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Electronic Supporting Information

A Click Chemistry Strategy for Visualization of Plant Cell Wall Lignification

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Experimental Procedures

Materials The azide- and alkyne-tagged coniferyl alcohol probes CA-Az and CA-Alk, and 7-nitrobenz-2-oxa-1,3diazol (NBD) click dyes NBD-Az, NBD-Alk, and NBD-BCN were synthesized as described below, according to the schemes shown in Figure S1. Coniferyl alcohol CA¹ and its protected derivative 1,² 2-azidoethylamine 5,³ and NBD derivative 7^4 were synthesized according to literature methods. Other chemicals were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich or Fisher Scientific and were used as received.

Spectroscopy NMR spectra were acquired on Bruker Biospin AVANCE 500 MHz or AVANCE 700 MHz spectrometers fitted with cryogenically-cooled 5-mm gradient probes with inverse geometry (proton coils closest to the sample) and spectral processing used Bruker's Topspin 3.2 (Mac) software. The central solvent peak was used as internal reference in each case [δ_{H}/δ_{C} : acetone, 2.04/29.80; methanol, 3.31/49.00; dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO), 2.49/39.50 ppm]. The standard Bruker implementations of 1D (¹H and ¹³C) and 2D (gradient-selected COSY, HSQC, and HMBC) NMR experiments were used for routine structural assignments of newly synthesized compounds. For structural characterization of synthetic lignins (DHPs), adiabatic heteronuclear single quantum coherence (HSQC) experiments ("hsqcetgpsisp2.2") were carried out using the parameters described previously⁵ and used DMSO- d_6 /pyridine- d_5 (4:1, v/v, 30-40 mg/600 µL) as solvent. Processing used typical matched Gaussian apodization in F2 (LB = -0.5, GB = 0.001), and squared cosine-bell and one level of linear prediction (32 coefficients) in F1. UV-vis absorption spectra were recorded on a Shimadzu UV-1800 spectrophotometer at ambient temperature, and data acquisition used Shimadzu UVProbe software. Fluorescent spectroscopy was conducted with a PTI QuantaMaster Model C-60/2000 spectrofluorometer (Photon Technology International) at 25 ± 0.1 °C and data acquisition used FelixGX software (Photon Technology International).

Compound 3 To a biphasic solution of compounds **1** (5.3 g, 0.02 mol) and **2** (8.9 mL, 0.06 mol) in toluene (60 mL) and sodium hydroxide aq. (50%, w/w, 20 mL) was added tetrabutylammonium bromide (320 mg, 0.001 mol) at room temperature. After being stirred overnight (~15 h), the reaction mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (50 mL), washed with saturated aqueous ammonium chloride (3 x 100 mL), dried over sodium sulfate, and evaporated under reduced pressure. Purification by silica-gel chromatography yielded the title compound as a white solid, 7.0 g, 92% yield. ¹H NMR (chloroform-*d*): $\delta = 1.47$ (9H, s, H4'), 1.59-1.70, 1.91-1.97, 2.00-2.08 (6H, broad m, THP-H2, -H3, and -H4), 3.56-3.63 (1H, broad m, THP-H5a), 3.86 (3H, s, OMe), 3.94-3.98 (1H, broad m, THP-H5b), 4.00 (2H, s, H1'), 4.22 (2H, broad d, J = 6.3 Hz, H γ), 5.37 (1H, broad s, THP-H1), 6.14-6.20 (1H, m, H β), 6.55 (1H, d, J = 15.8 Hz, H α), 6.89 (1H, broad d, J = 6.3 Hz, H6) 6.96 (1H, broad s, H2), 7.06 (1H, broad d, J = 6.3 Hz, H5). ¹³C NMR (chloroform-*d*): $\delta = 18.80$ (THP-C3), 25.19 (THP-C4), 28.09 (C4'), 30.26 (THP-C2), 55.99 (OMe), 62.15 (THP-C5), 67.47 (C1'), 71.91 (C γ), 81.59 (C3'), 97.42 (THP-C1), 109.87 (C2), 117.45 (C5), 119.80 (C6), 123.53 (C β), 131.02 (C1), 133.30 (C α), 146.16 (C4), 150.17 (C3), 169.65 (C2'). HR-MS (ESI) calcd. for C₂₁H₃₄N₁O₆ [(M+NH4)⁺]: 396.2381; found: 396.2383.

