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1 4 Biogenic volatile organic compounds in Amazonian forest ecosystems

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10 Abstract (150 words, for web purposes only)

11 Plants produce and emit a large array of volatile metabolites termed biogenic volatile organic 12 compounds (BVOCs) as an integral part of primary and secondary metabolism. Although well studied for their impacts on atmospheric processes, there is much to learn about their biological 13 14 functions. It is now recognized that many cellular processes leave unique volatile fingerprints 15 behind that can be studied through the acquisition of BVOC profiles in the headspace 16 atmospheres of plants across a wide range of spatial and temporal scales from leaves, whole 17 organisms, ecosystems, and regions and from seconds to seasons. In this chapter, in-plant BVOC 18 production and potential functional roles in the Amazon Basin are discussed. The chapter closes 19 with some suggested future research on Amazonian BVOCs, specifically - detailed studies on the 20 identities, fluxes, and environmental dependencies of BVOC emissions including the 21 characterization of potential bi-directional exchange.

22

23 4.1 Introduction

24 Biogenic volatile organic compounds (BVOCs) are produced directly within plants via 25 biochemical pathways associated with primary and secondary metabolic processes. Although 26 non-volatile metabolites are typically bound within specific cellular organelles in lipids or 27 aqueous phases, BVOC volatile metabolites can readily partition between these phases and the 28 intracellular airspace (Fall 2003). Thus, many BVOCs may freely exchange among cellular 29 organelles, cells, and tissues, contributing to an integration of whole organism carbon and energy 30 metabolism. Moreover, exchange of the intracellular airspace with the atmosphere may help 31 coordinate the metabolisms of different plants within an ecosystem in response to environmental 32 and biological factors (Yan and Wang 2006). In addition, land-atmosphere exchange of VOCs 33 integrates local and regional atmospheric chemistry with plant metabolism (Jardine et al. 2011a). 34

35 The emerging field of volatile ecosystem metabolomics integrates the volatile component into the 36 chemical, physical, and biological processes involved in the processing of metabolites within the 37 land-atmosphere interface including potential perturbations of the system by anthropogenic 38 activities (e.g. VOC emissions from biomass and fossil fuel burning). The power of volatile 39 metabolomics comes from the fact that many cellular processes leave unique chemical 40 fingerprints (biomarkers) behind in the atmosphere (e.g. BVOCs such as volatile isoprenoids, 41 organic acids, alcohols, esters, aldehydes, ketones, aromatics, sulfides, nitriles, etc.). Therefore, 42 volatile metabolomics provides noninvasive techniques to study plant metabolism from a variety 43 of spatial and temporal scales. The application of these methods in the tropics may improve our 44 mechanistic understanding of how environmental and biological variables associated with climate 45 and land use change affects the carbon and energy metabolism of natural and managed forests.

46

47 Tropical ecosystems cycle more carbon than any other biome (~ 1.4 PgC/yr versus 0.5 PgC/yr for temperate ecosystems, (Sarmiento et al. 2010) and are estimated to account for nearly 80% of the 48 49 global BVOC emissions (Levis et al. 2003). The Amazon Basin is a major tropical source of 50 BVOCs to the global atmosphere (Greenberg et al. 2004), yet less is known about BVOCs from 51 its vegetation than other regions of the world (Guenther 2013). This is due to a number of factors, 52 among which are the extremely high tree species diversity (ter Steege et al. 2013; Macarthur 53 1965) and difficulties in conducting and sustaining remote field studies with highly sensitive 54 analytical chemistry instrumentation for even short periods of time. What we do know about 55 Amazonian BVOCs primarily results from a few important short-term plant enclosure studies,

bove-canopy measurements, and aircraft observations (Kesselmeier et al. 2002; Karl et al. 2007;

57 Jardine et al. 2011b).

58

59 Historically, BVOCs have been studied with respect to their significant impacts on the chemistry 60 and physics of the atmosphere, which remains an active area of research (see chapter x, Artaxo). 61 The focus of this chapter is towards developing a mechanistic understanding of BVOC dynamics 62 within plants and ecosystems. First is a brief overview of BVOC production within plants 63 followed by an introduction to the field of volatile metabolomics. Next, examples of Amazonian 64 plant and ecosystem functional roles of several BVOCs are discussed. The chapter ends with 65 suggested directions for Amazonian BVOC research including detailed plant VOC emission 66 surveys, the identification of new BVOCs, and the characterization of potential BVOC 67 ecosystem-atmosphere bidirectional exchange (i.e. emission and consumption by vegetation).

