provide mechanical
171 protection to biotic and abiotic stressors.⁴⁸ In broadleaves, the type of trichomes vary from species
172 to species, with densities ranging from 1 to 250 mm⁻² and 1 to 140 mm⁻² for non-glandular and
173 glandular trichomes, respectively (Li et al.⁴⁸ and references therein). To our knowledge, trichomes
174 in gymnosperms have only been observed on the stem and needle surfaces of young conifer
175 shoots.⁴⁹

176 2.1.2 *Hydathodes*

177 Most vascular plants host specialized structures on the surface, margins, and tips of leaves called
178 hydathodes.^{35,50,51} Hydathodes consist of an area of loosely packed cells (the epithem) at the end
179 of the leaf's vein, a water cavity, and two guard cells that always remain open (Figure 1B).^{50,52,53}
180 When root water uptake is favored and leaf evapotranspiration is disfavored – e.g., during cold
181 nights or pre-dawn following warm days, or in tropical wet climates – the plant's sap may be
182 excreted through the hydathodes, a process known as guttation.^{50,51,53,54} If relative humidity is high,
183 guttation droplets remain visible along leaf margins and surfaces, whereas in dry conditions, water
184 evaporates leaving a solid residue. In a single guttation event, plants can secrete from a few drops
185 to several milliliters of guttation fluids.^{51,55} (The chemical composition of these fluids is discussed

186 in Section 3.2.) Although hydathodes are widespread among vascular plants, guttation requires
187 unique meteorological conditions and is rarely observed in woody plants of temperate climates.⁵⁰

188 *2.1.3 Resin ducts*

189 Gymnosperms have additional structures dedicated to the synthesis and storage of resin that
190 include resin ducts, resin cavities, and resin cells.^{35,41,56} Resin ducts are mostly found in needles,
191 cortex, xylem, and phloem of the *Pinaceae* family, including spruces (*Picea spp.*) and pines (*Pinus*
192 *spp.*).^{41,56} In needles, resin ducts are situated in the mesophyll and consist of an intracellular space
193 surrounded by epithelial cells (Figure 1C). The latter produce and excrete resin into the duct, where
194 it accumulates. Within the mesophyll, resin ducts can be along the needle margin, in its central
195 portion, or both, and are always at least two per needle.⁴¹ Details on the chemistry of resins are in
196 Section 3.3.

197 *2.2 Leaf cuticles*

198 *2.2.1 Chemistry and morphology*

199 Cuticles cover all aerial parts of plants; their thickness, chemistry, and morphology differ
200 depending on plant species, organ, developmental stage, and climatic factors.^{46,57–60} Additional
201 variables impacting the cuticle's structure include epidermal cell type, leaf age, light exposure,
202 and the presence of phyllosphere microorganisms, among other things.⁵⁹

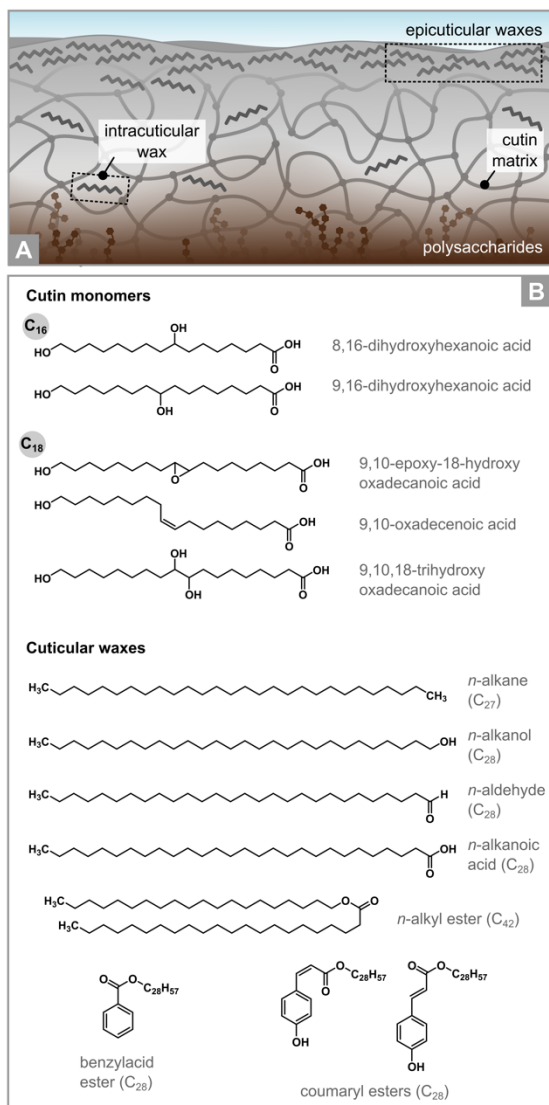


Figure 2 Chemical composition of leaf cuticles. **A** Schematic representation of a cuticle showing the location of its primary components. **B** Major chemicals in the leaf cuticles of *Fagus sylvatica* (European beech).^{61–63} Epi- and intracuticular waxes are reported together, although the distribution of each chemical may vary depending on its location within the cuticle (see Supplementary Materials).

203

204 Cuticles consist of two key ingredients: cutin and waxes (Figure 2).^{33,34,64–66} Cutin is an amorphous
 205 polyester of C₁₆ and C₁₈ ω-hydroxycarboxylic acids, both of which can have mid-chain hydroxy,
 206 epoxy, and carbonyl functionalities that act as polymer branching points or hydrophilic sites. C₁₆
 207 acids are typically present in large amounts in every plant species, while the specific substitution
 208 pattern and relative contribution of C₁₈ acids varies. In some plants, cutin contains small amounts

209 of glycerol.^{64,67,68} Overall, the amount of cutin ranges from a few $\mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$ to up to 1 mg cm^{-2} ,³⁴
210 corresponding to 40 – 80% of the total cuticle's mass.^{30,34}

211 Waxes are the second most abundant components of leaf cuticles by mass and are mixtures of
212 compounds including long-chain fatty acids, *n*-alcohols, *n*-alkanes, *n*-aldehydes, alkyl esters, and
213 triterpenoids.⁶⁵ The exact blend of molecules and their tridimensional arrangement are
214 characteristic of each plant species and organ (see Jetter et al.⁶⁵ for details). Depending on their
215 location within the cuticle, waxes are intra- or epicuticular (Figure 2A). Intracuticular waxes are
216 embedded within the cuticle's polymer matrix, where they help strengthening its structure and
217 prevent water loss, whereas epicuticular waxes are deposited on the top of cutin, effectively
218 representing the outermost layer of the plant.⁶⁶ Epicuticular waxes display a large variety of
219 tridimensional structures, textures, and patterns that create a heterogeneous surface at the
220 submicron scale.^{69–71} They can be amorphous or crystalline, with the crystal morphology being
221 broadly controlled by their chemical composition.^{71–73} Epicuticular wax morphology is also
222 influenced by leaf age and environmental factors like temperature, pollution, water availability,
223 salinity, solar exposure, and mechanical stress (see also Section 2.2.2).^{72,73} Although the
224 mechanisms responsible for the formation of these many surface patterns are not yet fully
225 understood, their presence impacts the leaves' interaction with water, particles, and organic
226 molecules, in addition to their mechanical and optical properties.⁶⁹

227 Additional compounds can be found in minor quantities in leaf cuticles. Polysaccharides from the
228 epidermal cell wall are present in the lower part of the cuticle, where they play a pivotal role in the
229 absorption and transport of water and hydrophilic molecules (Figure 2A; see also Section 5.2).^{34,74}

230 Cutan is the insoluble residue that is found after depolymerization of cutin in some plant
231 species.^{74,75} Cutan is understood to be a polymer of long-chain aliphatic moieties and a small

232 fraction of hydroxylated aromatics crosslinked through ester and ether bonds, although its origin
233 and structure are under debate.⁷⁵ Phenolic compounds like cinnamic acids, flavonoids, flavonols,
234 and, in some gymnosperms, lignin-like moieties are also present either free or co-polymerized
235 within the cutin matrix, where they help protect the leaf against ultraviolet radiation.^{34,66,76} In some
236 plant species (e.g., *Fagus sylvatica*; see Figure 2B), alkyl hydroxycinnamates are also present in
237 association with cuticular waxes.⁷⁷ Cuticles also contain water in both “free” (i.e., in equilibrium
238 with the gas-phase) and “embedded” forms (i.e., having two or three hydrogen bonds with polar
239 cuticle components).⁷⁸ The amount of water depends on ambient relative humidity and
240 temperature, among other factors, and impacts the cuticle’s mechanical properties (see also Section
241 5.2).⁷⁹

242 2.2.2 Reactivity

243 Given their location at the plant-atmosphere interface, cuticular components – and epicuticular
244 waxes in particular – have the potential to engage in multiphase reactions with gas-phase oxidants.
245 Although this hypothesis has been circulating since the 1980s, empirical evidence for a “pure”
246 chemical reactivity remains scarce.^{65,73} In conifers, this lack of reactivity has been attributed to the
247 peculiar chemistry of their epicuticular waxes – they primarily consist of 10-nonacosanol, a
248 saturated alcohol unreactive towards O₃.⁷³ Indeed, Jetter et al.⁸⁰ showed that ambient levels of
249 NO₂, SO₂, and O₃ do not impact the chemical composition of epicuticular waxes isolated from
250 *Picea pungens*, although oxidation products were detected after high NO₂ exposure (i.e.,
251 equivalent to 700 – 58,000 years at ambient levels). Exposure to pollutants exposure can induce
252 chemical changes in epicuticular wax composition in both broadleaves and conifers,^{72,81,82}
253 however, variation in plant metabolism rather than direct chemical reactivity is so far the most
254 convincing explanation for this phenomenon.^{81,83}

255 Conversely, there is ample evidence that exposure to atmospheric oxidants impacts epicuticular
256 wax *morphology* by accelerating its natural weathering (reviewed by Turunen and Huttunen⁸⁴ and
257 others^{72,73,85}). In conifers, the most common symptom is an accelerated fusion of wax tubes around
258 stomata.^{84,85} This process occurs naturally as the needle ages, but it is accelerated after exposure
259 to acid rain or mist, SO₂, and/or NO₂.^{84,85} Exposure to O₃ alone did not consistently induce
260 morphological changes but had an effect when present in combination with other oxidants.⁸⁵
261 Various explanations have been put forward to justify these morphological variations, with
262 changes in wax biosynthesis being the most likely.^{73,85} Recently, Burkhardt et al.^{86,87} showed that
263 deliquescent aerosol particles on leaf surfaces look visually similar to degraded waxes, suggesting
264 that metabolic changes are not the underlying cause of this phenomenon.

265 Despite general agreement about the lack of *direct* chemical reactivity, there are a few biases worth
266 highlighting. First, most studies were performed between the beginning of the 1970s and the end
267 of the 1990s, and visually detected changes in wax crystal morphology via microscopy. When
268 chemical analyses were performed, instrument sensitivity might not have been sufficient to detect
269 minor variations in wax chemistry. Second, the literature is heavily biased towards conifers,^{73,84,85}
270 whose epicuticular waxes consist primarily of 10-nonacosanol, a saturated alcohol.⁷³ However,
271 other plant species may have more reactive molecules in their leaf cuticles. For example, more
272 than 50% of the fatty acids in the cuticles of some mangrove species are unsaturated,⁸⁸ while *Fagus*
273 *sylvatica* and other plants have traces of alkyl coumarates and other unsaturated compounds
274 (Figure 2B).^{62,77} Notably, an early study reported significant production of 4-oxopentanal, 6-
275 methyl-5-hepten-2-one, and geranyl acetone upon ozonation of isolated cuticles of various oak
276 species (e.g., *Quercus ilex* and *Quercus suber*) and other common Mediterranean plants.⁸⁹
277 Although the authors did not investigate the nature and location of the parent molecule(s), some

278 *Quercus* species show a remarkably high proportion of terpenes and terpenoids in their cuticle, in
279 addition to a few aromatic compounds.^{90,91} (However, metabolites excreted from glandular
280 trichomes^{92,93} (Section 3.1) and/or sampling artifacts (i.e., skin lipids⁸⁹) may also be responsible
281 for the observed reactivity.) Third, physically damaged leaves may expose chemicals embedded
282 within the cuticle to atmospheric oxidants (e.g., phenolics in the cuticle^{34,77} and in other leaf
283 tissues⁷⁷ may react with gas-phase oxidants⁹⁴⁻⁹⁷). In conclusion, the cuticle's reactivity may
284 warrant a reassessment, as it may be relevant in specific situations and/or for selected plant species.

285 **3. Chemicals from the plant and its biome**

286 Most leaf surface structures excrete chemicals – glandular trichomes exude a rich variety of
287 secondary metabolites (Section 3.1.1), hydathodes release drops of the plant's sap (Section 3.2.1),
288 and resin ducts excrete resins (Section 3.3.1). However, not all plant species display these
289 structures; and when present, environmental conditions influence their role as a source of
290 chemicals. As such, we expect the blend of endogenous compounds to be highly species-specific
291 and, to a certain extent, predictable. Furthermore, endogenous exudates are typically highly
292 concentrated and have thus high potential to be involved in multiphase reactions – though, to our
293 knowledge, this reactivity has only been marginally explored for trichome metabolites of a few
294 plant species (Section 3.2.1).

295 If one considers plants as miniature ecosystems, the definition of “endogenous” can be broadened
296 to include chemicals and particles from organisms that inhabit the canopy. Section 3.4. provides a
297 brief overview of the phyllosphere, the community of microbes living on leaf surfaces, and its
298 direct and indirect influences on the chemical landscape's chemistry and reactivity. Other
299 organisms that may contribute additional species (but are not discussed) include epiphytes

300 (reviewed by Van Stan and Papyker⁹⁸) as well as insects, little invertebrates, and macrofauna
301 (reviewed by Ponette-González et al.⁹⁹). Depending on their source, pollen and fungal spores may
302 be considered endogenous or exogenous; in this work, we assume the latter and cover thus them
303 in Section 4.

304 *3.1 Glandular trichomes*

305 *3.1.1 Chemicals*

306 Glandular trichomes produce and/or accumulate a rich variety of metabolites (reviewed by
307 Schillmiller et al.¹⁰⁰ and others^{101,102}) in amounts that can reach up to 30% of the leaf's dry
308 weight.^{44,101} Terpenes are among the most common compounds stored in glandular trichomes,
309 including monoterpenes (C₅H₁₆), sesquiterpenes (C₁₅H₂₄), diterpenes (C₂₀H₃₂), and terpenoids
310 resulting from oxidation, conjugation, or other structural modification of the former. While
311 monoterpenes are markedly volatile,¹⁰³ members of other classes are less prone to gas-phase
312 partitioning and will (at least partially) remain on the leaf's surface – e.g., in the form of drops
313 either accumulated onto the head or dripping along the stalk of capitate trichomes.^{44,45,101}

314 Phenylpropanols are other common secondary metabolites produced in glandular trichomes,¹⁰⁰
315 whose basic structure consists of a C₃ chain linked to an aromatic ring.¹⁰⁴ Some examples include
316 chavicol, methyl chavicol, eugenol, and methyl eugenol, volatile compounds produced by the
317 peltate trichomes of some basil varieties¹⁰⁵ and other plant species.¹⁰⁶ Flavonoids and other
318 polyketides are other important metabolites produced in these structures and often found
319 embedded into the cuticle.¹⁰⁷ Glandular trichomes can also produce and excrete fatty acids and
320 antimicrobial proteins. For example, tobacco trichomes actively secrete T-phylloplanins, small
321 water-soluble glycoproteins that can inhibit the germination of fungal spores causing the blue-

322 mold disease.^{108,109} In general, the specific suite of chemicals in glandular trichomes is unique of
323 each plant taxa and can be used as a classifying tool (see Spring¹¹⁰ for details). For a few plant
324 species of high economical or medicinal relevance, reviews exist on the entire suite of secondary
325 metabolites produced by their glands (e.g., tobacco,¹⁰⁹ *Cannabis sativa*,¹¹¹ and *Artemisia*
326 *annua*¹¹²).