Compound 4 To a solution of compound **3** (1.5 g, 0.004 mol) in ethanol (36 mL), lithium hydroxide monohydrate (340 mg, 0.008 mol) in water (4 mL) was added dropwise at 0 °C. After 4 h of stirring at room temperature, the reaction mixture was slowly acidified with 1 M aqueous hydrochloric acid (20 mL) at 0 °C, further stirred at that temperature for 10 min, and then extracted with ethyl acetate (100 mL). The organic layer was washed with brine (3 x 100 mL), dried over sodium sulfate and evaporated under reduced pressure. The resulting solid was washed with cold chloroform-hexane (4:1, v/v, ~50 mL) to give essentially pure compound **4** as a colorless solid, 890 mg, 93% yield. ¹H NMR (acetone-*d*₆): δ = 3.86 (3H, s, OMe), 4.10 (2H, s, H1'), 4.20 (2H, dd, *J* = 6.3, 1.1 Hz, Hγ), 6.18 (1H, dt, *J* = 15.9, 6.2 Hz, Hβ), 6.55 (1H, d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, Hα), 6.77 (1H, d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, H5), 6.89 (1H, dd, *J* = 8.1, 1.6 Hz, H6), 7.10 6.77 (1H, d, *J* = 1.6 Hz, H2). ¹³C NMR (acetone-*d*₆): δ = 56.12 (OMe), 67.08 (C1'), 72.33 (Cγ), 110.04 (C2), 115.67 (C6), 120.97 (C5), 123.55 (Cβ), 129.66 (C1), 133.65 (Cα), 147.44 (C4), 148.40 (C3) 171.65 (C2'). HR-MS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₂H₁₃O₅ [(M-H)⁻]: 237.0768; found: 237.0771.

CA-Az To a solution of compounds **4** (240 mg, 0.001 mol), 2-azidoethylamine trifluoroacetate **5** (220 mg, 0.0011 mmol), and benzotriazol-1-yl-oxytripyrrolidinophosphonium hexafluorophosphate (PyBOP) (572 mg, 0.0011 mol) in anhydrous *N*,*N*-dimethylformamide (DMF) (2 mL) and dichloromethane (5 mL) was added *N*,*N*-diisopropylethylamine (DIEA) (870 µL, 0.005 mol) at room temperature. After being stirred overnight (~15 h), the reaction mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (100 mL), washed with saturated ammonium chloride aqueous solution (3 x 100 mL) and brine (3 x 100 mL), dried over sodium sulfate, and evaporated under reduced pressure. Purification by silica-gel chromatography yielded the title compound as colorless oil, 290 mg, 95% yield. ¹H NMR (chloroform-*d*): δ = 3.46-3.51 (4H, m, H4' and H5'), 3.91 (3H, s, OMe), 4.01 (2H, s, H1'), 4.20 (2H, dd, *J* = 6.5, 1.2 Hz, Hγ), 5.69 (1H, broad s, phe-OH), 6.11 (1H, dt, *J* = 15.8, 6.5 Hz, Hβ), 6.55 (1H, d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, Hα), 6.92-6.86 (3H, overlapped, H2, H5 and H6). ¹³C NMR (chloroform-*d*): δ = 38.21 (C5'), 50.81 (C4'), 55.86 (OMe), 69.02 (C1'), 72.24 (Cγ), 108.34 (C2), 114.46 (C5), 120.48 (C6), 121.85 (Cβ), 128.65 (C1), 134.20 (Cα), 145.88 (C4), 146.61 (C3), 170.15 (C2'). HR-MS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₁H₁₃N₆O₄ [(M+NH₄)⁺]: 324.1667; found: 324.1653.