68 **4.2 BVOC biosynthesis in plants**

69 During photosynthesis, plants assimilate atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO_2) into primary 70 metabolites which are essential components required for growth and development. Primary 71 metabolites can be used as substrate for the biosynthesis of new biomass including proteins, 72 nucleic acids, carbohydrates and lipids, or can be used as a carbon and energy source during 73 respiration (Bourgaud et al. 2001; Tegeder and Weber 2008). Secondary metabolites are a diverse 74 set of compounds which are intricately involved in many physiological and ecological processes 75 within plants (Weng et al. 2012). For example, secondary metabolites have been identified as 76 plant defenses against abiotic and biotic stresses and chemical communication within and 77 between species (Weng et al. 2012; Jardine et al. 2008; Karl et al. 2008; Pophof et al. 2005). Both 78 primary and secondary metabolic pathways within plants create intermediates with sufficient 79 vapor pressures to be directly emitted into the atmosphere in the gas phase as BVOCs.

80

Plant metabolic pathways involved in BVOC biosynthesis occur in and across a number of cellular organelles including the cytosol, chloroplast, mitochondria, and peroxisome (Figure 4.1). Some BVOCs like isoprene are strictly light dependent with a strong connection to recently assimilated carbon (Jones and Rasmussen 1975). In contrast, instantaneous emissions of other BVOCs like methanol are much less light dependent and can be produced at night (Fall and Benson 1996; Harley et al. 2007). 87

88 Key substrates (i.e. glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate, phosphoenol pyruvate, pyruvate, and acetyl-89 CoA) can be produced independently within plant compartments or can be transported across 90 compartmental boundaries. For example, pyruvate is a central substrate in the biosynthesis of 91 BVOC classes such as volatile isoprenoids (isoprene, monoterpenes, sesquiterpenes), oxygenated 92 VOCs (acetaldehyde, ethanol, acetic acid, acetone, volatile acetate esters), and fatty acid 93 oxidation products (green leaf volatiles, e.g. Z-3-hexenol, Z-3-hexenal). Pyruvate is also a product of glycolysis and photosynthesis, and a key substrate in photorespiration and 94 95 mitochondrial respiration.

96

97 Acetyl CoA is another central substrate, which integrates primary and secondary metabolic 98 processes as well as signaling and regulatory mechanisms. It is used as the primary substrate of 99 mitochondrial respiration for the biosynthesis of lipids including fatty acids and isoprenoids, and 100 can be produced through a fermentation like process involving the activation of acetic acid 101 (Jardine et al. 2013a). In addition to many non-volatile organic compounds (e.g. fatty acids, some 102 amino acids, flavonoids, phenolics) (Oliver et al. 2009), acetyl CoA provides substrate for a large 103 array of BVOCs including volatile isoprenoids, oxygenated VOCs, fatty acid oxidation products, 104 and volatile acetate esters (e.g. methyl acetate, ethyl acetate).

105

106 [Figure 4.1-Metabolic pathways]

107

108 4.3 Volatile Metabolomics

109 The emerging field of volatile metabolomics is the study of the gas phase component of the 110 chemical, physical, and biological processes involved in the production of metabolites within an 111 ecosystem, allowing for a molecular understanding of biogeochemical cycles. This field aims to 112 combine traditional biochemical pathway studies involving destructive tissue sampling and 113 metabolite extraction and analysis with non-invasive atmospheric analytical chemistry techniques 114 used for identification and quantification of BVOCs within and above forest canopies to gain new 115 insights on within-plant carbon and energy allocation to primary and secondary metabolic 116 processes. For example, plant BVOC exchange fluxes using enclosures and ambient BVOC 117 concentrations and fluxes within and above forest canopies can be made in-situ in real-time and 118 used as biomarkers of carbon allocation processes such as photosynthesis, photorespiration, 119 respiration, and fermentation (Jardine et al. 2010b; Loreto et al. 2007; Kesselmeier et al. 1997; 120 Bracho-Nunez et al. 2012), cell wall expansion and growth (Harley et al. 2007), acetyl-CoA and