327 3.2.1 Reactivity

328 Trichome metabolites have a wide range of volatility and reactivity, and consequently have varied
329 impacts on atmospheric chemistry. Monoterpenes are volatile and contribute to gas-phase
330 reactivity in the atmosphere; this chemistry has been extensively studied due to the relative ease
331 of detection and monoterpene's potential for gas-phase oxidation (e.g., Figure 3, left).¹¹³⁻¹¹⁷ In
332 contrast, systematic investigations of multiphase reactions involving non- or semi-volatile
333 metabolites are rare. Jud et al.¹¹⁸ showed that *cis*-abienol, a diterpenoid produced by the trichomes
334 of some tobacco varieties, readily reacts with ozone to produce gas-phase formaldehyde and
335 methyl vinyl ketone (Figure 3, right), whereas plant varieties that excrete cembradienol, another
336 diterpenoid, produced 4-oxapentanal. A follow-up study showed that the density of glandular
337 trichomes, capitate trichomes in particular, strongly correlates with non-stomatal O₃ uptake also
338 in other woody and herbaceous plants.⁴⁸

339 In addition to ozone, Khaled et al.¹¹⁹ showed that myrigalone A, a non-volatile secondary
340 metabolite of the Mediterranean bush *Myrica gale*, can be degraded by sunlight to yield acetic
341 acid, benzaldehyde, and other gas-phase products. Although these experiments were performed on
342 model surfaces, real-leaf extracts contained myrigalone A's photodegradation products,
343 suggesting that this process occurs also under natural settings.

344 Thus, given the substantial reactivity of several low-volatility terpenes and terpenoids towards O₃
345 and hydroxyl radicals^{120,121} and the light-absorption properties of some secondary
346 metabolites,^{119,122} multiphase oxidation involving semi- and non-volatile chemicals from
347 trichomes may be an overlooked source of low-molecular-weight compounds (e.g.,
348 formaldehyde¹¹⁸ or formic acid¹¹⁶) and a sink of reactive trace gases in specific plant species.

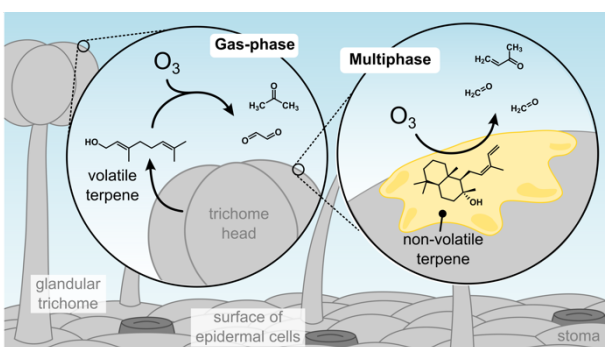


Figure 3 Examples of gas-phase (left) and multiphase (right) reactions involving glandular trichome's metabolites. On the left, geraniol, a volatile monoterpene produced by several plant species, undergoes gas-phase reactivity with ozone to produce acetone and glyoxal.¹²³ On the right, *cis*-abienol, a non-volatile diterpenoid produced by some tobacco varieties, reacts with gas-phase ozone to yield formaldehyde and methyl vinyl ketone.¹¹⁸ Although multiphase reactions are considerably less studied than gas-phase processes, both have been observed experimentally.

349 3.2 Guttation fluids

350 3.2.1 Chemical composition

351 Guttation droplets contain a wide variety of organic and inorganic compounds, whose identity and
352 concentration depend on plant species, age, physiological activity, and the chemistry of the plant
353 growing medium.¹²⁴ The most common organics in guttation fluids are primary plant metabolites,
354 i.e., sugars, amino acids, proteins, enzymes, nucleotides and nucleic acids, plant hormones, and
355 alkaloids, in addition to secondary metabolites like monoterpenes and sesquiterpenes.^{50,124}
356 Concentrations vary by orders of magnitude but are always substantial. For example, sugars can

357 range from 27 mg L⁻¹ to 1500 g L⁻¹, while proteins can be between 2.7 mg L⁻¹ and 30 g L⁻¹
358 (reviewed by Urbaneja-Bernat et al.¹²⁵). Systemic pesticides such as neonicotinoids have also been
359 found in crops' guttates in tens of mg L⁻¹ (summarized by Thompson¹²⁶). In addition to organic
360 compounds, guttation fluids contain a wide range of inorganic species whose identity and
361 concentration depend on the plant growing medium.^{50,124}

362 *3.2.2 Reactivity*

363 The extent to which chemicals in guttation fluids take part in multiphase chemistry is currently
364 unconstrained by observations. Dibley et al.¹²⁷ speculated that guttation may contribute to the pool
365 of organics detected in dew droplets and frost collected from grass blades, but did not provide
366 conclusive evidence for their occurrence. This mixture of compounds was further shown to be
367 susceptible to photodegradation (in bulk aqueous solutions),¹²⁷ hinting that components of
368 guttation fluids may also take part in leaf-surface photochemistry.

369 Although solute concentrations can be significant, the unique conditions required for guttation to
370 occur combined with the relatively small volumes of liquid excreted in each event (Section 2.1.2)
371 suggests that these chemicals may be relevant to the overall leaf surface reactivity only in selected
372 environments, seasons, plant species, and under specific weather conditions.

373 *3.3 Resin ducts*

374 *3.3.1 Chemicals*

375 Resins are mixtures of terpenoids consisting of a volatile and a non-volatile fraction.^{41,128,129}
376 Volatile chemicals include monoterpenes and some sesquiterpenes, and their relative proportion
377 controls the overall viscosity of the resin. The non-volatile fraction consists mostly of diterpene

378 and triterpene acids such as abietic acid.^{128,129} Short-chain alkanes are also found in resins of some
379 pine species.¹³⁰ Resins are part of the plant's defense mechanism and typically exit resin ducts
380 because of needle damage – e.g., following a wound induced by beetles.¹³¹ Resins can also extrude
381 without damage at the junction between needles and the branch and on seed cones, especially in
382 the spring.¹³¹ After resin excretion, the volatile fraction evaporates leaving a solid residue on the
383 needle that protects the damaged site both physically and chemically (Figure 4).^{56,129} For the same
384 plant species, the resin's chemical composition can vary from organ to organ (e.g., needles vs.
385 bark).⁴¹

386 3.3.2 Reactivity

387 Even though several authors have shown that volatile resin components can impact atmospheric
388 chemistry in sporadic, local episodes (e.g., Jaakkola et al.¹³² and others^{131,133}; Figure 4, left), the
389 interest in the non-volatile fraction has so far been limited. However, empirical evidence from
390 other fields suggests that also these chemicals react with atmospheric oxidants. For example, a few
391 studies investigating the stability of biomass burning tracers showed that abietic acid undergoes
392 heterogeneous reactions with hydroxyl radicals, nitrate radicals, and ozone (summarized by
393 Arangio et al.¹³⁴). Oxidation of abietic and other diterpenoid acids ubiquitous in resins of the
394 *Pinacea* family occurs also in varnish covering paintings and other artwork,¹³⁵ suggesting the same
395 may take place on the surface of resin residues on needles and other plant surfaces (Figure 4, right).

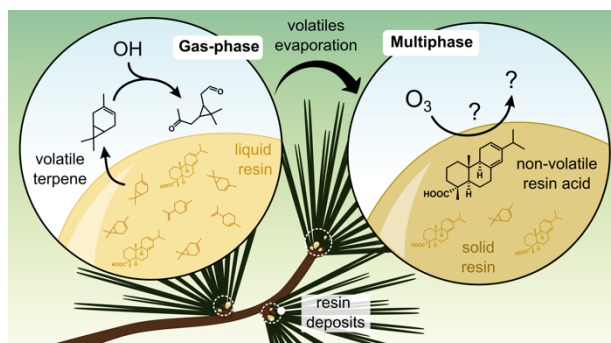


Figure 4 Examples of gas-phase (left) and multiphase (right) reactions involving resin components. On the left, Δ^3 -carene, the most abundant volatile in the sapwood resin of *Pinus ponderosa*,¹³⁶ undergoes hydroxyl radical (OH) oxidation to form coronaldehyde.^{114,137} The right panel depicts the potential ozonation of levopimaric acid, the primary resin acid in *Pinus ponderosa* sapwood resin.¹³⁶ This multiphase reactivity has not yet been reported under natural conditions, but is likely to occur based on literature precedents.¹³⁵ This figure also illustrates the increasing contribution of multiphase reactivity as just excreted resins dry to form solid or semi-solid deposits.

396 3.4 Phyllosphere microorganisms

397 3.4.1 Chemicals

398 Despite the extreme conditions caused by lack of nutrients, intermittent water availability, intense
 399 solar radiation, and fluctuating temperatures, leaf surfaces host communities of microorganisms
 400 collectively referred to as the “phyllosphere”.^{37,59,138,139} This term includes primarily bacteria
 401 (mainly *Proteobacteria*) and fungi (mainly *Ascomycota* and *Basidiomycete* yeasts), while
 402 archeobacteria, algae, nematodes, and viruses are less common.^{1,138} To increase their chance of
 403 success, phyllosphere microorganisms form biofilms and live preferentially in the most protected
 404 regions of the downward-facing leaf side (e.g., around trichome bases, in the indentations between
 405 epidermal cells, and inside stomata).⁵⁹ Although phyllosphere microorganisms are ubiquitous
 406 (with an average surface density of $10^6 - 10^7$ cells cm^{-2} ; see refs in Lindow and Brandl¹⁴⁰), they
 407 are estimated to occupy less than 2% of the available global leaf surface area.³⁷ Leaf microbiology

408 is a complex and active field of research; readers interested in this topic can find more information
409 in dedicated reviews and book chapters (e.g., Vorholt,¹ Trivedi et al.¹⁴¹, and others^{37,59,138–140}).

410 Phyllosphere microorganisms release a variety of chemicals onto leaf surfaces to increase their
411 chance of survival. Important classes include extracellular polymeric substances (EPS),
412 surfactants, and plant hormones.^{1,59} EPS are major biofilm components on a per-mass basis (50 –
413 90%)^{142,143} and are crucial to maintaining bacterial cells hydrated.¹ This polymeric matrix has a
414 complex and dynamic composition and includes functionalized polysaccharides, proteins, nucleic
415 acids, phospholipids, and traces of humic substances.^{143–145} Surfactants help cells access water and
416 nutrients either by softening the cuticle (see also Section 4.2.2), reducing water tension (thus,
417 allowing bacteria to relocate where nutrients are more abundant), or increasing water
418 availability.^{59,146,147} For example, syringafactin, a hygroscopic surfactant produced by
419 *Pseudomonas syringae*, can absorb water up to 250% of its weight at high relative humidity.¹⁴⁷
420 Some phyllosphere organisms also produce volatile organic compounds (reviewed by Farré-
421 Armengol et al.¹⁴⁸) and indole-3-acetic acid (auxin), a non-volatile plant hormone that stimulates
422 the release of saccharides from the plant cell wall and helps alleviate nutrient limitations.¹

423 3.4.2 Reactivity

424 To the best of our knowledge, no studies have explicitly investigated the potential for multiphase
425 reactions of phyllosphere-derived compounds with atmospheric oxidants – although results from
426 other fields hint they may occur. For example, aqueous solutions containing EPS isolated from
427 pure microbial cultures are susceptible to photochemical reactions,¹⁴⁹ hydroxyl radical
428 oxidation,¹⁵⁰ and ozonation,¹⁵¹ as are suspension of bacterial cells and other pathogens.^{152–154}

429 In addition to reactions involving specific biofilm components, the phyllosphere can impact the
430 leaf surface's chemical composition and reactivity in other ways (see also Farré-Armengol et
431 al.¹⁴⁸). First, by creating and maintaining a layer of microscopic wetness, these microorganisms
432 can facilitate the leaching of organic and inorganic substances to the leaf surface (see also Section
433 5). Microbial surfactants similarly enable the leaching of endogenous compounds. Second,
434 microbes can take up or modify adsorbed pollutants or specific plant metabolites. This process has
435 primarily been described for natural compounds (e.g., methanol¹⁵⁵ and monoterpenes like geraniol
436 and nerol¹⁵⁶) but anthropogenic chemicals can undergo a similar fate (e.g., phenol¹⁵⁷ and
437 polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs); summarized by Terzaghi et al.¹⁵⁸). In addition to
438 biological processes, abiotic reactions mediated by redox-active EPS moieties (e.g., proteins with
439 a sulfhydryl group) and extracellular enzymes can also occur within the biofilm.^{143,144} Third,
440 pathogenic microorganisms can induce the host plant to produce and release specific chemicals
441 that otherwise would not be present. Elucidating the full range of reactions enabled by
442 phyllosphere biofilms remains a major topic of future (interdisciplinary) investigations.

443 **4. Chemicals from the environment**

444 In addition to metabolites produced by the plant and its associated biome, compounds from the
445 surrounding environment can find their way onto leaves via various pathways (Figure 5). Dry
446 deposition describes the direct delivery of mass via gravitational settling, impaction, interception,
447 diffusion, and adsorption (Section 4.1), whereas in wet deposition, chemicals and particles reach
448 plant surfaces through precipitation or other forms of liquid media (Section 4.2).^{159–161} For specific
449 types of particles, mixed forms of deposition are also possible (Section 4.3).

450 Based on our critical review of the literature, dry deposition appears responsible for delivering
451 most exogenous substances onto leaf surfaces, including particles (Sections 4.1.1 – 4.1.3) and
452 semi-volatile compounds (Section 4.1.4). The role of wet deposition is more challenging to
453 estimate due to the polyvalent role of water in impacting the leaf's chemical landscape (see also
454 Section 5), the overall dilute character of hydrometeors, and case-by-case differences in
455 meteorological conditions, geographical location, and plant species (Section 4.2.1). Radionuclide
456 studies indicate that rain can deliver particles and solutes onto leaf surfaces, but large variations
457 exist depending on the plant development stage, leaf characteristics, rain amount, and chemistry
458 of the deposited material (Section 4.2.1.1). Foliar application of pesticides is another wet
459 deposition pathway discussed in the literature relevant primarily to agricultural settings (Section
460 4.2.2). Irrespective of their delivery pathway, exogenous substances are susceptible to multiphase
461 reactions. Although empirical data is available only for a few groups of anthropogenic semi-
462 volatile compounds and primarily for photochemical reactions (Section 4.4.1), knowledge from
463 the broad environmental chemistry literature strongly suggests that leaf surface reactivity of
464 exogenous chemicals with atmospheric oxidants is widespread (Section 4.4.2).