CA-Alk To a solution of compounds **4** (240 mg, 0.001 mol), propargylamine hydrochloride (101 mg, 0.0011 mol), and PyBOP (572 mg, 0.0011 mol) in anhydrous DMF (2 mL) and dichloromethane (5 mL) was added DIEA (870 μ L, 0.005 mol) at room temperature. After being stirred overnight (~15 h), the reaction mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (100 mL), washed with saturated ammonium chloride aqueous solution (3 x 100 mL) and brine (3 x 100 mL), dried over sodium sulfate, and evaporated under reduced pressure. Purification by silica-gel chromatography yielded the title compound as a colorless solid, 260 mg, 94% yield. ¹H NMR (acetone-*d*₆): δ = 2.64 (1H, t, *J* = 2.5 Hz, H6'), 3.87 (3H, s, OMe), 3.94 (2H, s, H1'), 4.04 (2H, dd, *J* = 5.9, 2.5 Hz, H4'), 4.19 (2H, broad d, *J* = 5.8 Hz, H γ), 6.21 (1H, dt, *J* = 15.9, 5.8 Hz, H β), 6.58 (1H, d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, H α), 6.79 (1H, d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, H5), 6.90 (1H, dd, *J* = 8.1, 1.9 Hz, H6), 7.11 (1H, d, *J* = 1.9 Hz, H2). ¹³C NMR (acetone-*d*₆): δ = 27.98 (C4'), 55.84 (OMe), 69.52 (C1'), 71.31 (C6'), 72.37 (C γ), 81.12 (C5'), 109.79 (C2), 115.46 (C5), 120.74 (C6), 122.81 (C β), 129.23 (C1), 133.79 (C α), 147.32 (C4), 148.14 (C3), 169.33 (C2'). HR-MS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₅H₂₁N₂O₄ [(M+NH₄)⁺]: 293.1496; found: 293.1502.

NBD-Alk To a solution of compounds **7** (337 mg, 0.001 mol), propiolic acid **8** (68 µL, 0.0011 mol), and PyBOP (572 mg, 0.0011 mol) in anhydrous DMF (2 mL) and dichloromethane (5 mL) was added DIEA (870 µL, 0.005 mol) at room temperature. After being stirred overnight (~15 h), the reaction mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (100 mL), washed with saturated ammonium chloride aqueous solution (3 x 100 mL) and brine (3 x 100 mL), dried over sodium sulfate, and evaporated under reduced pressure. Purification by silica-gel chromatography yielded the title compound as an orange solid, 236 mg, 82% yield. ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 3.36-3.45 (2H, broad m, H13), 3.50-3.61 (2H, broad m, H12), 4.17 (1H, s, H17), 6.42 (1H, d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, H5), 8.52 (1H, d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, H6), 8.89, 9.94 (2H, broad, NH). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 37.37 (C13), 42.34 (C12), 76.16 (C17), 78.12 (C16), 99.24 (C5), 121.00 (C7), 137.96 (C6), 144.10 (C4), 144.53 (C3), 145.28 (C8), 152.08 (C15). HR-MS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₁H₁₀N₅O₄ [(M+H)⁺]: 276.0728; found: 276.0728.

NBD-Az To a solution of compounds 7 (337 mg, 0.001 mol), 2-azidoacetic acid 9 (82 µL, 0.0011 mol), and PyBOP (572 mg, 0.0011 mol) in anhydrous DMF (2 mL) and dichloromethane (5 mL) was added DIEA (870 µL, 0.005 mol) at room temperature. After being stirred overnight (~15 h), the reaction mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (100 mL), washed with saturated ammonium chloride aqueous solution (3 x 100 mL) and brine (3 x 100 mL), dried over sodium sulfate, and evaporated under reduced pressure. Purification by silica-gel chromatography yielded the title compound as an orange solid, 230 mg, 75% yield. ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 3.39-3.44 (2H, broad m, H13), 3.53-3.69 (2H, broad m, H12), 3.83 (1H, s, H16), 6.44 (1H, d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, H5), 8.32 (1H, broad, NH). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 37.36 (C13), 42.73 (C12), 50.87 (C16), 99.19 (C5), 120.93 (C7), 138.03 (C6), 144.11 (C4), 144.52 (C3), 145.41 (C8), 167.85 (C15). HR-MS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₀H₁₁N₈O₄ [(M+H)⁺]: 307.0898; found: 307.0895.