- 121 fatty acid biosynthesis and degradation (Fall et al. 1999; Jardine et al. 2012b), and signaling and
- 122 defense against abiotic and biotic stresses (Niinemets 2010; Karl et al. 2008; Jardine et al. 2013c).
- 123

124 For example, Jardine et al. (2010b) used positional ¹³C labeled pyruvate to trace the metabolic 125 pathways responsible for the biosynthesis of volatile isoprenoids and oxygenated VOCs in real 126 time for individual mango leaves (Mangifera indica). While the metabolic pathways leading to 127 isoprenoid biosynthesis are well documented, those leading to the production of oxygenated 128 VOCs are still uncertain. In their study, leaves fed with the pyruvate-2-13C solution resulted in 129 large enrichments (¹³C/¹²C) of both ¹³C-labeled isoprenoids and oxygenated VOCs (up to 266% 130 for sesquiterpenes and 154% for acetaldehyde for example). However, when mango leaves were 131 fed with pyruvate-1-¹³C, ¹³C-labeling of BVOCs was greatly reduced. Positional pyruvate labeling 132 was then used to demonstrate that the C_{2,3} atoms of pyruvate are directly utilized for the 133 biosynthesis of volatile and non-volatile metabolites and biopolymers. However, the C_1 of 134 pyruvate has a completely different fate and is decarboxylated to CO₂, representing a new source 135 of CO_2 not previously considered in studies of plant CO_2 sources and sinks (Jardine et al. 2013a). 136 Thus, BVOCs can be used to track cellular processes that imprint a unique chemical fingerprint 137 on the atmosphere surrounding individual plants. When applied at the ecosystem level, volatile 138 metabolomics has the potential to advance mechanistic understanding of BVOC biosynthesis as a 139 function of changing environmental conditions.

140 **4.3 BVOCs as biomarkers of lipid peroxidation under oxidative stress**

141 Lipids serve numerous critical functions in plant biology including providing membrane 142 structure, participating in the light reactions of photosynthesis, antioxidant, and signaling 143 processes. Saturated lipids are extremely resistant to oxidation within plants and the environment, 144 with plant alkanes with ages greater than one billion years have been detected in lake sediments 145 (Oro et al. 1965). In contrast, unsaturated lipids including isoprenoids and fatty acids are highly 146 susceptible to oxidization with their pools rapidly turned over under oxidizing conditions. 147 Moreover, the oxidative power of the lower atmosphere is strongly influenced by the emission of 148 unsaturated volatile lipids from vegetation, especially isoprenoids and reactive volatile lipids 149 which can be emitted at high rates from many plants fueling atmospheric chemistry through 150 photo-oxidation reactions (Monson 2002a).

152 Reactive oxygen species (ROS) including singlet oxygen (${}^{1}O_{2}$), superoxide anion (O_{2}^{-}), hydrogen 153 peroxide (H_2O_2) , and the hydroxyl radical (OH) are continuously generated in plants by the 154 incomplete reduction of oxygen (O₂). While, ROS concentrations within plants are generally kept 155 low by ROS quenching and scavenging systems, excessive ROS accumulation can result in 156 extensive oxidation of plant lipids (Apel and Hirt 2004; Jardine et al. 2010a). While traditionally 157 described as the "Oxygen Paradox" where ROS are a toxic byproduct of aerobic metabolism, 158 ROS-lipid signaling is now recognized as an integral component of plant response to abiotic and 159 biotic stress as well as regulation of growth, development, and programmed cell death (Suzuki et 160 al. 2011; Mittler et al. 2011).

161

162 In a changing global climate with increasing air pollution and rapid land use changes, plants are 163 exposed to a wide variety of biotic (e.g. microbes, insects) and abiotic (e.g. thermal, radiative, 164 drought) stressors. In plant tissues, these stressors can cause the accumulation of reactive oxygen 165 species (ROS), which if left unchecked, can overwhelm cellular antioxidant defenses including 166 enzyme-mediated ROS quenching reactions, internal systems for ROS scavenging, and defense 167 gene activation (Møller 2001). This can lead to extensive ROS-mediated oxidation of important 168 components, such as nucleic acids, proteins and lipids leading to cell death (Apel and Hirt 2004). 169 Therefore, plants with a diverse suite of antioxidant defenses may better tolerate stressful 170 environmental conditions occurring in response to local and global changes in climate.