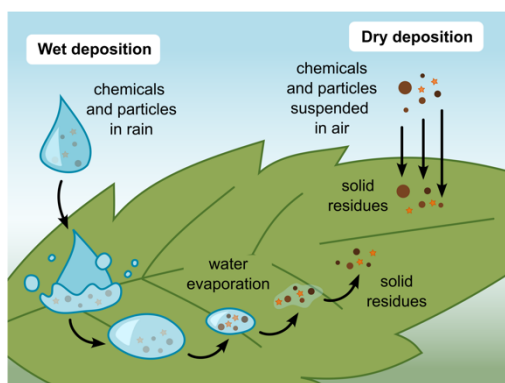


Figure 5 Overview of the main delivery pathways of exogenous substances onto leaf surfaces. For wet deposition to contribute leaf surface material, drops must remain on the leaf – if drops roll off, they are more likely to remove soluble material and particles from the leaf surface.

465 **4.1 Dry deposition**

466 *4.1.1 Particulate matter*

467 A rich body of literature supports the ability of leaves to intercept atmospheric particulate matter
468 (PM) in various size ranges. A recent meta-analysis indicated that plants growing in urban
469 environments capture $50 - 550 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2} \text{ week}^{-1}$,¹⁶² resulting in surface concentrations ranging from
470 1 to $191 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$ (Figure S1).^{163,164} These numbers vary as a function of leaf structure,
471 meteorological, and geographical factors as well as particles' concentration, size, and
472 morphology.¹⁶³ Overall, leaf roughness and hairiness (i.e., the type and surface concentration of
473 trichomes) are the two most important factors defining leaves' ability to intercept and retain PM,
474 with rough, trichome-rich leaves being more effective than smooth leaves void of trichomes.^{163,165}
475 Furthermore, conifers have been found to accumulate overall more PM than broadleaf species,
476 likely because their leaves persist throughout the year.^{162,163,166} In addition to leaf traits, PM loads
477 depend on a plant's proximity to emission sources (e.g., industries or streets) and the presence and
478 frequency of removal processes, which include rain wash-off and resuspension by wind. Rain can
479 remove 30 – 70% of accumulated PM, with differences based on leaf type (broadleaves: 51 – 70%;
480 needles: 30 – 41%) and particulate matter size. In general, the longer the accumulation period (i.e.,
481 days after rain and leaf age), the higher the PM mass on leaves.¹⁶² Furthermore, fine particulate
482 matter ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$, particles with diameter $< 2.5 \mu\text{m}$) is generally more effectively retained on leaves
483 than the coarse fraction (PM_{10} , particles below $10 \mu\text{m}$), as its smaller size allows a more efficient
484 capture by surface grooves, ridges, and scales, and a partial encapsulation in surface
485 waxes.^{164,165,167} Particles larger than $50 - 100 \mu\text{m}$ are generally not observed on leaves.¹⁶¹

486 Although it is well-known that aerosols can be deposited onto any type of vegetation (e.g., Petroff
487 et al.¹⁶⁸) and that this deposition is linked to the plant traits and deposited PM mass, there is limited
488 knowledge on the chemical composition of leaf-deposited PM – primarily because of
489 methodological biases. Most studies are based on gravimetric methods and/or electron microscopy,
490 which only provide bulk mass and elemental composition (i.e., percent of carbon or metals).^{164,169}
491 In addition, the most common gravimetric method quantifies only the insoluble fraction. The few
492 groups analyzing both insoluble and water-soluble components consistently showed that inorganic
493 ions contribute on average to 30% (range: 7 – 50%) of the total deposited mass,^{166,170} hinting that
494 most studies underestimate total deposited PM. Water-soluble organics are challenging to quantify
495 via bulk analyses because of the matrix of organic compounds that is naturally present on leaves.¹⁷¹
496 To our knowledge, a thorough chemical characterization of the water-soluble organic fraction has
497 not yet been performed.

498 Although their chemistry is not thoroughly characterized, microscopy images provided visual
499 evidence for the presence of specific types of particles, including pollen, soil-derived PM, spores,
500 bacteria, combustion products, metallic particles, and aggregates (e.g., Freer-Smith et al.¹⁷²). The
501 occurrence of pollen and soil-derived PM on leaf surfaces has been further investigated in crop or
502 pasture systems and is illustrated more in detail in the following sections. In particular
503 environments, mineral dust (e.g., cement dust) can also accumulate on leaves (reviewed by
504 Burkhardt and Grantz¹⁶⁴).

505 *4.1.2 Pollen*

506 Pollen is a specific type of particulate matter that has been detected on leaves, representing both
507 an endogenous and exogenous source of chemicals. In general, pollen can be <10 to >100 μm in

508 size,¹⁷³ averaging 15 – 60 μm in species relying on wind pollination.^{174,175} Pollen size and
509 morphology are unique in every plant species,¹⁷³ which helps distinguish it from other particles
510 and identify its source.¹⁷² The large size limits the relevance of pollen deposition to the local scale
511 (typically within meters to hundreds of kilometers from its emission source),¹⁷⁶ with variations
512 based on meteorological conditions, as well as grain size and shape.^{176,177}

513 In general, pollen dynamics follow the same trends as PM deposition. First, not all pollen grains
514 suspended in the air stick onto leaves, with percentages that vary depending on the presence and
515 density of trichomes, leaf orientation, area, and position within the plant (e.g., Pleasants et al.¹⁷⁸).
516 Second, rain and wind are also the main environmental factors impacting pollen's retention on leaf
517 surfaces. For example, a study on corn pollen retention on milkweed leaves showed that a single
518 rain event can remove 54 – 86% of deposited grains.¹⁷⁸ Third, when wetted, pollen releases water-
519 soluble compounds including, among others, sugars (e.g., fructose, used also as a chemical tracer
520 for pollen^{179,180}), polyunsaturated fatty acids, and proteins.^{175,180–183} Some of these substances have
521 allergenic properties,¹⁷⁵ whereas others can nucleate ice crystals.¹⁸⁴ In the atmosphere, pollen can
522 also release sub-particles (0.5 – 3.0 μm in size)¹⁷⁹ in a process that is triggered by water and/or
523 high relative humidity and is common during thunderstorms.^{179,180,182} These sub-particles are pre-
524 existing bodies that can be found on the external surface (named “Ubisch bodies”)¹⁷³ and/or inside
525 (e.g., starch granules)^{183,185} intact pollen grains, depending on the species. Atmospheric pollutants
526 can also interact with pollen in a variety of ways (reviewed by Sénéchal et al.¹⁸²). For example, in
527 urban areas, PM accumulates on pollen surfaces,¹⁷⁵ whereas pollen-derived material has been
528 observed on soot (e.g., Namork et al.¹⁸⁶). Reactivity of pollen grains with air pollutants has also
529 been investigated and is briefly summarized in Section 4.4.2.

530 4.1.3 Soil particles

531 Soil particles have been detected on leaves in pastures and crop fields (reviewed by Smith and
532 Jones¹⁶¹ and Collins et al.¹⁸⁷) and sporadically on woody plants (e.g., Freer-Smith et al.¹⁷²). The
533 mechanisms responsible for the displacement of soil particles include wind erosion, mechanical
534 disturbances, and animal grazing^{161,187} – in addition to rain-induced dispersal (Section 4.3).
535 Overall, soil type has minimal impact on the quantity of particles found on leaves, whereas leaf
536 morphology and distance from the ground play a more significant role.^{161,164,187} Mass loads for
537 various crops and herbaceous plants range from 1.1 to 260 mg of soil per gram of leaf (reviewed
538 by Smith and Jones¹⁶¹). These values are expected to vary considerably in the presence of removal
539 agents such as wind and rain,¹⁶¹ and as a function of canopy height.¹⁸⁸ As for generic PM (Section
540 4.1.1), soil particles are more or less strongly bound to the surface and some of them (< 5 mg per
541 gram of leaf) may not be easily removed through wash off.^{189–191} Sheppard et al.¹⁹⁰ suggested these
542 strongly adhering particles to be aluminum silicate (clay) of comparable size of surface roughness
543 features.

544 The occurrence and amount of soil particles on leaves can be estimated by comparing Al, Fe, Si,
545 Ti, and rare earth metal content of full plant ash to that of the underlying soil.^{190–192} Of all elements,
546 titanium and rare earth metals have less interferences due to their low concentration in plant
547 tissues.^{191,192} This analysis is possible due to the prevalence of inorganic constituents in soil – as
548 organic matter comprises only 1 to 5% of top-soil mass.¹⁹³

549 4.1.4 Semi-volatile compounds

550 In addition to particles, individual compounds of various origin can partition from the atmosphere
551 onto dry or wet leaves. While many environmental science communities define this entire suite of

552 chemicals as “semi-volatile”, atmospheric aerosol chemists further divide this category into sub-
553 classes depending on broad ranges of saturation vapor pressure (see, for instance, Donahue et
554 al.^{194,195}). Here, we adopt the World Health Organization’s convention and use the term semi-
555 volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) to encompass all chemicals with boiling points between
556 240/260°C and 350/400°C at standard atmospheric pressure.^{196,197} Many persistent organic
557 pollutants and pesticides,¹⁹⁶ and several sesquiterpenes, diterpenes, terpenoids, and other plant
558 metabolites belong to this category.¹⁹⁸

559 4.1.4.1 Variables impacting dry deposition

560 In general, SVOCs adsorption onto leaves depends on their lipophilicity and/or water solubility
561 (the predominant factor depends on the SVOC’s molecular structure), variations in epicuticular
562 wax chemistry, environmental conditions, and potential reactivity.^{5,199} Modeling studies indicated
563 that dry deposition of POPs and semi-volatile pesticides onto leaves is broadly controlled by their
564 octanol-air partition coefficients (K_{OA}).^{26,29,187,200,201} Variations in cuticular chemistry introduce an
565 additional layer of complexity that led to the definition of plant-air partition coefficients ($K_{\text{plant-air}}$).
566 Empirical equations exist to calculate $K_{\text{plant-air}}$ from the corresponding K_{OA} value (summarized by
567 Taylor et al.²⁹). For a given compound, $K_{\text{plant-air}}$ can vary orders of magnitude depending on the
568 plant species.^{29,202} For SVOCs with polar functional groups, the partitioning equilibrium is
569 additionally impacted by the presence of leaf wetness, thus ambient relative humidity.^{29,201} This
570 same trend has been observed for hydrophilic SVOCs formed from the atmospheric oxidation of
571 biogenic and anthropogenic gases.^{5,195,203}

572 The fraction of SVOCs deposited onto leaves changes dynamically in response to environmental
573 variables. Under outdoor conditions, SVOCs adsorption occurs preferentially during cold nights,

574 while warmer temperatures and sunlight favor re-emission.²⁰¹ Joensuu et al.²⁰⁴ suggested that the
575 adsorption-emission cycle may be particularly relevant for semi-volatile chemicals that are poorly
576 reactive towards atmospheric oxidants (e.g., sesquiterpene alcohols), as their atmospheric lifetime
577 is longer. Besides diurnal variations, local climate (thus, season and latitude) can define the
578 importance of vegetation as SVOCs sink,^{202,205} while changes in relative humidity are important
579 for polar compounds. Ambient SVOC concentrations, which are impacted by meteorology and
580 proximity to emission sources, can further affect the partitioning equilibrium.²⁰¹ This fact is well
581 exemplified by the observations that *volatile* compounds (e.g., benzene and toluene)²⁰⁶ have been
582 detected on plant leaves only in indoor environments, where their gas-phase concentrations
583 remains high due to limited air exchange.²⁰⁷

584 In addition to direct gas-phase partitioning, SVOCs can also reach plant surfaces *indirectly* through
585 PM deposition. This process involves three steps: (1) SVOCs adsorb onto particles in the gas-
586 phase; (2) particles deposit on leaves; and (3) SVOCs migrate from the particle to the leaf
587 surface.^{161,187} The relevance of this additional mechanism depends on a complex interplay of
588 factors including the SVOC's vapor pressure and the particle surface chemistry, as well as ambient
589 temperature, relative humidity, and the aerosol's residence time on the leaf.^{161,208} According to
590 Cousins and Mackay,²⁰⁸ direct SVOC adsorption onto leaves is predominant for organic
591 compounds with $6 < \log(K_{OA}) \leq 9$, whereas particle-bound transfer is the main delivery route when
592 $\log(K_{OA}) > 9$. A few empirical studies focusing on PAHs and other persistent organic pollutants
593 supported the existence of this indirect delivery pathway.^{167,187,209,210}

594 4.1.4.2 SVOCs detected on leaf surfaces.

595 Both anthropogenic and biogenic SVOCs have been detected on leaf surfaces. The former group
596 comprises POPs and pesticides. Several studies used plant leaves as passive samplers for persistent
597 organic pollutants including PAHs, polychlorinated biphenyls and other chlorinated hydrocarbons,
598 and dioxins (summarized by Wetzel and Doucette²⁰⁶ and others^{202,205,211}). Reported surface
599 concentrations range from < 1 ng to up to tens of µg per gram of leaf dry weight,^{202,205,211} with
600 PAHs being overall the most abundant contributors (see also Figure S2).²⁰⁵ Although generally
601 deposited via wet routes (Section 4.1.2), many pesticides are semi-volatile²⁹ and undergo
602 evaporation/deposition cycles. (This observation is also supported by the fact that volatilization is
603 a major pesticide loss mechanism in the environment.^{26,201}) Indeed, pesticides have been found on
604 non-target plants growing nearby agricultural fields (e.g., Essumang et al.²¹²). Considerable levels
605 of pesticides have also been measured in dust and indoor surfaces in households nearby
606 agricultural areas (reviewed by Dereumeaux et al.²¹³).

607 Biogenic SVOCs from *exogenous* sources have also been found on leaves. For instance, some
608 authors observed daily adsorption and re-emission cycles of ledene, ledol, palustrol, and
609 aromadendrene (two sesquiterpene alcohols and two sesquiterpenes, respectively) from birch
610 (*Betula sp.*) leaves. Birch does not produce these compounds – rather, they were emitted by an
611 understory shrub (*Rhododendrum tomentosum*) and picked up by overlying birch leaves.^{198,214}
612 Likewise, Joensuu et al.²⁰⁴ posited that sesquiterpenes reach *Pinus sylvestris* needles via dry
613 deposition after being released from a surrounding plant or a different plant organ. This conclusion
614 was based on the observation that sesquiterpenes' content and speciation differ strikingly in wax

615 extracts and needle emissions from the same plant. Analogous processes were also observed in
616 laboratory settings on other tree species.^{215–217}

617 **4.2 Wet deposition**

618 **4.2.1 Hydrometeors**

619 Hydrometeors, which include rain, snow, mist, and fog, scavenge compounds and particles present
620 in atmosphere and can deliver them to leaf surfaces (Figure 5). At the same time, hydrometeors
621 can remove exogenous and endogenous compounds and particles through leaf wash-off (Section
622 4.1.1) and aerosolization (Section 4.3), induce the leaching of metabolites and nutrients (Section
623 5.3), and modify the chemistry of leaf wetness (Section 5.4). The relative importance of these
624 opposite processes depends on the interplay of numerous factors including hydrometeor type and
625 total carbon concentration, intensity of the meteorological event, leaf surface features and location
626 within the canopy, and physico-chemical properties of the deposited compound or particle.