NBD-BCN To a solution of bicyclo[6.1.0]non-4-yn-9-ylmethyl *N*-{2-[2-(2-aminoethoxy)ethoxy]ethyl}carbamate **11** (50 mg, 0.00015 mol) in anhydrous acetonitrile (5 mL) was added 4-chloro-7-nitrobenzofurazan **10** (26 mg, 0.00013 mol) and oven-dried potassium carbonate (18 mg, 0.00013) successively at 0 °C. After being stirred for 3 h at room temperature, the reaction mixture was added with saturated sodium bicarbonate aq. (50 mL) and dichloromethane (50 mL). The organic layer was dried over sodium sulfate, and evaporated under reduced pressure. Purification by silica-gel chromatography yielded the title compound as orange foam, 44 mg, 60% yield. ¹H NMR (acetone-*d*₆): $\delta = 0.82$ -0.92 (2H, s, H22), 1.22-1.35, 1.50-1.62 (5H, overlapped, H21 and H23), 2.09-2.26 (4H, m, H24), 3.25 (2H, t, *J* = 5.7 Hz, H17), 3.51 (2H, t, *J* = 5.7 Hz H16), 3.58-3.61 (2H, broad m, H15), 3.63-3.67 (2H, broad m, H14), 3.76 (2H, broad, H12), 3.87 (2H, t, *J* = 4.9 Hz, H13), 8.52 (1H, d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, H6)), 4.07 (2H, d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, H20), 6.54 (1H, d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, H5), 8.53 (1H, d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, H6). ¹³C NMR (acetone-*d*₆): $\delta = 18.64$ (C21), 20.78 (C22), 21.65 (C24), 30.27 (C23), 41.21 (C17), 44.49 (C12), 62.47 (C20), 69.25 (C13), 70.60 (C16), 70.93 (C15), 71.15 (C14), 99.27 (C25), 99.84 (C5), 123.52 (C7), 137.83 (C6), 145.13 (C4), 145.49 (C3), 145.77 (C8), 157.37 (C19). HR-MS (ESI) calcd. for C₂₃H₃₃N₆O₇ [(M+NH₄)⁺]: 505.2406; found: 505.2402. **Synthetic Lignins** Dehydrogenation polymers (DHPs) from CA alone (G-DHP), and in combination with CA-Az (G-DHP-Az), and with CA-Alk (G-DHP-Alk) were generated via horseradish peroxidase (HRP)-catalyzed polymerization:⁵ Acetone/sodium phosphate buffer (240 mL, 0.1 M, pH 6.5) (1:9, vol/vol) containing the precursors (CA 1.0 mmol for C-DHP; CA / CA-Az or CA-Alk = 0.85 / 0.15 mmol for G-DHP-Az or G-DHP-Alk), and a separate solution of hydrogen peroxide (1.2 mmol) in 240 mL of water were added by peristaltic pump over a 20-h period at 25 °C to 60 mL of buffer containing HRP (Sigma-Aldrich, type VI, 250-330 U, 5 mg). The reaction mixture was further stirred for 4 h. The precipitate was collected by centrifugation (10,000 × g, 15 min), washed with ultrapure water (100 mL × 3), and lyophilized (weight yield 79%, G-DHP; 89%, G-DHP-Az; 66%, G-DHP-Alk).

