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Primer Note

An expanded nuclear phylogenomic PCR toolkit for Sapindales¹

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- • *Premise of the study:* We tested PCR amplification of 91 low-copy nuclear gene loci in taxa from Sapindales using primers developed for *Bursera simaruba* (Burseraceae).
- *Methods and Results:* Cross-amplification of these markers among 10 taxa tested was related to their phylogenetic distance from *B. simaruba*. On average, each Sapindalean taxon yielded product for 53 gene regions (range: 16–90). *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Brassicales), by contrast, yielded product for two. Single representatives of Anacardiaceae and Rutacaeae yielded 34 and 26 products, respectively. Twenty-six primer pairs worked for all Burseraceae species tested if highly divergent *Aucoumea klaineana* is excluded, and eight of these amplified product in every Sapindalean taxon.
- *Conclusions:* Our study demonstrates that customized primers for *Bursera* can amplify product in a range of Sapindalean taxa. This collection of primer pairs, therefore, is a valuable addition to the toolkit for nuclear phylogenomic analyses of Sapindales and warrants further investigation.

Key words: Anacardiaceae; Burseraceae; low-copy nuclear genes; microfluidic PCR; Rutaceae.

Low-copy nuclear gene regions offer increased phylogenetic utility for species- and population-level studies of plants as compared to chloroplast and nuclear ribosomal markers (Zimmer and Wen, 2012), yet sampling these regions remains challenging due to the dearth of universal primers and barriers to sequencing whole or partial nuclear genomes from multiple individuals. Consequently, assessing the phylogenetic limits of custom-designed target sequences or primers for low-copy nuclear gene regions is critical to fully realizing their broader impacts for advancing plant systematics. We report the results of a cross-amplification study incorporating primers for 91 low-copy nuclear gene loci created by Gostel et al. (2015) for species-level phylogenetics of Malagasy *Commiphora* Jacq. (Burseraceae). Primers for these markers were developed using genomic resources from two rosid orders by mapping sequence data from a transcriptome of *Bursera simaruba* (L.) Sarg. (Burseraceae; Sapindales) (Matasci et al., 2014) to 950 putative low- or single-copy nuclear gene loci of *Arabidopsis thaliana* (L.) Heynh. (Brassicaceae; Brassicales) (Duarte et al., 2010). Gostel et al. (2015) further optimized the primers for microfluidic

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PCR-based target enrichment, a method that allows simultaneous and cost-effective amplification of multiple loci (Blow, 2009; Uribe-Convers et al., 2016).

We tested cross-amplification of these primers using 10 taxa that have varying phylogenetic distances from *B. simaruba* within Sapindales and included *A. thaliana* as the outermost limit of the survey. Sapindales is a widespread group that includes ca. 6700 species within nine families (Angiosperm Phylogeny Group, 2016) (Fig. 1). Molecular phylogenies of this order often lack sufficient phylogenetic support along their backbone as well as at the species level (e.g., Fine et al., 2014; Grudinski et al., 2014), thus our understanding of Sapindalean systematics could benefit from an expanded phylogenetic toolkit such as that provided by the Gostel et al. (2015) primers.

METHODS AND RESULTS

*Taxonomic sampling and molecular methods***—**Appendix 1 contains accession information for the 11 taxa sampled; Fig. 1 displays their phylogenetic relationships. *Bursera simaruba* (*Bursera* Jacq. ex L. subgenus *Bursera*) and *C. grandifolia* Engl. were included as positive controls; prior work has shown that all or most of the custom-designed primers amplify PCR product in these two species (Gostel et al., 2015). For experimental taxa, we included *B. tonkinensis* Guillaumin, which is sister to *Commiphora* (Weeks and Simpson, 2007), as well as *Aucoumea* Pierre, the monotypic genus sister to *Bursera* and *Commiphora* (Weeks et al., 2014). One species from each of *Boswellia* Roxb. ex Colebr., *Canarium* L., and *Protium* Burm. f. were included, as well as *Beiselia* Forman, the monotypic genus sister to all other Burseraceae (Weeks et al., 2014). We included one species of Anacardiaceae, the family that is sister to Burseraceae (Weeks et al., 2014), and one species of Rutaceae, which represents the Sapindalean clade sister to Burseraceae*–*Anacardiaceae– Kirkiaceae (Muellner-Riehl et al., 2016). *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Brassicales) was included because its genomic resources were used in primer design and can test the applicability of these primers to other closely related rosid lineages (Wang et al., 2009).