627 **4.2.1.1 Behavior of rain on leaf surfaces**

628 In general, only drops and water films that persist on leaves until evaporation contribute to the
629 pool of leaf-adsorbed chemicals (Figure 5).^{218,219} This fact has been well established for particulate
630 and dissolved radionuclides delivered onto pastures and crops by contaminated rain (reviewed by
631 Pröhl²²⁰ and Anspaugh²²¹); with some limitations (discussed at the end of this section), we expect
632 the same principles to be valid also for non-radioactive species and other vegetation types.

633 The fraction of incoming radionuclides intercepted by and retained on leaf surfaces is called the
634 interception factor (f). This parameter is obtained as the radioactivity measured on standing
635 vegetation divided by that of incoming precipitation.^{220,222} Empirical values for f span from 0.006

636 to > 0.95 ,^{219,220,222,223} reflecting the complex dependence of this variable on features of the plant,
637 incoming precipitation, and wet-deposited material.^{218,220,222} For > 1 mm of rain, f is typically
638 between 0.01 and 0.3 – 0.5.^{222,223} The interception factor is conceptually related to the fraction of
639 precipitation lost to evaporation at the top of the canopy (E_i/P ; see, e.g., Lian et al.²²⁴). Recent
640 modeling²²⁴ and meta-analysis²²⁵ studies showed that E_i/P averages 0.20 – 0.25 globally, with large
641 variations (i.e., ≈ 0 to 1) depending on biome, leaf type, climate, and storm conditions. The
642 similarities between values and drivers for f and E_i/P strengthen our hypothesis that the knowledge
643 for wet deposition of radioactive elements can be translated to non-radioactive chemicals and
644 particles.

645 Development stage and water storage capacity are two important plant features influencing the
646 magnitude of the interception factor. In general, f increases during plant development because
647 more surface area becomes available for intercepting rain.^{218,220} Plant development can be
648 estimated from the standing plant biomass (i.e., the dry mass of plant per m^2 of soil) or the leaf
649 area index (i.e., the single-sided total leaf area of the plant per area of soil).²²⁰ When normalized
650 by the standing plant biomass ($0.05 - 0.35 \text{ kg m}^{-2}$), f for pasture plants and crops is $0.06 - 11 \text{ m}^2$
651 kg^{-1} (summarized by Gonze and Sy²¹⁸). The canopy storage capacity (S) is another key factor
652 impacting the value of f . This parameter describes the amount of water that can be hold on leaves
653 before rolling off – this happens when the accumulated water mass becomes too heavy to outweigh
654 the leaf's water surface tension.^{218,226} S depends on leaf area, orientation, and surface properties,
655 and ranges from 0.1 to 4.3 mm depending on plant species (see also Section 5.1).^{226,227} The canopy
656 water storage capacity is also impacted by preexisting surface wetness – S is lower for wet than
657 dry leaves – and decreases in the presence of wind and other mechanical disturbances.^{220,227} The
658 important role of the leaf water storage capacity justifies empirical observations that f decreases

659 with amount of rainfall.^{219,222,223,228} Leaf area index, canopy storage capacity, and rainfall amount
660 have also been identified as drivers of E_i/P , with rainfall characteristic being more influential than
661 vegetation attributes at global scales.²²⁴

662 Last, the chemistry of wet-deposited material strongly influences its fate. In general, radionuclides
663 in particulate forms ($> 3 \mu\text{m}$ to $100 \mu\text{m}$) and cations (e.g., ${}^7\text{Be}^{2+}$) are retained on leaf surfaces,
664 whereas dissolved anions (e.g., ${}^{131}\text{I}^-$ or ${}^{34}\text{SO}_4^{2-}$) are washed off as efficiently as water.^{219,220,222,228}
665 For example, in the same simulated rain event, Hoffman et al.²¹⁹ measured an average interception
666 fraction of 0.08 for ${}^{131}\text{I}^-$, 0.28 for ${}^7\text{Be}^{2+}$, and 0.30 – 0.37 for radionuclides embedded in
667 polystyrene microspheres (3 – 25 μm in diameter). This trend was found to be independent of plant
668 type.²²⁸ The different behavior of dissolved radionuclides has been justified in terms of electrical
669 properties – being negatively charged, leaf surfaces attract cations and repel anions.^{218,220,222} Like
670 cations, particles are understood to settle and adsorb on the surface, which partially prevents their
671 subsequent wash off when the water storage capacity is reached. As observed for dry deposition
672 of particulate matter (Section 4.1.1), smaller particles adsorb more efficiently than larger
673 ones.^{219,220} In the worst-case scenario, dissolved organic molecules present in rainfall may behave
674 as negatively charged radionuclides – thus, their interception fraction can be estimated directly
675 from E_i/P values. Individual molecules with hydrophobic domains or positive charges may interact
676 with the leaf surface, resulting in $f > E_i/P$, whereas volatile compounds (e.g., small organic acids)
677 may volatilize during water evaporation, leading to a $f < E_i/P$.

678 Despite the clear evidence showing that rain can deliver chemicals onto leaf surfaces, the
679 radionuclide literature has a few biases worth highlighting. First, interception fractions are
680 calculated from the bulk radioactivity of whole leaves and do not distinguish between material

681 *adsorbed onto* the cuticle and taken up by the plant. While particles $> 1 \mu\text{m}$ do not enter leaf
682 tissues,²²⁹ dissolved cations can (Section 5.2 – 5.3) – thus, the amount of positively charged
683 chemicals on leaf surfaces may be overestimated if deduced from the interception factor. Second,
684 f has primarily been measured for grasses and crops,^{218,220} and only sparsely for saplings of woody
685 plants (e.g., Hoffman et al.²²⁸). When considering fully grown trees, these values are representative
686 only of leaves at the top or on the outside of the canopy. E_i/P values are also referred to top of the
687 canopy conditions.²²⁴ Hoffman et al.²²⁸ posits that f should increase inside tree crowns because
688 drops have higher chances to be intercepted; we are not aware of studies confirming or disproving
689 this hypothesis. We further note that rain chemistry will change considerably as drops move
690 through the canopy (Section 5.3), complicating the assessment of its contribution to the leaf's
691 chemical landscape.

692 4.2.1.2 Behavior of other hydrometeors on leaf surfaces

693 In the presence of fog, mist or low clouds, tiny water droplets suspended in the atmosphere
694 condense onto leaf surfaces, forming water films that are generally less than 0.5 mm thick.²³⁰
695 Compared to rain drops, which have diameters from 0.1 mm (splash throughfall)²³¹ to up to 5.5
696 mm^{231,232} and can easily roll off, water films are more likely to remain on the leaf onto which they
697 first formed – although, if the cumulative amount of water exceeds the water storage capacity, they
698 grow into droplets and fall to the ground with their load of chemicals.^{233,234} For this reason,
699 contribution of surface chemicals are expected to be rather homogeneous across the canopy.
700 Similar to rain,²²⁴ evaporation of water films takes a few hours and is favored by wind and sunlight
701 (e.g., Wentworth et al.²³⁵).

702 On the other hand, we expect snow and dew to contribute negligibly to the pool of leaf surface
703 chemicals. Although canopies retain up to ten times more snow than rain^{227,236} for up to several
704 weeks,²³⁶ snow is solid and porous, with only a single layer of flakes in contact with the leaf at any
705 given time. When snow melts, a layer of liquid water forms between the overlying flakes and the
706 leaf surface – however, it is unlikely for chemicals in this melted layer to stick on the leaf, as its
707 presence decreases snow’s adherence and facilitates its sliding from the branch.²³⁷ A rare study
708 comparing snow and rain supports our hypothesis by showing almost no change in total phenolics
709 (as compared to its control) in snow collected below a spruce, but a considerable increase of these
710 compounds in rain throughfall from the same tree.²³⁸ Despite the apparent similarity with fog, dew
711 forms when water *vapor* (thus, individual water molecules) condenses on a cold surface.²³⁹
712 Although the resulting film can rapidly pick up water-soluble gases and further engage in
713 multiphase processes,^{235,240} dew *per se* is pure water and does not contribute surface chemicals.

714 4.2.1.3 Chemicals in hydrometeors

715 The concentration of chemical compounds and particles in hydrometeors is a key factor defining
716 the relevance of wet deposition. In the 1980s, scientists studying the impact of acid rain on plants
717 concluded that mist, fog, and clouds are more relevant contributors to ecosystem acid deposition
718 than rain because of their higher solute concentrations.²⁴¹ Even though this deduction was based
719 on inorganic species, present-day organic carbon concentrations are also lower in rainwater
720 (typically 0.02 – 13 mg_C L⁻¹, averaging ≈ 2 mg_C L⁻¹; Figure S3)²⁴² as compared to cloud-water and
721 fog (typically 0.10 – 41 mg_C L⁻¹, averaging ≈ 15 mg_C L⁻¹; Figure S4)²⁴³, hinting that this trend may
722 be valid in general.

723 Specific organic compounds have also been identified in hydrometeors. Formic and acetic acid
724 have been ubiquitously detected in rain, fog, and cloud water in concentrations that are relevant
725 for the total organic carbon budget.^{243–245} Less abundant low-molecular-weight compounds
726 include organic acids such as oxalic, lactic, malonic, and succinic acids; carbonyls like
727 formaldehyde, glyoxal, and methylglyoxal; amino acids; and levoglucosan.^{243–245} Rain also
728 contains POPs like perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), organophosphate esters, and PAHs in tens
729 to hundreds of ng L⁻¹ (cumulative concentrations for each class, summarized by Casas et al.²⁴⁶ and
730 Guo et al.²⁴⁷). Likewise, PAHs, nitrosamines, nitrophenols, pesticides, and other anthropogenic
731 chemicals have been detected in fog and cloud water samples (reviewed by Herckes et al.²⁴³), with
732 individual compounds in concentrations ranging from hundreds of ng L⁻¹ to tens of mg L⁻¹ (e.g.,
733 Khoury et al.²⁴⁸). Particulate matter is also found in hydrometeors, although its contribution to the
734 total carbon budget is minimal – it ranges from negligible to 35% depending on location, time of
735 the year, and occurrence of specific events.^{242,247,249} These insoluble particles include black
736 carbon,^{250,251} primary biogenic particles (e.g., bacteria, pollen, fungal spores),²⁵² soot (including
737 elemental carbon),²⁵² soil minerals particles,²⁵² and microplastics.^{253–255}

738 4.2.2 Sprays for agricultural use

739 Wet deposition may be particularly relevant in agricultural settings because pesticides are often
740 applied as aqueous sprays. Pesticide formulations contain the active ingredient and one or more
741 surfactants in relatively high amounts (up to 10% by weight).²⁵⁶ Surfactants enhance leaf
742 wettability, and thus both droplet retention on leaves and cuticular permeability – two features that
743 increase the plant's uptake of the active ingredient.^{256–258} Depending on their molecular structures,
744 surfactants can also influence pesticide reactivity (thus, persistence) on leaf surfaces (see also
745 Section 4.4.).²⁵⁹ Common surfactants include anionic (e.g., linear alkylbenzene sulfonates) and

746 non-ionic compounds (e.g., polymerized glycol ether), with new and more environmentally
747 friendly alternatives being constantly developed.^{256,260,261}

748 Active ingredients persist on crop leaves for a variable amount of time depending on the specific
749 combination of the pesticide's physicochemical features and reactivity, and on the leaf's surface
750 chemistry and morphology. For example, Das et al.²⁶² detected chlorpyrifos, an organophosphate
751 pesticide, in concentrations of 21.6 $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ immediately following spray application on Purple tansy
752 leaves, dropping below 5 $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ already the following day. For this pesticide, literature values for
753 DT_{50} , the time required to halve the initial active ingredient concentration by 50%, range from 0.4
754 h to 166 h depending on the leaf type (summarized in Das et al.²⁶²), underscoring the importance
755 of leaf surface properties in controlling pesticides' uptake and environmental fate (see also
756 Sections 4.1.4.1 and 4.4).

757 *4.3 Deposition facilitated by hydrometeors*

758 In addition to acting as a wet deposition or leaf cleansing agent, rain falling on environmental
759 surfaces can generate or facilitate the release of particles that are then deposited onto nearby
760 vegetation via wet and dry deposition. This mechanism has been reported for soil
761 particles,^{161,187,263,264} soil bacteria,²⁶⁵ plant pathogens,^{266,267} pollen-derived aerosols (see also
762 Section 4.1.2),¹⁸² and spores of some fungal species,²⁶⁸ and can be considered a "mixed type" of
763 deposition pathway primarily with local relevance.²⁶³

764 The mechanistic details of how hydrometeors affect deposition vary across particle type, leaf type,
765 and environmental circumstance. For example, submicron aerosol containing soil microbes and
766 soil organic matter form through a "bubble bursting" mechanism triggered by the entrapment of
767 air films between fallen droplets and porous surfaces.^{263,265} This process requires unique conditions

768 to take place – namely, light or medium intensity rain falling onto unwetted sandy-clay or clay
769 soils²⁶³ – and is expected to be relevant only in specific ecosystems (e.g., agricultural areas and
770 grasslands).^{263,264} Rain splash is another mechanism that delivers larger soil-derived particles to
771 leaves growing up to 1.5 m from the ground.^{161,269} Fungal spores are dispersed differently. Kim et
772 al.²⁶⁸ showed that rain droplets falling onto maize leaves infected with the rust fungus *Puccinia*
773 *tritricina* trigger spore release via wet and dry mechanisms. The wet pathway is a splash-release
774 dispersal that involves the generation of daughter drops after raindrop impact onto an infected area.
775 These smaller spore-containing drops are expected to fall only onto nearby or underlying leaves
776 due to their large size.²⁶⁷ Dry spores are also ejected when leaves vibrate following a drop's impact
777 or as a result of the spreading motion of a fallen drop. The impact further generates an air vortex
778 that drives dry spores away from the surface allowing longer-range dispersal. Different fungal
779 species adopt different spore dispersal mechanism depending on their survival strategy.²⁶⁷

780 **4.4 Reactivity**

781 *4.4.1 Observed leaf-surface reactivity of anthropogenic SVOCs*

782 Although there is compelling evidence for the *presence* of exogenous substances onto plant leaves,
783 information on their multiphase reactivity is scarce and biased towards anthropogenic compounds.
784 To the best of our knowledge, leaf-surface photodegradation of pesticides is the only process that
785 has been investigated in detail (reviewed by Sleiman et al.²⁷⁰ and others^{27,259}) – although primarily
786 in laboratory settings using model surfaces or reconstructed cuticles.^{27,270,271} Some work has also
787 been performed on the photodegradation of PAHs and their oxidation products on and within leaf
788 cuticles,^{272–274} while recent studies investigated HNO₃/nitrate photolysis on leaves of various
789 plants.^{275,276} On the contrary, the reactivity of anthropogenic SVOCs adsorbed on leaves with other

790 gas-phase oxidants has received considerably less attention.²⁵⁹ An early investigation reported the
791 oxidation of parathion (a pesticide) adsorbed onto lemon tree leaves in the presence of ozone and
792 “foliar dust” (soil organic matter particles).²⁷⁷ In more recent years, a handful of studies further
793 described the multiphase oxidation of pesticides deposited onto vegetable leaves by gas-phase
794 hydroxyl radicals and ozone.^{278–281} The interest in this topic has been driven primarily by the
795 potential of ozone (both in the gas-phase and dissolved in water) as a “green” strategy to eliminate
796 pesticide residues from fruits and vegetables (reviewed by Pandiselvam et al.²⁸²).