CuAAC reactions of G-DHP-Az and G-DHP-Alk To a solution of DHPs (G-DHP-Az or G-DHP-Alk, 15.0 mg), NBD dyes (NBD-Alk for G-DHP-Az or NBD-Az for G-DHP-Alk, 10 μ mol), and tris(3-hydroxypropyltriazolyl-methyl)amine (THPTA) (0.9 mg, 2 μ mol) in DMSO (900 μ l) was successively added copper sulfate (0.5 mg, 2 μ mol) in ultrapure water (50 μ L) and sodium ascorbate (2 mg, 10 μ mol) in ultrapure water (50 μ L) at room temperature. After being stirred at room temperature, the reaction mixture was poured into 0.02 M hydrochloric acid aq. (100 mL). The precipitate was collected by filtration through a nylon membrane (pore size, 0.45 μ m), washed with ultrapure water (500 mL), and lyophilized to give the derivatized DHPs (G-DHP-Az:NBD-Alk from G-DHP-Az, 15.4 mg; G-DHP-Alk:NBD-Az from G-DHP-Alk, 15.3 mg).

SPAAC reaction of G-DHP-Az A solution of G-DHP-Az (15 mg) and NBD-BCN (10 μ mol) in DMSO-water (9:1, v/v, 500 μ L) was stirred at room temperature for 8 h, and the mixture was poured into 0.02 M hydrochloric acid aq. (100 mL). The precipitate was collected by filtration through a nylon membrane (pore size, 0.45 μ m), washed successively with ultrapure water (200 mL) and ethanol-water (1:1, v/v, 200 mL), and lyophilized to give the derivatized DHP (G-DHP-Az:NBD-BCN, 15.3 mg).

Metabolic labeling and fluorescence imaging of *Arabidopsis thaliana* stems Stems of 12-week-old *Arabidopsis thaliana* ecotype Col-0 plants (about 25-30 cm high green stems) were cut of from the rosette at the base in the morning. Immediately after harvesting, stem sections (200 μ m) with secondary growth were made and placed in water. For metabolic labeling, the stem sections were incubated for 1 h in liquid ½ MS medium⁶ supplemented with 100 μ M CA-Az, CA-Alk, or CA, in the absence or presence of a H₂O₂ scavenger, potassium iodide (KI, 5 mM),⁷. The sections were subsequently washed twice in phosphate buffered saline (PBS), and incubated for 1 h in PBS supplemented with fluorophores. CuAAC labeling was performed with 1 μ M NBD-Alk or NBD-Az, in the presence of 1 mM CuSO₄, 1 mM sodium ascorbate and 200 μ M THPTA. SPAAC labeling was done with 1 μ M Fluor488-dibenzocyclooctyne (Fluor488-DBCO, Sigma-Aldrich). The labeled sections were directly analyzed by confocal laser scanning microscope (Zeiss LSM710) with a 458/482 nm excitation/emission filter set. Sections treated with a tagged CA and control sections treated with non-tagged CA were visualized under identical microscopic conditions. The fluorescent intensity of the stem sections was quantified using ImageJ 1.48v (http://imagej.nih.gov). For each

of the imaging conditions, a minimum of five sections with comparable dimensions was selected and the green fluorescent area of each was determined using the following HSB (hue, saturation, and brightness) pass filter settings: H= 85, S=200 and B=70. The selected area was subsequently calculated using the Area function of ImageJ. Average values and their standard deviations are presented in Figure S5B.

Metabolic labeling and fluorescence imaging of *Arabidopsis thaliana* seedlings Seeds of *Arabidopsis thaliana* ecotype Col-0 were surface-sterilized and transferred to square petri dishes with $\frac{1}{2}$ MS medium. The plates were left overnight at 4 °C for stratification after which they were transferred to a temperature-controlled chamber (21 °C, 16 h light/8 h dark light cycle). Three days after germination the seedlings were incubated each morning and evening with a droplet of 0.1% agar in $\frac{1}{2}$ MS containing 100 μ M CA-Az and CA. After 48 h, the seedlings were rinsed twice in PBS and incubated for 0.5 h at RT with 1 μ M NBD-Alk, 1 mM CuSO₄, 1 mM ascorbic acid, and 200 μ M THPTA for CuAAC labeling. After a quick rinse in PBS, seedlings were 2 min incubated in MQ water containing 100 μ g/mL propidium iodide to counterstain the cell walls.^{2,7} Live imaging of the samples was performed by CLSM (Zeiss LSM710) with a 458/482 nm excitation/emission filter set.