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172 The oxidation of plant fatty acids via non-enzymatic (Durand et al. 2009; Mene-Saffrane et al. 173 2009) and enzymatic (Andreou and Feussner 2009; Gigot et al. 2010; Heiden et al. 2003) 174 mechanisms produces a broad range of oxidation product biomarkers termed oxylipins. The 175 accumulation of ROS in plant tissues initiates fatty acid (e.g. α -linolenic acid) peroxidation, 176 yielding a large array of 'oxidative stress' biomarkers. Lipid peroxidation generates a number of 177 products, which have been extensively used as quantitative indicators of oxidative damage in 178 plants (Gutteridge 1995; Shulaev and Oliver 2006). For example, 4-hydroxy-2-nonenal (HNE), 4-179 hydroxy-2-hexenal (HHE), and maliondialdehyde are widely used as biomarkers of non-180 enzymatic lipid peroxidation (Hartley et al. 1999; Halliwell and Gutteridge 1999; Long and 181 Picklo 2010). However, the extraction from plant tissues, derivatization, and compound specific

analysis (GC-MS or HPLC) of these reactive carbonyl compounds remains a challenge due to
their trace abundances, high reactivity, water solubility, and volatility (Shibamoto 2006).
Nonetheless, a number of classes of lipid peroxidation products have been identified including
hydrocarbons, ketones, furans, alkanals, 2-alkenals, 2,4-alkadienals, 2-hydroxyalkanals, 4hydroxy-2-alkenals, and dicarbonyls (Kawai et al. 2007; Steeghs et al. 2006; Frankel et al. 1989;
Mark et al. 1997; Moseley et al. 2003; Nielsen et al. 1997).

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189 Given the volatile nature of many of these biomarkers, it is interesting to speculate on the 190 potential of detecting them in atmospheric samples as non-invasive indicators of oxidative stress 191 at a variety of temporal and spatial scales. Numerous volatile oxylipins have been recently 192 observed as direct emissions from plants under oxidative stress generated by freeze-thaw 193 treatment of tropical leaves (Table 1). These include alkanals (e.g. propanal, butanal, pentanal, 194 hexanal), 2-alkenals (e.g. 2-propenal, 2-butenal, 2-pentenal, 2-hexenal), 2-alkenes (e.g. 2-195 propene, 2-butene, 2-pentene, 2-hexene), 2,4-alkadienals (e.g. 2,4-hexadienal), furans and 196 furanones (e.g. tetrahydrofuran, 2-ethyl furan), and dicarbonyls (e.g. malondialdehyde, gyloxal, 197 methyl glyoxal, and diacetyl). In addition, the enzymatic peroxidation of plant fatty acids by 198 lipoxygenase enzymes can lead to the formation and emission of characteristic oxidation products 199 known as green leaf volatiles (GLVs) via the lipoxygenase pathway (Loreto and Schnitzler 2010; 200 Hatanaka 1993; Fall et al. 1999). In this pathway, the formation of the classic 6 carbon (C6) 201 GLVs in plants is initiated by the ubiquitous type 2 lipoxygenase enzymes (13-LOX) in 202 chloroplasts which catalyze the oxygenation of α -linolenic acid (the dominant fatty acid in the 203 aerial tissues of most plants) to form 13-hydroperoxy linolenic acid (HPLA) (Andreou and 204 Feussner 2009). HPLA can be degraded (catalyzed by hydroperoxide lyase) to form the primary 205 GLV (Z)-3-hexenal which is then reduced and acetylated to form the corresponding alcohol (Z)-206 3-hexen-1-ol and acetate ester (Z)-3-hexen-1-yl acetate respectively (D'Auria et al. 2007).