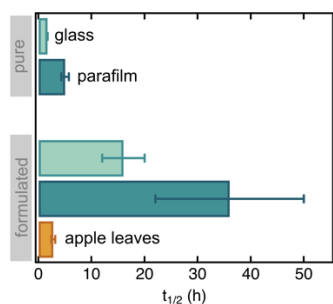


Figure 6 Photolysis half-lives ($t_{1/2}$) of the plant protection product acibenzolar-S-methyl deposited on model (green) and natural (orange) substrates, both as a pure ingredient (top) or as component of a commercial formulation (bottom). Higher half-lives mean faster photodegradation. Data replotted from Sleiman et al.²⁸³

797 Regardless of the specific compound, the photochemical reactivity of SVOCs on leaves follows
798 similar principles. Overall, photodegradation obeys pseudo-first-order kinetics, with reaction rate
799 constants that change considerably (but not predictably) based on chemistry, surface coverage, and
800 micromorphology of the reaction substrate, as well as co-occurrence of other substances (e.g.,
801 Figure 6).^{27,259,272–275} Formulation ingredients (e.g., surfactants) and co-occurring volatile and
802 semi-volatile metabolites can further influence surface photolysis by acting as photosensitizers or
803 quenchers of reactive species, stabilizing radical intermediates, screening light, or a combination
804 of these processes.^{27,119,259,284} By modifying the leaf’s wettability, surfactants can also influence
805 shape, density, and crystallinity of the active ingredient’s residue, with impacts on its
806 photochemical stability.^{27,283} Variation in epicuticular wax chemistry, thickness, and morphology
807 impact photodegradation in a similar manner.²⁷⁰ Wax components may act as photosensitizers or

808 quenchers of reactive species and actively participate in reactions to form “bond residues”,
809 whereas the presence of specific microstructures modify light transmission and water
810 spreading.^{27,259,270} SVOC solubility in epicuticular waxes can also impact the half-lives, as
811 compounds buried within the cuticle are less susceptible to photodegradation than less lipophilic
812 molecules sitting on its surface.²⁷³ Despite this comprehensive set of empirical observations, the
813 mechanistic understanding of leaf-surface photolysis is still largely speculative.

814 Environmental parameters additionally impact surface photolysis. Temperature, wind speed, and
815 light have received the most attention so far, whereas ambient relative humidity has been largely
816 overlooked. Both temperature (during irradiation) and wind speed increase the relative importance
817 of volatilization vs. photodegradation,^{26,279} with their absolute effect depending on the pesticide’s
818 physicochemical properties. Xi et al.²⁸⁵ also evaluated the impact of the plant’s growing
819 temperature on photodegradation rates, observing a reduced loss of leaf-adsorbed pyrethroids as a
820 function of irradiation time for spinach plants grown at 21 vs. 15°C. The change was attributed to
821 variations in cuticular wax chemistry as a function of growing temperature – a phenomenon that
822 has already been described.^{57,58}

823 Light intensity and spectral composition are two key variables driving photochemical processes,
824 but lab-based investigations rarely represent realistic field conditions. Most studies use horizontal
825 surfaces kept under full irradiation, while, within the canopy, most leaves are shaded and/or not
826 necessarily perpendicular to the incoming radiation.²⁸⁶ Furthermore, overlying leaves will
827 selectively absorb certain wavelengths, resulting in spectral variations within the canopy as
828 compared to the top-canopy irradiance.^{287,288} For plants grown indoor, the fraction of available
829 UV-B radiation will also be considerably reduced due to light absorption by glass windows.^{259,289}

830 Last, there have been limited assessments of how ambient relative humidity affects leaf surface
831 photodegradation. When reported, RH typically refers to the plants' growing conditions, not the
832 irradiation experiment (e.g., Xi et al.²⁸⁵). In some cases, pesticides are deposited onto surfaces as
833 aqueous solutions, but water is either allowed to evaporate before irradiation (e.g., ter Halle et
834 al.²⁹⁰) or it is used as the reaction solvent (e.g., Anderson et al.²⁷¹). The known impact of relative
835 humidity in other multiphase systems (e.g., for the hydroxyl radical oxidation and ozonation of
836 pesticides adsorbed on silica particles)^{291,292} and the fact that photodegradation kinetics are
837 different in bulk aqueous solutions than on leaf surfaces^{271,290} underscores the need for a deeper
838 assessment of this variable.

839 *4.4.2 Expected leaf-surface reactivity of SVOCs and particles*

840 Empirical evidence of leaf-surface reactivity for chemicals other than pesticides, PAHs, and
841 HNO₃/nitrate is lacking. However, as Dibley et al.¹²⁷ pointed out, multiphase reactions of leaf-
842 adsorbed compounds may be analogous to those occurring on outdoor and indoor organic surfaces,
843 and on inert substrates. In analogy to anthropogenic SVOCs on leaves, studies on the reactivity of
844 urban grime have focused on photochemical processes, but with an emphasis on nitrous acid
845 (HONO; summarized by Kroptavich et al.²³) and, recently, sulfur compounds.⁹³ Surface ozonation
846 of adsorbed PAHs has also been described, but only on model organic films.²⁹³ In recent years, an
847 increasing number of investigations characterized the multiphase reactivity of individual
848 compounds and organic films ubiquitously present on indoor surfaces.²⁹⁴⁻²⁹⁶ Most studies focus
849 on ozone, and have clearly demonstrated that skin lipids (e.g., squalene) and terpenoids from
850 consumer products undergo multiphase ozonation.²⁹⁵ Other well-established multiphase reactions
851 occurring indoor include the formation of HONO by dissolution of gas-phase NO₂ into adsorbed
852 water or via photochemical processes; acid-base partitioning of ammonia, amines, and organic

853 acids; hydrolysis; and reactions induced by chlorine-based oxidants (reviewed by Ault et al.²⁹⁶ and
854 others^{294,295}). While some of these processes will only be relevant in human-occupied areas, others
855 may also occur on leaf surfaces (e.g., acid-base equilibria⁴). The multiphase oxidation of pesticides
856 has also been investigated on inert substrates. For example, solid films of neonicotinoids
857 (deposited on silica) have been shown to react with gas-phase ozone,²⁹⁷ hydroxyl radicals,²⁹⁸ and
858 sunlight,²⁹⁹ yielding both volatile (e.g., HONO)²⁹⁷ and non-volatile products.

859 In addition to individual compounds, there is strong evidence for the multiphase reactivity of
860 particulate matter with gas-phase oxidants and light, both when suspended in air and when
861 deposited onto surfaces (reviewed, e.g., by George et al.³⁰⁰). Pollen also interacts with gas-phase
862 O₃ and NO_x, causing changes in elemental composition and increased tendency to crack and
863 release sub-micron particles (reviewed by Sénéchal et al.¹⁸²). Atmospheric processing of pollen is
864 of high interest given the established link between air quality and severity of seasonal allergies.
865 Exposure to polluted air has also been linked to nitration of tyrosine residues of specific pollen
866 allergens (e.g., in birch pollen³⁰¹). Thus, it is highly probable that pollen undergoes multiphase
867 chemistry also when deposited on leaf surfaces.

868 **5. Leaf wetness**

869 Water plays a crucial role in impacting the chemical landscape of leaf surfaces. In previous
870 sections, we showed that hydrometeors influence the flux of exogenous chemicals and particles by
871 acting both as a source of material (Sections 4.2.1) and as a cleansing agent (Section 4.1.1). High
872 relative humidity can also induce plants to release drops rich in endogenous chemicals from leaf
873 tips (Section 3.2). Water availability further impacts fitness and metabolism of phyllosphere

874 microorganisms (Section 3.4) – thus, the chemicals they excrete and the chemical transformations
875 of those already present – as well as rates and mechanisms of leaf surface reactions (Section 4.4).
876 In addition to the former processes, water allows the establishment of mass transfer pathways
877 across the cuticle and enables surface aqueous chemistry, further contributing to the complexity
878 and dynamicity of the leaf surface’s chemical landscape. In this section, we briefly review the
879 various forms of leaf wetness and their environmental occurrence (Section 5.1) and describe
880 mechanisms of cuticular mass transfer in the presence and absence of water (Section 5.2). We then
881 illustrate available evidence supporting the bi-directional exchange of water, nutrients, and
882 metabolites through wet cuticles (Section 5.3) and of atmospherically relevant species through
883 surface wetness (Section 5.4).

884 *5.1 Types of leaf wetness and their occurrence*

885 Leaf wetness can be macroscopic or microscopic. Macroscopic wetness refers to forms of water
886 that are visible to the naked eye, such as rain drops (0.1 – 5.5 mm in diameter)^{228,231,232} and water
887 films formed in the presence of dew, fog, haze, mist, clouds, or during prolonged rain events (\leq
888 0.5 mm in thickness).²³⁰ Macroscopic wetting occurs on average > 100 days per year across all
889 biomes (ranging from 29 days year⁻¹ for deserts to 174 days year⁻¹ for tropical and subtropical
890 forests), with leaves remaining wet on average (8.7 ± 2.5) hours per day.³⁰² Overall, broadleaves
891 and conifers store up to 0.1 – 2.0 and 0.1 – 4.3 mm of water, respectively, on their canopies, with
892 variations depending on leaf structure and meteorological variables (reviewed by Klamerus-Iwan
893 et al.²²⁷; note that the canopy storage capacity is expressed as “mm” to indicate liters of water per
894 m² of land). Macroscopic wetness responds dynamically to changes in meteorological conditions.
895 For example, night dew evaporates during the day when temperature increases and sunlight

896 reaches leaf surfaces; a decrease in ambient relative humidity and occurrence of winds further
897 accelerates evaporation.³⁰³

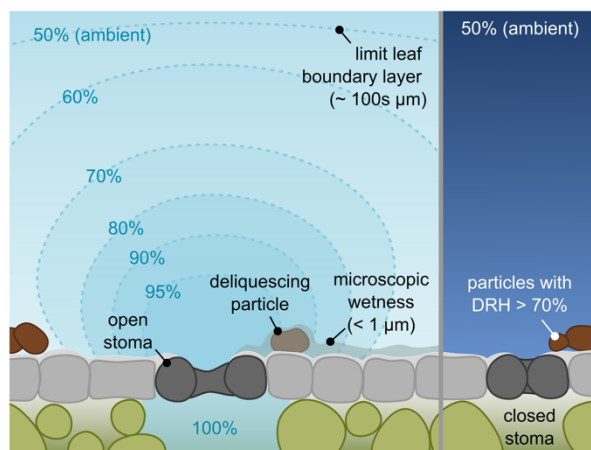


Figure 7 Schematic illustrating the formation of microscopic wetness from deliquescing particles. Ambient conditions have minimal influence when stomata are open (e.g., during the day; left); the situation reverses when stomata close (e.g., during the night; right). The schematic assumes that all particles have a deliquescence relative humidity (DRH) > 70%. Percentages indicate relative humidity values. Figure inspired by Burkhardt and Eiden.³⁰⁴

898 Conversely, microscopic wetness denotes water layers <math>< 1 \mu\text{m}</math>, which form from stomatal
899 transpiration and, potentially, condensation of atmospheric water vapor. According to Burkhardt
900 and Hunsche²³⁰, microscopic wetness is permanently present on leaves, even when they look dry
901 and ambient relative humidity (RH_{amb}) is low. In analogy to the Earth's atmosphere, leaves are
902 surrounded by a boundary layer that extends micrometers to millimeters from their surface and is
903 characterized by different temperature, relative humidity, and gas transport properties compared
904 to the surrounding air.^{37,138,164,230} In particular, when stomata are open (typically but not uniquely
905 during the day), the relative humidity in the leaf boundary layer ($\text{RH}_{\text{leaf}} > \text{RH}_{\text{amb}}$) due to stomatal
906 transpiration, often reaching values above 75% (Figure 7).²³⁰ The high RH_{leaf} allows hygroscopic
907 salts present on leaves (which may originate from deposited aerosols or guttation) to become
908 deliquescent, resulting in the formation of wet areas on the leaf surface, mostly localized around
909 stomata.^{230,305,306} This mechanism is similar to water uptake by cloud condensation nuclei in the
910 atmosphere.¹⁶⁴ Cuticular water uptake (see Section 5.2), adsorption of gas-phase water molecules,

911 capillary condensation, and evaporation of drops in areas populated by bacterial aggregates have
912 been proposed as additional processes that contribute generating microscopic wetness.^{230,307}

913 When stomata are closed (e.g., during nighttime), ambient RH plays a more significant role in
914 forming and maintaining microscopic leaf wetness (Figure 7).²³⁰ The factors driving its formation
915 are the same as with open stomata; however, as most salts do not deliquesce $< 70\%$,³⁰⁸ other
916 mechanisms may become predominant. For example, Hu et al.³⁰⁹ observed absorption of individual
917 water molecules on clean mica (a hydrophilic surface) $< 5\%$ RH, a continuous monolayer between
918 20 and 40% RH (0.2 nm thick), and additional layers of mobile, liquid water from 40% to 100%
919 RH (up to 2 nm thick). It is well known that water absorption depends on surface properties,
920 especially hydrophobicity (reviewed by Xiao et al.³¹⁰). Leaves have a wide range of contact angles,
921 ranging from $\leq 40^\circ$ (super-hydrophilic) to $\approx 180^\circ$ (super-hydrophobic; e.g., *Nelumbo*
922 *lucifera*),^{311,312} with temperate species showing values $> 60^\circ$.³¹³ Thus, depending on plant species
923 and ambient relative humidity, individual water molecules may preferentially adsorb onto bacterial
924 aggregates and deposited aerosol particles (without inducing deliquescence) rather than the cuticle
925 itself. In all cases, this wet layer is orders of magnitude thinner (i.e., a few nm) than the one
926 generated by stomatal transpiration.

927 ***5.2 Mechanisms of cuticle permeability in the presence and absence of leaf wetness***

928 While cuticles are considered a protective layer, they still allow chemicals to move between the
929 mesophyll and the leaf surface. Transport through the cuticle is a passive, bi-directional process
930 that is driven by gradients in concentration and, for charged molecules, electric potential.²⁵⁷
931 Compounds of different hydrophilicity move through the cuticle via different pathways. The
932 behavior of lipophilic compounds can be effectively predicted with the “solution-diffusion model”,

933 according to which the penetration rate of a given molecule is proportional to its partition
934 coefficient between the external solution and the cuticle (i.e., its solubility) and its diffusion
935 coefficient through the cuticle (i.e., its mobility).^{257,314} A compound's mobility is negatively
936 correlated with molecular weight, with larger molecules being less mobile than small ones, and is
937 strongly enhanced by increasing temperature (see Riederer and Friedmann³¹⁴ for more details).