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Fig. S1 Synthetic scheme for azide- and alkyne-tagged coniferyl alcohol (CA) derivatives, CA-Az and CA-Alk, and azide-, alkyne-, and bicyclo[6.1.0]nonyne-tagged nitrobenzofuran dyes, NBD-Az, NBD-Alk, and NBD-BCN.



Fig. S2 Aliphatic sub-regions of short-range ${}^{1}H{-}^{13}C$ correlation (HSQC) NMR spectra of synthetic lignins (DHPs) prepared from 100% CA (A), and 85% CA in combination with 15% CA-Az (B) or CA-Alk (C).



Fig. S3 Overlays of aliphatic ¹H–¹³C HSQC NMR spectra of synthetic lignins (DHPs) before and after click reactions with NBD dyes. (**A**) Azide-tagged DHP (GDHP-Az) derivatized with alkyne-tagged NBD (GDHP-Az:NBD-Alk); (**B**) Alkyne-tagged DHP (GDHP-Alk) derivatized with azide-tagged NBD (GDHP-Alk:NBD-Az); (**C**) Azide-tagged DHP (GDHP-Az) derivatized with BCN-tagged NBD (GDHP-Az:NBD-BCN). For structure abbreviations, also see Figs. S1 and S2.



Fig. S4 Normalized UV-vis (left) and fluorescence (right) spectra of synthetic lignins (DHPs) before and after click reactions with NBD dyes. (**A**) Azide-tagged DHP (GDHP-Az) derivatized with alkyne-tagged NBD (GDHP-Az:NBD-Alk). (**B**) Alkyne-tagged DHP (GDHP-Alk) derivatized with azide-tagged NBD (GDHP-Alk:NBD-Az). (**C**) Azide-tagged DHP (GDHP-Az) derivatized with BCN-tagged NBD (GDHP-Az:NBD-BCN).

(Fig. S5)



Fig. S5 Arabidopsis stem sections labeled with azide- or alkyne-tagged CA mimics, CA-Az and CA-Alk, and subsequently derivatized via *in vivo* click reactions with azide-tagged NBD (NBD-Az), alkyne-tagged NBD (NBD-Alk), or DBCO-tagged Fluor488 (Fluor488-DBCO) dyes. (**A**) Wide views showing whole stem sections. Scale bars denote 200 μ m. (**B**) Green fluorescence (area in pixels) was quantified for each image showing the stem sections labeled with the chemical reporter-tagged CAs and the corresponding control treated with non-tagged CAs. Despite the variations between individual sections, the sections treated with the chemical reporter-tagged CAs were always significantly brighter than their corresponding controls treated with non-tagged CA (CA-Az/CA: $p = 2.72 \times 10^{-4}$; CA-Alk/CA: $p = 3.00 \times 10^{-8}$; CA-Az/CA: $p = 1.87 \times 10^{-6}$). (**C**) A selected magnified view and fluorescence intensity profile showing the fiber cells mainly labeled in the cell corners and compound middle lamellae. Scale bar denotes 10 μ m.



Fig. S6 Arabidopsis stem sections labeled with azide- or alkyne-tagged CA mimics, CA-Az and CA-Alk, in the presence or absence of potassium iodide (KI), and subsequently derivatized via *in vivo* click reactions with azide-tagged NBD (NBD-Az), alkyne-tagged NBD (NBD-Alk), or DBCO-tagged Fluor488 (Fluor488-DBCO) dyes. Scale bars denote 50 µm.











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