207

The emissions of GLVs from plants have been documented during processes known to be associated with ROS accumulation including programmed cell death during senescence (Holopainen et al. 2010) and a wide variety of biotic and abiotic stresses including pathogen attack (Jansen et al. 2009), high ambient ozone concentrations (Heiden et al. 2003; Beauchamp et al. 2005), herbivory (Arimura et al. 2009), desiccation (De Gouw et al. 2000), high light and temperature (Loreto et al. 2006), mechanical wounding (Fall et al. 1999), and freeze-thaw events (Fall et al. 2001). Thus, both enzymatic and non-enzymatic lipid peroxidation mechanisms lead to the formation of characteristic fatty acid peroxidation biomarkers that may be detectable as gasphase emissions from plant tissue under stress at the ecosystem scale. Although not yet reported from Amazonian ecosystems, these and other lipid peroxidation biomarkers may be emitted under environmental extremes associated with changes in land use and climate and are therefore prime candidates for ecosystem scale volatile metabolomics studies (Kawai et al. 2007; Steeghs et al. 2006; Frankel et al. 1989; Mark et al. 1997; Moseley et al. 2003; Nielsen et al. 1997).

221

222 [Table 1: volatile oxylipin lipid peroxidaotion biomarkers]

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224 The 5 carbon molecule, isoprene, is estimated to be the most abundant and well-studied BVOC 225 emitted from terrestrial ecosystems (Rasmussen and Khalil 1988). Isoprene is a biomarker of 226 photosynthesis and concentrations are known to positively correlate with light and temperature 227 (Figure 4.2) (Monson and Fall 1989). As reviewed by Vickers et al. (2009), a rich literature 228 exists demonstrating the role of isoprene as a photosynthesis protector from oxidative stress 229 caused by high temperature and light. Isoprene has also been shown to quench ozone and 230 hydrogen peroxide (Loreto and Velikova 2001), singlet oxygen (Velikova et al. 2004) and nitric 231 oxide (Velikova et al. 2005), suggesting an antioxidant role for isoprene. Recently, investigations 232 using mango leaves and branches (Mangifera indica) as well as ambient air samples from an 233 enclosed tropical mesocosm and a central Amazon forest support the role of antioxidant 234 properties of isoprene (Jardine et al. 2012a; Jardine et al. 2013b). Observations of temperature-235 stressed leaves from isoprene emitting plants showed production of first generation oxidation 236 products of isoprene; methyl vinyl ketone (MVK), methacrolein (MAC), and 3-methyl furan (3-237 MF). The authors suggested that the emissions of isoprene oxidation products increased with 238 temperature stress due to direct chemical reactions with ROS, or in other words, in-plant 239 oxidation of isoprene (Figure 4.3).

240

241 [Figure 4.2: isoprene molecule + 3-D tracks light, temp]

242

243 [Figure 4.3: isoprene oxidation schematic]

244

245 To a large extent, the oxidative power of the lower atmosphere is controlled by ecosystem 246 emission of biogenic VOCs, especially those that contain carbon-carbon double bonds, such as 247 volatile isoprenoids, which are readily available for oxidation through reaction with hydroxyl 248 radicals, ozone and nitrate radicals (Monson 2002b). However, current models cannot adequately 249 describe atmospheric oxidant levels in biogenically dominated areas like the Amazon Basin 250 (Lelieveld et al. 2008). The discovery of significant primary emissions of isoprene oxidation 251 products in the central Amazon (Jardine et al. 2012c) may reduce previous estimates of the effect 252 of VOCs on the oxidizing power of the troposphere, and increase the role of leaves as a source for 253 at least the first generation products of VOC oxidation to the atmosphere. These findings may 254 have important implications for characterizing the oxidizing capacity of the atmosphere and its 255 impacts on atmospheric chemistry and climate. Understanding lipid production and oxidation 256 dynamics within plants may be critical for predicting ecosystem response to the increasing 257 temperature and light as a result of a changing climate. Investigating these mechanistic processes 258 is complex, because of the very broad scale over which lipid production is influenced and over 259 which they react. For example isoprene starts at the sub-cellular level in chloroplasts and 260 ultimately impacts key atmospheric processes, which in turn modify global climate, which in turn 261 influences isoprene production in the biosphere. Investigation therefore requires a mixture of 262 expertise and collaborating disciplines.

263 **4.4 BVOC bidirectional biosphere-atmosphere exchange**

There is a growing consensus that a large number of oxygenated compounds are both emitted and consumed by plants and that bidirectional exchange occurs between tropical forests and the atmosphere (Jardine et al. 2011c; Karl et al. 2005; Jardine et al. 2008; Ganzeveld et al. 2008; Andreae et al. 1988). The compensation point is the point at which the ambient air mixing ratio of a BVOC results in a net zero flux, where consumption and emission are balanced.