938 The situation is different for hydrophilic molecules, whose movement across the leaf surface is
939 mediated by leaf wetness. Two mechanisms have been proposed but are based on indirect
940 empirical evidence rather than direct observations: (i) the cuticular pathway and (ii) the stomatal
941 pathway (reviewed by Fernández et al.^{74,257,303}; Figure 8).

942 The cuticular pathway involves the movement of solutes through “water pores”, dynamic channels
943 that form upon absorption of water molecules by the hydrophilic domains of the cuticle (i.e.,
944 polysaccharides and unesterified hydroxyl, carboxylic, and ester groups; Figure 8A, left).^{303,315}

945 The major evidence for the existence of water pores is the ability of cuticles to swell in contact
946 with water, with reported increase in mass of 1 – 20% for isolated cuticles depending on the plant
947 species and ambient relative humidity (Figure 8B-C).^{303,316,317} Like hydrophobic compounds, the
948 molecular weight, and thus hydrodynamic size, defines which solutes can traverse the cuticle.

949 Estimated water pore diameters range from 0.3 to 4.8 nm, dimensions that allow sugars and
950 chelated micronutrients to pass through.^{74,257} Molecular charge is another important feature that

951 controls the extent of cuticular transfer. As the bottom of the cuticle is more negatively charged
952 than its surface, cations and anions are taken up or released at different rates depending on the
953 solution's ionic strength (see Fernández and Eichert²⁵⁷ for details). Several other parameters
954 influence the cuticular pathway, namely ambient RH and temperature, pH and ion composition of

955 the applied solution, leaf age, and plant species.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, water pores are often unevenly
 956 distributed across the leaf surface, with the specific location depending on the plant species.^{33,60,318}
 957 For instance, the base of trichomes are preferential sites for fructose permeability in isolated
 958 cuticles of poplar leaves, whereas other species have high abundance of water pores close to
 959 stomata guard cells.³¹⁸

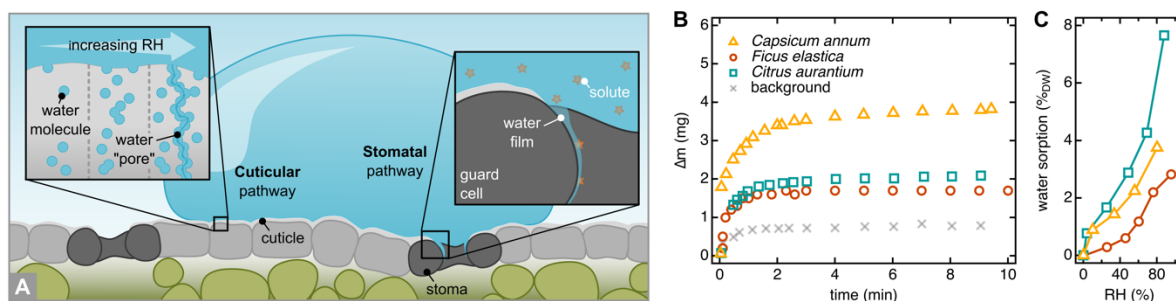


Figure 8 **A** Schematic illustrations of cuticular (right) and stomatal (left) pathways for the uptake of water and solutes (redrawn from Fernández et al.⁷⁴). **B** Water absorption kinetics in isolated cuticles of three broadleaves at 48 – 50% RH. The y-axis is the mass increase measured via magnetic suspension balance. **C** Relative increase in the cuticle’s mass (in percent of dry weight, %_{DW}) as a function of RH for the plant species in panel **B**. Data in **B** and **C** are replotted from Chamel et al.³¹⁹

960 The stomatal pathway involves the diffusion of hydrophilic solutes through water covering
 961 the surface of stomata guard cells (Figure 8A, right).⁷⁴ The existence of this pathway is based on
 962 the observation that the uptake of aqueous nutrient solutions deposited onto leaves is positively
 963 correlated with presence, density, and degree of aperture of leaf stomata even though direct water
 964 infiltration is prevented by their architecture.^{74,303} (In general, direct infiltration of aqueous
 965 solutions through stomata requires the application of an external pressure or the presence of
 966 surfactants.^{74,320,321}) Stomata need to be “active” for this pathway to be operative: activation has
 967 been observed in the presence of hygroscopic particles, bacteria, or fungal hyphae,^{74,229} which are
 968 also involved in the formation of microscopic wetness (Section 5.1). Overall, the stomatal pathway
 969 is deemed more efficient than the cuticular pathway in mediating the transport of hydrophilic

970 solutes across the cuticle, also because of its higher equivalent pore radius (3.5 to > 100 nm).^{229,322}
971 This mechanism also contributes to the transfer of nanoparticles ($\ll 1 \mu\text{m}$) to the leaf's interior.²²⁹

972 ***5.3 Bi-directional exchange of compounds through the cuticle***

973 After the establishments of pathways for mass transport, compounds can move across the cuticle
974 in two directions, with the prevalence of one over the other being controlled by their concentration
975 and ionic gradients.²⁵⁷ Overall, leaching of nutrients and metabolites following rain or other natural
976 wetting phenomena is ubiquitous,²³³ whereas the uptake of nutrients requires highly concentrated
977 solutions (10^{-3} to $>1 \text{ mol L}^{-1}$).^{74,257} Thus, under natural setting, release of water-soluble metabolites
978 likely outweighs uptake due to the overall diluted character of hydrometeors (Section 4.2.1.3). The
979 situation is different for hydrophobic compounds. Secondary metabolites can be present in high
980 concentrations in glandular trichomes and other specialized epidermal cells, which creates a
981 driving force for their excretion,¹⁰² while pollutants and pesticides are less concentrated inside the
982 leaf as compared to their surface and are thus more prone to be taken up (e.g., Wang et al.³²³).

983 Whereas evidence for foliar uptake is limited, there is ample data hinting that leaf wetness induces
984 the release of plant metabolites. Most evidence for this process was gathered between the 1950s
985 and 1980s and has been summarized by Tukey in a series of reviews.^{233,324,325} Briefly, both organic
986 and inorganic substances are leached. Organic metabolites include free sugars and sugar alcohols,
987 pectic substances, amino acids, organic acids, growth-regulating chemicals, vitamins, alkaloids,
988 and phenolic compounds, with carbohydrates being the most easily leached compound class.
989 Inorganic species comprise, among others, K^+ , Ca^{2+} , Mg^{2+} , and Mn^{2+} ;³²⁵ K^+ and Mn^{2+} have also
990 be employed as tracers for leaf leaching (e.g., Burkhardt et al.^{86,326}). Leaching rates vary across
991 not only plant species, but also individual plants of the same species and even leaves of the same

992 plant; ambient temperature, surface wetting properties, leaf age, and the chemistry of surface
993 wetness further influence this process. An overarching finding is that leaves just need to be wet to
994 leach – thus, dew, fog, and light, prolonged rain induce more efficient leaching than short and
995 intense rain. This early literature identified guttation and excretion from glandular trichomes and
996 nectaries as possible mechanisms underpinning this process, whereas leaching through stomata
997 was deemed negligible.³²⁵ Remarkably, the observations presented by Tukey align well with those
998 that led to the identification of cuticular and stomatal pathways in the foliar fertilization literature
999 (Section 5.2). However, to our knowledge, the hypothesis that these chemicals reach leaf surfaces
1000 through “water pores” remains untested.

1001 A second line of evidence for water-induced leaching is the observation that rain becomes enriched
1002 in organic chemicals as it travels through the canopy (reviewed by Van Stan and Stubbins³²⁷ and
1003 others^{99,328}). Over the past thirty years, several studies reported significantly higher dissolved
1004 organic carbon concentrations in rain samples collected below trees, either as throughfall (5 – 57
1005 mg_C L⁻¹) or stemflow (7 – 332 mg_C L⁻¹), compared to controls collected in an open canopy space
1006 (0.3 – 2 mg_C L⁻¹).³²⁷ This organic carbon is commonly referred to as tree dissolved organic matter,
1007 or tree-DOM, and is a complex mixture of organics that encompasses aromatic (16 – 30%) and
1008 aliphatic (24 – 31%) compounds, carbohydrates (14 – 25%), and a small amount of black
1009 carbon.^{329,330} Some of these constituents absorb sunlight, making tree-DOM potentially susceptible
1010 to photodegradation.³²⁷ According to the current understanding, tree-DOM is produced *in situ*
1011 through the erosion of epicuticular waxes during rain,³³¹ lignin degradation,³³² and excretion of
1012 compounds by the plant, its epiphytes,⁹⁸ and its phyllosphere.³³² To our knowledge, also this field
1013 does not consider leaching through cuticular water pores as a potential source of tree-DOM
1014 constituents – although the high bioavailability of this mixture³²⁷ fits with this view. Some

1015 inorganic ions (e.g., K^+ and Mn^{2+}) are also present in higher concentrations in throughfall
1016 compared to the incoming precipitation (see Ponette-González et al.⁹⁹ and refs therein). A few
1017 authors (e.g., Lequy et al.³³³) also quantified particulate matter content ($> 0.45 \mu m$) in throughfall,
1018 observing an enhancement as rain travels through the canopy – however, as we discussed in
1019 Section 5.2, particles larger than $1 \mu m$ cannot cross the cuticle, implying that they originate from
1020 the wash-off of material deposited *onto* leaf surfaces.

1021 *5.4 Bi-directional exchange of atmospheric gases through leaf wetness*

1022 In addition to establishing mass transfer pathways across the cuticle, surface wetness also mediates
1023 the leaf's interaction with the atmosphere. Historically, this process has been investigated for
1024 water-soluble gases (i.e., NH_3 and SO_2) and ozone, but an increasing body of knowledge indicates
1025 that other organic and inorganic species undergo similar processes.³³⁴

1026 In general, gas-phase species contribute surface mass if they undergo reactions with leaf wetness
1027 or chemicals dissolved therein. Sulfur dioxide (SO_2) and ozone are two gases that show this
1028 behavior.^{12,334–336} SO_2 is highly water soluble and has long been shown to be taken up by leaf
1029 wetness via reversible acid-base chemistry (reviewed by Erisman and Baldocchi³³⁵). However, in
1030 the presence of oxidants like ozone, hydrogen peroxide, and O_2 + trace metals (e.g., Mn^{2+}), a
1031 fraction of this dissolved SO_2 is irreversibly converted to sulfate and remains on the leaf after
1032 evaporation.^{326,335,336} Ozone is sparsely soluble in water and its uptake by leaf wetness involves
1033 irreversible chemical reactions.^{12,334} The identity of the compounds participating in these reactions
1034 is still unknown and may include organic and inorganic species^{13,337} – in agreement with known
1035 principles of aqueous-phase ozonation³³⁸ – of both endogenous and exogenous origin.¹³ In addition
1036 to SO_2 and ozone, a few lines of evidence hint that aqueous ammonia may be reacting with organic

1037 compounds dissolved in leaf wetness to form new organonitrogen species. This yet untested
1038 hypothesis may help explaining why throughfall is enriched in dissolved organic nitrogen
1039 compared to incoming precipitation and justifies the ability of canopies to retain ammonia and
1040 other inorganic nitrogen species.^{339–341}

1041 Acid-base chemistry is another way through which water-soluble gases interact with leaf wetness
1042 – however, in the absence of subsequent reactions, this uptake is only temporary: gases are released
1043 back to the atmosphere when wetness evaporates.³³⁶ This process is well-known for
1044 ammonia^{15,17,334,336} and SO₂^{334,335} and, more recently, has also been observed for organic acids
1045 (e.g., formic, propionic, butyric and isocyanic acids)⁴, HONO,^{18,276} and, potentially, other
1046 nitrogen-containing compounds.³³⁴ Wetness pH and presence of neutralizing species are two key
1047 variables controlling gas uptake.^{15,17,335}

1048 **6. Overview of leaf surfaces' chemical landscape and its reactivity**

1049 This final section summarizes the Review's main findings and contextualizes them in the broader
1050 environmental science literature. First, we discuss semi-quantitative estimates of surface mass
1051 coverage for each compound class (Section 6.1.1) and describe examples that better contextualize
1052 these numbers (Section 6.1.2). Second, we summarize known and expected surface reactivity of
1053 exogenous and endogenous chemicals with atmospheric oxidants (Section 6.2.1) and provide a
1054 unified view of the dynamic multiphase reactivity we anticipate on leaf surfaces (Section 6.2.2).
1055 Across the text, we highlight new frontiers for research in this evolving topic.

1056 **6.1 Relative contributions of exogenous and endogenous chemicals**

1057 *6.1.1 Expected contributions from different compound classes*

1058 This Review highlights the large number of factors influencing the leaf's surface chemical
1059 landscape – plant species, physiology, location, and meteorological conditions, just to name a few.
1060 Despite the anticipated variability, we used available literature data to estimate order-of-magnitude
1061 surface mass contributions for each compound class and better contextualize the *qualitative*
1062 evidence presented above. As this analysis emphasizes observational data, our results are
1063 inherently biased – either by selected analytes (e.g., PAHs are the most commonly measured
1064 SVOCs on leaves but not necessarily the most abundant on a per-mass basis) or environmental
1065 context (e.g., pesticides are dominantly studied in agricultural systems). To overcome these
1066 limitations and provide broader context to our conclusions, we also include top-down estimates
1067 based on alternative approaches (e.g., ecosystem-scale flux measurements for total SVOCs).

1068 Table 1 summarizes the outcome of these back-of-the-envelope calculations for the twelve classes
1069 of endogenous and exogenous species described in Sections 3 and 4, respectively. Results are
1070 expressed as surface mass coverage, i.e., the mass of organic species (individual molecules or
1071 particles) per unit of leaf area (Γ_i , in $\mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$). To aid comparison, we report this data both as a
1072 range ($\Gamma_i^{\min} - \Gamma_i^{\max}$) and log₁₀-based average ($\hat{\Gamma}_i$, where $\log_{10} \hat{\Gamma}_i = (\log_{10} \Gamma_i^{\min} + \log_{10} \Gamma_i^{\max}) /$
1073 2). For endogenous chemicals, we further specify if results are applicable for any or selected plant
1074 species, whereas for exogenous species we clarify if they are valid in general or for selected
1075 environments. The need for this elucidation depends on input data and assumptions underpinning
1076 each estimate. The full description of equations, assumptions, limitations, and alternative
1077 approaches is presented in the Supplementary Materials.

Table 1 Estimated contribution of each compound class to the total organic mass on leaf surfaces. Endogenous compounds are considered only in broadleaves (B), conifers (C), or all plant types (All), while exogenous species are found in rural/pristine areas (R), urban/polluted areas (U), in agricultural settings (A), or all environments (All). For each entry, we further specified if chemicals are spread homogeneously (O) or heterogeneously (E) across the surface; if the latter, Γ_i should be considered an *average* surface mass load. To facilitate comparison, we also report the \log_{10} -based average ($\hat{\Gamma}_i$) of each range. Text S2 provides a detailed description of equations, input data, derivations, and limitations of these estimates.

