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Publication information: *Phytochemistry* (ISSN 0031-9422). For 2008, volume 69 is scheduled for publication. Subscription prices are available upon request from the Publisher or from the Regional Sales Office nearest you or from this journal's website (<http://www.elsevier.com/locate/phytochem>). Further information is available on this journal and other Elsevier products through Elsevier's website (<http://www.elsevier.com>). Subscriptions are accepted on a prepaid basis only and are entered on a calendar year basis. Issues are sent by standard mail (surface within Europe, air delivery outside Europe). Priority rates are available upon request. Claims for missing issues should be made within six months of the date of dispatch.

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USA mailing notice: *Phytochemistry* (ISSN 0031-9422) is published 18 times a year, January–December, by Elsevier Ltd (The Boulevard, Langford Lane, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 1GB, UK). Periodical postage paid at Rahway NJ and additional mailing offices.

USA POSTMASTER: Send change of address to *Phytochemistry*, Elsevier, 6277 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando, FL 32887-4800.

AIRFREIGHT AND MAILING in USA by Mercury International Limited, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, NJ 07001.

Front cover illustration: Picture 1 (left): Homology model of α -amylase from *V. radiata*. (a) Overall view showing the conserved active site residues, (b) comparison with the structure of AMY 1 at the starch granule binding site (AMY 1, Trp²⁷⁸ and Trp²⁷⁹; VrAmy, Val²⁷⁷ and Lys²⁷⁸) and (c) sugar tongs binding site (AMY 1, Tyr³⁸⁰; VrAmy, Met³⁷⁹). Tripathi, P., Lo Leggio, L., Mansfeld, J., Ulbrich-Hofmann, R., Kayastha, A.M., 2007. α -Amylase from mung beans (*Vigna radiata*)—Correlation of biochemical properties and tertiary structure by homology modelling. *Phytochemistry* 68, 1623–1631. Picture 2 (middle): Hypersensitive resistance reaction of a wheat cell penetrated by a haustorium of the wheat stem rust fungus, *Puccinia graminis* f. sp. *tritici*. Stem rust is one of the most dangerous and potentially devastating pathogens of wheat, and a renewed threat to global wheat production since the appearance of the new race Ug99 in Uganda that has broken the widely used Sr31-based resistance of wheat to this pathogen. Menden, B., Kohlhoff, M., Moerschbacher, B.M., 2007. Wheat cells accumulate a syringyl-rich lignin during the hypersensitive resistance response. *Phytochemistry* 68, 513–520. Picture 3 (right): The photograph shows the flower of the so-called Japanese roof iris, *Iris tectorum* Maxim (Iridaceae), first observed growing on roofs in Asia by Carl Maximovic (1827–1891). Its Chinese name is *Lan hu die* (blue butterfly) and the root is used in Chinese Traditional Medicine for the treatment of certain cancers. It contains iridal-type triterpenes—two biologically active iritectorols (A and B) were reported in 2007. Fang, R., Houghton, P.J., Luo, C., Hylands, P.J., 2008. Isolation and structure determination of triterpenes from *Iris tectorum*.