A recent study focused on methanol and acetone Ganzeveld et al. (2008), showed that a commonly applied algorithm to simulate global acetone and methanol biogenic exchanges substantially overestimates ambient concentrations and emission strengths (compared with observations). In contrast, the use of a compensation point approach simulated ambient concentrations and exchange dynamics that were much more comparable to observations. Another example comes from studies focused on gas phase formic acid (FA) and acetic acid (AA) (Kesselmeier 2001; Gabriel et al. 1999; Andreae et al. 1988; Talbot et al. 1990), which are found 276 ubiquitously in the atmosphere (Paulot et al. 2011). Jardine et al. (2011c) conducted a study in a 277 central Amazon ecosystem comparing ratios of FA to AA (FA/AA) providing the first ecosystem 278 scale evidence for the bidirectional FA and AA exchange between the forest canopy and the 279 atmosphere and further estimated an ecosystem compensation point for each acid. While 280 traditionally viewed strictly as emission sources to the atmosphere, these recent works 281 demonstrate that plants can act as both a source and sink for BVOCs, especially those that are 282 intermediates in metabolic pathways. Thus, in order to improve simulations of biosphere-283 atmosphere fluxes and atmospheric concentrations of oxygenated VOCs in Earth System Models, 284 development of modeling approaches that embrace the bidirectional exchange of BVOCs 285 warrants further investigation.

286 4.5 Conclusions

287 Studies of biogenic volatile organic compounds within the Amazon have been conducted for 288 nearly 30 years (Rasmussen and Khalil 1988; Andreae et al. 1988), however, we are still at the 289 forefront of our understanding of what BVOCs are emitted from vegetation, the metabolic 290 pathways that produce them within plants, their functional roles in terrestrial ecosystems, and 291 how these roles may change under a changing climate. Some of the basic yet extremely important 292 questions to address with respect to BVOCs in the Amazon are: (i) What are the identities, 293 concentrations and fluxes of BVOC emissions from individual tree species and whole 294 ecosystems? (ii) What are the functional biological roles of BVOCs and what roles will they play 295 under future land use and climate change? and (iii) What controls the amount of assimilated 296 carbon allocated to the production and emission of BVOCs in relation to non volatile metabolites 297 and respiratory processes?

298

299 Addressing these questions requires intensive observations at both the plant species and 300 ecosystem scales within the Amazon Basin. As highly sensitive analytical chemistry tools 301 become available, the identification and quantification of novel BVOCs is also emerging. The 302 promising area of research, volatile metabolomics, is beginning to provide noninvasive 303 methodologies to develop a mechanistic understanding of BVOC metabolism and therefore may 304 lead to new understanding of the functional roles of BVOCs at the plant and ecosystem scales. In 305 turn, improvements in Earth System Models can further our ability to predict changes in BVOC 306 impacts on atmospheric chemistry and climate.

307

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579 Figure and Table Captions

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Figure 4.1. A simplified representation of the flow of carbon in the cytosol, chloroplast
and mitochondria, which produce classes of biogenic volatile organic compounds
(BVOCs) in photosynthetic cells during primary and secondary metabolism.

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585 Figure 4.2. A snapshot of the diurnal patterns of isoprene concentration variations over a 586 three-day period measured from a tower in a central Amazon forest. The x-axis represents 587 time, while the y-axis shows measurement heights from 2 meters above the ground to 10 588 meters above the canopy. The color scale ranges from minimum (blue) to maximum 589 (black) concentrations. The vertical gradients show clear sources within the under canopy (10 - 17 m) and canopy (30 m) layers corresponding with maximum temperature and 590 591 light at midday and minimum concentrations at night. A sudden drop in concentration at 592 all heights occurring during a rain event which decreased temperatures and light and 593 likely diminished ecosystem photosynthesis is also observable.

594 Figure 4.3. A simplified schematic showing the production of isoprene and its oxidation 595 products methyl vinyl keytone and methacrolein in plants as well as their emission to the 596 atmosphere.

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598 **Table 1:** Example of isoprene (red text) and fatty acid (black text) peroxidation 599 biomarkers from plants under oxidative stress.