	Plant type	Environment	Distribution	Γ_i ($\mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$)		Equation
				range	\log_{10} -based average ($\hat{\Gamma}_i$)	
Endogenous compounds						
Trichomes	B ⁽¹⁾		O	0.027 – 30	0.90	S1
Guttation	B ⁽²⁾		E	0.0000049 – 10	0.0070	S2
Resins	C		E	0.00056 – 0.034	0.0044	S3
Phyllosphere	All		E	2.0 – 100	14	S4
Exogenous compounds, dry deposition						
PM ⁽³⁾		All	O	0.20 – 115	4.8	S5
Pollen		A ⁽⁴⁾	O	1.5 – 210	18	S6
Soil particles		All ⁽⁵⁾	O/E	0.015 – 126	1.4	S7
SVOCs		All	O	0.28 – 1.7 ⁽⁶⁾	0.68	S8
PAHs ⁽⁷⁾		All	O	0.000012 – 0.064	0.00088	S9
Exogenous compounds, wet deposition						
Rain		All	O/E	0.00000015 – 0.26	0.00020	S10
Fog		R	O	0.000020 – 0.35	0.0027	S11
		U		0.00040 – 4.1	0.040	
Pesticides		A	O	0.000014 – 0.35 ⁽⁸⁾	0.0022	S12

⁽¹⁾ Only plant species with glandular trichomes. ⁽²⁾ Based on data for crops but in principle applicable to any broadleaf. ⁽³⁾ Only water-insoluble components. ⁽⁴⁾ Only plants inside the crop field at pollen maturity. ⁽⁵⁾ Only leaves close to the soil (up to ≈ 50 cm). ⁽⁶⁾ To be considered a reasonable order of magnitude rather than a range. ⁽⁷⁾ Referred to a class of 5 – 15 individual PAH analogues. ⁽⁸⁾ Values up to 10 – 20 times higher right after application.

1078 Despite the assumptions and inherent limitations of our analysis, this exercise highlights three key
 1079 findings: (1) phyllosphere and PM contributions are always predominant; (2) wet deposition is
 1080 never competitive with other sources; (3) individual compounds are minor contributors to the total
 1081 deposited mass of organics.

1082 Biofilms and particles are key to the surface mass budget

1083 Based on our estimates, phyllosphere biofilms and dry-deposited particles are the most significant
 1084 contributors to the surface mass of organics, with log-based averages always $> 1 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$ and Γ_i^{min}

1085 generally $> 0.1 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$. Although Table 1's data for pollen and soil particles apply only to specific
1086 contexts (see Supplementary Materials), numbers for phyllosphere biofilms and generic PM have
1087 more general validity; furthermore, they are based on direct observational evidence, and we
1088 therefore deem them robust. Indeed, the main factor defining $\Gamma_{\text{phyllosphere}}$ is the average bacterial
1089 cell coverage of $10^6 - 10^7 \text{ cell cm}^{-2}$,¹⁴⁰ a number that appears well-established in the literature.
1090 Likewise, Γ_{PM} , Γ_{pollen} , and Γ_{soil} rely on direct measurements of particles' mass on leaves. A bias
1091 of the three latter estimates is the disproportional effect that a few large particles may have on the
1092 total deposited mass. This fact is highlighted by estimating Γ_i for the lowest PM size fraction
1093 ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$), which yields $\Gamma_{\text{PM}_{2.5}} = 0.014 - 16 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$ (see Supplementary Materials), at least an
1094 order of magnitude lower than Γ_{PM} . Still, the fact that Γ_{PM} , Γ_{pollen} , and Γ_{soil} fall in the same range
1095 strengthens our conclusions on the predominant contribution of particles to the total mass of
1096 organics expected on leaf surfaces.

1097 In addition to particles, a few classes of individual compounds are quantitatively important to the
1098 total surface mass. Specifically, we expect 50 – 90% of the biofilm's mass to consist of
1099 extracellular polymeric substances,^{142,143} yielding $\Gamma_{\text{EPS}} = 1.0 - 90 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$. Thus, the ubiquitous
1100 presence of phyllosphere bacteria across environments and plant species makes EPS potentially
1101 responsible for most non-particle mass on leaves. For selected plant species, trichome metabolites
1102 may also contribute substantially to the leaf's chemical landscape ($\Gamma_{\text{trichomes}} = 0.027 - 30 \mu\text{g}$
1103 cm^{-2}); if not in terms of mass, they will most likely dominate its surface reactivity (e.g., as
1104 observed in tobacco¹¹⁸).

1105 Wet deposition has a minor role in the direct delivery of chemicals

1106 The second key finding is that wet deposition has a consistently negligible contribution to the total
1107 deposited mass, even at elevated organic carbon concentrations. Indeed, our “best-case” scenario
1108 (i.e., highest possible level of deposited mass) of fog deposition in urban areas yields $\hat{\Gamma}_{\text{fog}} = 0.040$
1109 $\mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$, two orders of magnitude lower than particles and biofilms. Fog becomes noteworthy only
1110 if concentrations reach several hundreds of mgC L^{-1} , a situation encountered only in extremely
1111 polluted environments.²⁴³ Rain’s contribution also increases with pollution (e.g., in the presence
1112 of wildfires³⁴²) but it never becomes competitive with other sources. (Details on extreme-case
1113 estimates are in the Supplementary Material.)

1114 Despite the minor role of fog and rain in the *direct* delivering of chemicals, their *indirect*
1115 contributions may be substantial. A considerable limitation of our analysis is the missing account
1116 of leaching through water pores, a process that requires surface wetness to take place. Although
1117 several indirect lines of evidence point to its occurrence (Sections 5.2 – 5.4), this mechanism is
1118 not yet explicitly recognized as a source of surface chemicals – thus, at the current state of
1119 knowledge, any Γ_i estimate would be entirely speculative. From a qualitative standpoint, we expect
1120 this process to be ubiquitous, occur in the presence of surface wetness, and release hydrophilic,
1121 low-molecular-weight compounds (e.g., carbohydrates) on the leaf surfaces. (Water-soluble
1122 chemicals released from the partial dissolution of PM in surface wetness may also bring sizeable
1123 contributions to the total surface mass; see Supplementary Materials). Confirming the occurrence
1124 of these processes and assessing their role in shaping the leaf surface’s chemicals landscape is a
1125 main research priority.

1126 Individual compounds' contributions to the total mass are negligible

1127 The third overarching observation is that *individual* compounds are quantitatively unimportant in
1128 the overall mass balance. This fact is particularly striking for pesticides applied as aqueous sprays
1129 as these products are designed to be highly concentrated. Estimated surface concentrations range
1130 from 0.000014 to 0.35 $\mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$, with log-based averages of 0.0022 $\mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$ – more than three orders
1131 of magnitude lower than PM and phyllosphere biofilms. Pesticide residues can be up to 20 times
1132 higher shortly after application,²⁶² but not even in this scenario log-based averages exceed 0.05 μg
1133 cm^{-2} . PAHs, the semi-volatile substances most often studied and detected on leaf surfaces (Section
1134 4.1.4.2), are an order of magnitude less abundant than wet-deposited pesticides. Based on typical
1135 concentrations reported in the literature, we expect negligible contributions from other SVOCs
1136 (Section 4.1.4.2) and individual chemicals in fog and rain (Section 4.2.1.3), whereas individual
1137 metabolites excreted by phyllosphere bacteria may contribute similarly to pesticides in aqueous
1138 sprays ($\hat{\Gamma}_{\text{phyllo,met}} = 0.030 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$; details in the Supplementary Material). Overall, the limited
1139 role of individual molecules to the total deposited mass agrees with similar estimates for urban
1140 grime²² and common knowledge that, once in the environment, organic compounds are
1141 continuously processed to form mixtures of up to thousands of individual molecules.^{327,343–345} Of
1142 course, this estimate is mass-based and ignores toxicity or bioactivity – individual molecules may
1143 be low in mass but highly toxic, with important consequences for environmental health.

1144 6.1.2 Case-studies

1145 The previous section provides a limited account of how biological, geographical, and
1146 meteorological variables influence the leaf surface's chemical landscape. Indeed, most compound
1147 classes are found only in specific environments or/and selected plant species, with dynamic
1148 contributions also in the absence of surface reactivity. Here, we present two case-studies to clarify

1149 how these variables may shape the leaf surface's chemical landscape – and how one can make use
1150 of available information to make educated guesses on expected composition and reactivity.

1151 First, we consider a mature holm oak tree (*Quercus ilex*) close to a heavy-traffic road during a
1152 rainy winter day (Figure 9, left; this plant is an evergreen, so leaves are present throughout the
1153 year). In terms of endogenous substances, we expect only phyllosphere's contributions to be
1154 relevant. *Q. ilex* leaves are densely covered with stellate non-glandular trichomes but lack
1155 glandular ones⁹² – thus, trichome contributions can be excluded *a priori*. Likewise, $\Gamma_{\text{resin}} = 0$
1156 because oaks are broadleaves, not conifers. Guttation is in principle possible but will not occur on
1157 a cold, rainy day (Section 2.1.3). Endogenous substances leached through water pores are also
1158 likely present as rain drops maintain the leaves wet (not shown in Figure 9); for this specific
1159 example, this still unconstrained pathway likely determines how meteorological variables shape
1160 the leaf surface's chemical landscape (see below). For exogenous substances, we anticipate
1161 potential contributions only from PM, SVOCs, and organics in rain. Γ_{pollen} and $\Gamma_{\text{pesticide}}$ are only
1162 relevant to agricultural environments, whereas Γ_{soil} can be disregarded because leaves of a mature
1163 oak tree lay $\gg 50$ cm; likewise, $\Gamma_{\text{fog}} = 0$ due to our selected meteorological conditions. Given the
1164 tree's location and high density of non-glandular trichomes, we expect PM to be the most abundant
1165 contributor to the surface mass, even given removal by precipitation ($\Gamma_{\text{PM}}^* = \Gamma_{\text{PM}} \cdot (1 - f_{\text{rain}})$, with
1166 $f_{\text{rain}} = 0.51 - 0.7$;¹⁶² see also Section 4.1.1). Overall, we anticipate $\Gamma_{\text{tot}} = \Gamma_{\text{PM}}^* + \Gamma_{\text{phyllosphere}} +$
1167 $\Gamma_{\text{SVOCs}} + \Gamma_{\text{rain}} = 2.3 - 158 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$, with predominant contributions from the phyllosphere and
1168 PM (Table S1). Notably, meteorological variables appear secondary for this combination of plant
1169 species and location – in a sunny day, $\Gamma_{\text{tot}} = \Gamma_{\text{PM}} + \Gamma_{\text{phyllosphere}} + \Gamma_{\text{SVOCs}} = 2.5 - 217 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$
1170 (Table S1). This conclusion stems directly from the missing quantification of leaching though

1171 water pores: if substantial, this contribution will drive differences in both surface mass and overall
1172 chemical composition between wet and dry days.

1173 In a second case study, we consider a fully developed tobacco plant (*Nicotiana tabacum*) growing
1174 inside a greenhouse (Figure 9, right). We additionally suppose that the greenhouse has an efficient
1175 air filtration system (i.e., $\Gamma_{PM} = \Gamma_{SVOCs} = 0$), a drip irrigation system (i.e., leaves are never in
1176 contact with irrigation water), and that pesticides have been recently applied as aqueous sprays.
1177 Under these conditions, we anticipate a similar cumulative surface mass (driven by phyllosphere
1178 biofilms) but different chemical composition than the previous case-study. Trichome metabolites,
1179 phyllosphere biofilms, and, potentially, guttates and water pores leachates contribute endogenous
1180 compounds. Three trichome types have been documented on *N. tabacum* leaves, two of which are
1181 glandular; of these, only “tall” glandular trichomes excrete resinous material (including
1182 cembratrienediol and other diterpenes), whereas “short” ones function as hydathodes, releasing
1183 aqueous secretions rich in nicotine, toxic metals, and sometimes antimicrobial proteins (reviewed
1184 by Uzelac et al.¹⁰⁹). As of exogenous substances, we anticipate soil particles to dominate dry
1185 deposition. As fully grown *N. tobacco* plants are 1 to 3 m tall with leaves distributed across the
1186 whole height,³⁴⁶ we scaled Γ_{soil} to account for the fact that only 16 – 50% of the leaves hang less
1187 than 50 cm from the soil. Last, wet exogenous contributions include the applied pesticide, other
1188 formulation components (e.g., surfactants), and other organics present in the aqueous solvent
1189 (whose contribution we assume comparable to natural rain, and thus negligible). As we consider
1190 the situation of a *just applied* spray, we multiplied the pesticide’s contributions by 10 – 20,²⁶²
1191 driving $\Gamma_{pesticide}^{max} > 1 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$. Formulations also contains surfactants, and we thus predict more
1192 leaching through water pores than with natural wetness. By summing all relevant contributions,
1193 we obtain $\Gamma_{tot} = \Gamma_{trichomes} + \Gamma_{guttation} + \Gamma_{phyllosphere} + \Gamma_{soil}^* + \Gamma_{pesticide}^* = 2.0 - 210 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$,

1194 with major influences from the phyllosphere, soil particles (most relevant for leaves close to the
 1195 soil), and trichome metabolites (Table S1). As the previous case-study, endogenous substances
 1196 leached through water pores may be major drivers of the leaf surface's chemical landscape, but
 1197 their contribution remains unconstrained in our estimate. Notably, trichome metabolites are
 1198 unlikely to comprise more than 15% of the total surface mass of organics but will most likely drive
 1199 the leaf surface's reactivity (at least concerning O₃; see also Section 3.2.1).

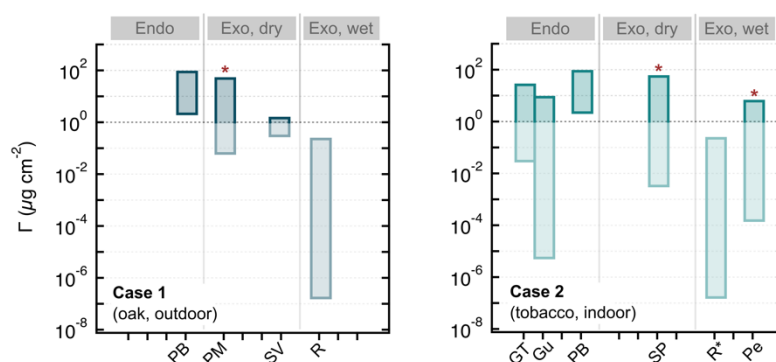


Figure 9 Case-studies elucidating the impact of plant species, location, and meteorological conditions on the leaf surface's chemical landscape. The first example (left panel) considers a holm oak close to a traffic-busy road during a rainy winter day; the second (right panel) illustrates a tobacco plant treated with aqueous pesticides inside a greenhouse. For each relevant contribution, we report the estimated concentration range from to Table 1; in three cases (clarified in the text and indicated with an asterisk), these contributions are scaled to correct for specific conditions. As in Table 1, Γ_i refers uniquely to the leaf surface mass of *organic* species. Acronyms on the x-axis indicate glandular trichomes (GT), guttation (Gu), phyllosphere biofilm (PB), particulate matter (PM), soil particles (SP), semi-volatile compounds (SV), rain (R or R*, indicating natural rain or “rain-like” contributions), and pesticides applied through aqueous sprays (Pe). Numeric data are in Table S1.

1200 6.2 Observed and expected multiphase reactions on leaf surfaces

1201 6.2.1 General overview of literature findings

1202 Beyond surface mass, the specific reactivity of leaf-deposited chemicals defines their contribution
 1203 to multiphase atmospheric processes. Table 2 provides a cohesive summary of the literature

1204 presented in previous sections divided by compound class and atmospheric oxidant. This overview
 1205 includes also the cuticle, as its interfacial location makes it an ideal site for multiphase chemistry.
 1206 Combinations of chemicals and oxidants are marked with at least one full dot if studies showed
 1207 evidence of reactivity (●, a few reports; ●●, several studies and/or reviews) and with a cross (×)
 1208 when reactivity was tested but not found. Asterisks highlight combinations that we anticipate based
 1209 on observed reactivity in other natural or multiphase systems; together with empty spaces, they
 1210 identify knowledge gaps and opportunities for future research.

Table 2 Summary of multiphase reactions for the twelve categories of organic compounds and particles identified in this Review. Leaf surface reactions reported in the literature are indicated with one (●; a few reports) or two (●●; several studies) filled dots if they take place, or with a cross (×) if the reactivity is negligible. Asterisks (*) indicate reactions that can be anticipated based on observed reactivity in the gas-phase and/or on other surfaces (“other media” refers to both), for specific chemicals of each category (e.g., abietic acid) or the whole category (e.g., PM). As atmospheric oxidants, we consider ozone (O₃), hydroxyl radicals (OH[•]), and light (hν).

	Atmospheric oxidant				Comments
	O ₃	OH [•]	hν	Other	
Cuticle	×			× (NO _x , SO ₂)	Based primarily on conifers
Endogenous compounds					
Trichomes	●		●		
Guttation			(*)		Proposed by Dibley et al. ¹²⁷
Resins	*	*		* (NO _x)	Proposed based on reactivity of individual components in other media (Sect. 3.3.2)
Phyllosphere	*	*	*		Proposed based on reactivity in other media (Sect. 3.4.2)
Exogenous compounds, dry deposition					
PM	*	*	*	* (NO _x)	Proposed based on reactivity in other media (Sect. 4.4.2)
Pollen	*			* (NO _x)	Proposed based on reactivity in air (Sect. 4.4.2)
Soil particles					
SVOCs					
PAHs	*		●		Proposed based on reactivity on other surfaces (Sect. 4.4.2)
Exogenous compounds, wet deposition					
Rain					
Fog					
Pesticides	●	●	●●	● (soil dust)	

1211 Four general trends emerge from Table 2. First, all tested chemicals *deposited onto the cuticle*
1212 show multiphase reactivity, whereas the cuticle itself is consistently unreactive. Even if this
1213 conclusion may not be valid in general (we note that the cuticle degradation literature is biased
1214 towards conifers, whose epicuticular waxes consist primarily of a saturated alcohol; Section 2.2.2),
1215 it clearly underlines the disparity between “living” and “non-living” matter. Although the cuticle
1216 itself is not a living structure, its composition responds dynamically to environmental stressors.³⁴⁷
1217 Thus, in living plants, the cuticle’s lack of multiphase reactivity is likely the result of evolutionary
1218 pressure, which resulted in the establishments of mechanisms that replace degraded components –
1219 as a matter of fact, solar radiation and microbes can degrade the cuticles of *dead* leaves (e.g., Logan
1220 et al.³⁴⁸)

1221 Second, available information on leaf surface reactivity reflects research interests rather than
1222 environmental relevance. According to Table 2, pesticide photochemistry is the most popular topic
1223 in the leaf surface reactivity literature – in our opinion, this fact reflects an interest in understanding
1224 and predicting pesticides loss in agricultural contexts rather than a predominance of leaf surface
1225 photochemistry in general. As light availability is a key driver for photochemistry, this reaction
1226 can be relevant for grasses, bushes, crops, and leaves in external canopy layers, but less *within* the
1227 canopy (Section 4.4.1). Ozone is the second most relevant multiphase oxidant, both in terms
1228 observed and expected reactivity. Unlike sunlight, ozone’s potential to undergo multiphase
1229 chemistry depends only on its background concentration, and we therefore expect leaf surface
1230 ozonolysis to be relevant in most terrestrial ecosystems. Future research on this process may also
1231 benefit from the large body of literature on wastewater ozonation^{338,349} and the growing number of
1232 investigations on multiphase indoor chemistry.^{294,296} Hydroxyl radicals have been largely
1233 overlooked despite their central role as outdoor atmospheric oxidants and broad reactivity

1234 spectrum; NO_x may also play a role, but direct empirical evidence of its involvement in leaf surface
1235 chemistry are still lacking.

1236 Third, the role of surface wetness in mediating and/or modifying leaf surface reactivity is another
1237 significant knowledge gap that emerged from our synthesis. As leaves are wet most of their time
1238 (Section 5.1) and water films impact the leaf's chemical landscape (Section 5.2 – 5.4), one cannot
1239 neglect ambient relative humidity (or RH in the leaf's boundary layer, depending on environmental
1240 conditions) when investigating the leaf surface reactions. In our view, water is likely to drive
1241 differences in multiphase reactivity between plant cuticles and other ambient indoor and outdoor
1242 surfaces (see Section 6.2.2.)

1243 Fourth, we note a lack of studies on phyllosphere biofilms and particulate matter, two compound
1244 classes we expect to dominate the leaf surface's mass (Section 6.1). Whereas PM reactivity can be
1245 inferred from the rich aerosol literature (Section 4.4.2), we are not aware of multiphase studies on
1246 extracellular polymeric substances and bacterial surfaces – although we know they can react with
1247 ozone, hydroxyl radicals, and light when dissolved or suspended in water (Section 3.4.2). Microbes
1248 can also act as ice nucleating particles,³⁵⁰ indicating the potential for complex surface interactions
1249 with water and, potentially, oxidants and other compounds. This chemistry is thought to be relevant
1250 to frost injury, but has yet to be considered in terms of multiphase reactivity.³⁵¹

1251 *6.2.2 Towards a unified view of leaf surface reactivity*

1252 This Review emphasizes the multifaceted and dynamic nature of the leaf surface's chemical
1253 landscape – if biological, geographical, and meteorological factors define its overall chemical
1254 composition (Section 6.1.2), exposure to varying oxidant levels and rapid changes in surface
1255 wetness further modify the landscape through multiphase reactions, bulk oxidations, and

1256 partitioning. Figure 10 illustrates a simplified overview of this cycle for selected species
1257 interacting with rain and generic gas-phase oxidants (these principles remain valid also for other
1258 forms of surface wetness and other endogenous and exogenous species not in Figure 10). For the
1259 sake of simplicity, we start from a “pristine” cuticle with no surface wetness and no adsorbed
1260 chemicals; complexity is added stepwise by considering contributions from abiotic reactions and
1261 the effect of changing environmental conditions. (The phyllosphere may also contribute to the leaf
1262 surface reactivity but is not included; see Section 3.4.2.)

1263 Particles and SVOCs are first brought onto the cuticle via dry deposition (Figure 10A; trichomes
1264 exudates and resins can also be included in this category). Then, rain adds surface wetness and
1265 supplies new species via two mechanisms (Figure 10B): (i) direct delivery of exogenous chemicals
1266 and particles and (ii) leaching of endogenous low-molecular-weight compounds via water pore
1267 formation. Dry-deposited particles may also undergo partial dissolution and release additional
1268 chemicals. We anticipate analogous processes in the presence of fog or low clouds and, potentially,
1269 when hydathodes excrete guttation drops.

1270 After chemicals are delivered onto the leaf, surface reactivity may occur (Figure 10C) – including
1271 gas-solid (multiphase, red arrows), gas-liquid (multiphase, blue arrows), and aqueous (bulk; blue
1272 arrows with empty head) reactions. Water-soluble gases (e.g., NH_3) will also undergo partitioning,
1273 further contributing reactants and/or modifying the solvent’s chemistry. Partitioning is favored by
1274 the dilute character of hydrometeors; in guttation drops, gas uptake may be hindered by high solute
1275 concentrations. Environmental disturbance will further impact the leaf surface chemistry (Figure
1276 10D). In this example, we consider factors inducing surface wetness evaporation, e.g., sunlight,
1277 wind, and decreasing ambient RH. Evaporation decreases the volume of liquid water,

1278 concentrating non-volatile chemicals and releasing water-soluble gases. The resulting changes in
1279 concentration gradient between the leaf's interior and its surface may start favoring metabolite
1280 uptake through water pores rather than their release (not shown in Figure 10). As surface wetness
1281 dissipates, aqueous-phase reactivity (blue arrows) may speed up (e.g., due to increased
1282 concentration of reactants in second-order reactions) or change altogether – shrinking volumes
1283 modify ionic strength and pH and may foster condensation reactions. We anticipate this chemistry
1284 to act on a rapid timescale (minutes to hours), reflecting typical evaporation rates observed in the
1285 environment.^{224,235}

1286 As wetness continues to evaporate, aqueous-phase reactivity becomes more and more intense until
1287 coming to a full stop; without more (macroscopic) wetness, only gas-solid reactions remain active
1288 (Figure 10E). (Under the right conditions, aqueous-phase reactivity may still be active in patches
1289 of microscopic surface wetness; not shown in Figure 10.) At the end of this first cycle, the leaf
1290 surface's chemical landscape appears different from the beginning; and as a new cycle takes place
1291 (Figure 10F), more substances are added, processed, and removed. Conceptually, this process is
1292 analogous to the growth and evolution of organic films on the surface of inert substrates
1293 indoor^{295,296} and outdoor,^{22,23} with differences related to specific features of the substrate (cuticles
1294 vs. inert materials), oxidant and substrates availability, and prevailing reaction conditions.

1295 Although simplified, this conceptual overview underscores the potential of leaf surface chemistry
1296 to explain some of the observations that motivated our work. For instance, interfacial ozonation of
1297 chemicals dissolved in leaf wetness may explain the non-stomatal O₃ uptake observed when leaves
1298 are wet.^{12–14} These chemicals may originate from the dissolution of deposited aerosols or surface
1299 biofilm components and/or may leach through water pores, explaining why this non-stomatal

1300 uptake is observed also in species lacking glandular trichomes. A better understanding of leaf
1301 surface chemistry may also help refine the description of organic gases' interaction with wet
1302 canopies. Wetness evaporation increases acidity and ionic strength, with consequent impacts for
1303 the release of water-soluble – due to shifting acid-base equilibria and salting effects. The co-
1304 occurrence of organics will also impact effective Henry's law coefficients, in addition to providing
1305 substrates that can supply the same gases through multiphase chemistry. For example, sunlight is
1306 a driver of wetness evaporation and may trigger the photodegradation of leaf surface organics,
1307 with the consequent release of gaseous products. Wetness evaporation may also enable
1308 condensation reactions – a process that may help explain, e.g., the presence of chromophores and
1309 organonitrogen species in tree-DOM.^{327,339,341} Last, given its ubiquitous presence and substantial
1310 contribution to the total leaf surface mass (Section 6.1), phyllosphere biofilms may be overlooked
1311 contributors to the leaf surface reactivity, promoting both biotic and abiotic (redox) chemistry
1312 (Section 4.3.2). Collectively, these yet untested hypotheses highlight the potential of leaf surface
1313 chemistry as an emerging topic in several environmental science disciplines.

(light grey) and prevailing meteorological conditions (dark grey). See Section 6.2.2 for a comprehensive description of this figure.

1314

1315 **7. Conclusions**

1316 Drawing from the broad natural science literature, this Review provides unequivocal evidence for
1317 the presence of a rich blend of organics on leaf surfaces. Although the specific amount and
1318 chemical composition are shaped by a complex interplay of biological, geographical, and
1319 meteorological factors, our back-of-the-envelope calculations indicate that cumulative mass loads
1320 are substantial ($\gg 2 \mu\text{g cm}^{-2}$) and likely driven by phyllosphere biofilms, dry-deposited particles,
1321 and, potentially, leaching of endogenous chemicals in the presence of surface wetness. Globally,
1322 these concentrations scale to $\gg 3 \text{ Tg}$ of organic material available for multiphase chemistry (details
1323 in the Supplementary Materials), underscoring the importance of including leaf surface reactions
1324 when considering interactions between plants, atmosphere, and the surrounding ecosystem. We
1325 hope our work will spark a renewed interest in multidisciplinary research leveraging expertise
1326 across natural science disciplines – from environmental and analytical chemistry to plant sciences,
1327 biochemistry, microbiology, and ecology.

1328

1329 **Supporting information**

1330 Details on the chemical composition of *Fagus sylvatica* leaf cuticles (Text S1), estimates of
1331 individual classes' contribution to the total organic mass deposited on leaf surfaces (Text S2),
1332 global estimate of the mass of organics on plant leaves (Text S3); numeric data used for Figure 9
1333 (Table S1).

1334 **Abbreviations list**

1335 DRH, deliquescence relative humidity; EPS, extracellular polymeric substances; E_i/P , fraction of
1336 precipitation lost to evaporation at the top of the canopy; f , interception factor; HONO, nitrous
1337 acid; HNO₃, nitric acid; K_{OA} , octanol-air partition coefficient; $K_{\text{plant-air}}$, plant-air partition
1338 coefficient; NH₃, ammonia; NO_x, nitrogen oxides; NO₂, nitrogen dioxide; O₃, ozone; OH, hydroxyl
1339 radical; PAHs, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons; PFAS, perfluoroalkyl substances; PM,
1340 particulate matter; PM_{2.5}, particulate matter (< 2.5 μm); POPs, persistent organic pollutants; RH,
1341 relative humidity; RH_{amb}, ambient relative humidity; RH_{leaf}, relative humidity in the leaf boundary
1342 layer; S , canopy water storage capacity; SO₂, sulfur dioxide; SVOCs, semi-volatile organic
1343 compounds; tree-DOM, tree dissolved organic matter; Γ_i , mass of organic per unit of leaf surface
1344 area (range); $\hat{\Gamma}_i$, mass of organic per unit of leaf surface area (og₁₀-based average).

1345 **Bibliography**

1346 Rachele Ossola completed her undergraduate studies in Chemistry at the University of Milan
1347 (Bachelor, 2014) and EPFL (Master, 2016). She gained her doctorate in Environmental Chemistry
1348 from ETH Zurich (2021) investigating the aquatic photochemistry of dissolved organic matter
1349 under the supervision of Prof. K. McNeill. Since 2022, she is a Swiss National Science Foundation

1350 postdoctoral fellow in the Farmer lab, where she studies multiphase reactions on leaf surfaces. Her
1351 research focuses on understanding the reaction mechanisms of complex organic mixtures at the
1352 plant-water-air interface.

1353 Prof. Delphine Farmer received her BSc in Chemistry from McGill University, her MS in
1354 Environmental Science, Policy, and Management from the University of California at Berkeley,
1355 and her Ph.D. in Chemistry from Berkeley. She held a NOAA Climate and Global Change
1356 Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Colorado Boulder before moving to her current
1357 position as a Professor at Colorado State University. She is a recipient of the 2013 Arnold and
1358 Mabel Beckman Young Investigator Award and the 2022 AGU Ascent Award. Her research
1359 focuses on atmospheric and indoor chemistry, with particular emphasis on processes that control
1360 atmospheric sources and sinks of organic gases and particles.

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