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Fig. 1. Phylogeny of Sapindalean lineages condensed from Wang et al. (2009), Weeks et al. (2014), and Muellner-Riehl et al. (2016); nodes having low or conflicting support are indicated by dashed branches. Lineages sampled by the current study are noted by open diamonds. Generalized generic phylogeny of Burseraceae does not depict *Rosselia* or *Pseudodacryodes*, which have not been included in any molecular phylogenetic analysis; paraphyletic genera are indicated by asterisks.

Whole genomic DNA was extracted from taxa using the FastPrep FastDNA Spin Kit (Bio101 Systems, La Jolla, California, USA) or the cetyltrimethylammonium bromide (CTAB) method (Weeks et al., 2005). Primer development for the 91 markers is detailed by Gostel et al. (2015); primer sequences are listed in Table 1. Markers were amplified via PCR in 15-μL reactions including: 0.15 μL of forward and reverse primers (50 μM), 0.75 μL spermidine (4 mM), 7.5 μL GoTaq Green Master Mix (Promega Corporation, Madison, Wisconsin, USA), 5.6 μL nuclease-free water, and 1 μL genomic DNA (0.1–25.8 ng/μL). Markers that failed to amplify for *B. simaruba* and *C. grandifolia* were then trialed using reaction chemistry based on that recommended for microfluidic PCR-based target enrichment including: 0.15 μL of forward and reverse primers (50 μM); FastStart High Fidelity PCR System reagents (Roche Diagnostics, Mannheim, Germany), composed of 1.5 μL FastStart High Fidelity Reaction Buffer without $MgCl₂$ (10× concentration), 2.7 μL $MgCl₂$ (25 mM), 0.75 μL DMSO, 1.2 μL Nucleotide Mix (10 mM), 0.15 μL FastStart High Fidelity Enzyme Blend

(5 U/μL); 0.75 μL Loading Reagent (Fluidigm Corporation, San Francisco, California, USA); 6.8 μL nuclease-free water; and 1 μL genomic DNA.

The PCR thermocycler protocol followed that of Gostel et al. (2015) and included three alternating standard and C_o t cycles (Mathieu-Daude et al., 1996), beginning with 2 min at 50°C, 20 min at 70°C, and 10 min at 95°C. The first set of 10 standard cycles included a denaturation step at 95°C for 15 s, annealing at 60 $^{\circ}$ C for 30 s, and extension at 72 $^{\circ}$ C for 1 min. Two C_ot cycles followed, including four steps consisting of 95°C for 15 s, 80°C for 30 s, 60°C for 30 s, and 72°C for 1 min. Standard and C_o t cycles alternated two more times with eight, two, eight, and five cycles, respectively. After 35 cycles, samples were held at 4°C prior to being visually verified via agarose gel electrophoresis (1% agarose; 94 V for 40 min). Low DNA mass ladder (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, California, USA) was included in the first and last wells of each gel to guide length estimation of PCR products.

*Marker amplification results***—**Table 1 contains amplification results for the low-copy nuclear loci, including the range of amplicon lengths for all taxa and GenBank numbers for markers sequenced by Gostel et al. (2015) for *B. simaruba* and *C. grandifolia* that had ≥15 sequence reads mapped. Table 2 summarizes marker amplification success for each taxon. Ninety primer pairs amplified product in *B. simaruba* and, on average, 54 primer pairs worked for other Burseraceae taxa. The low number of markers amplified in *Aucoumea* (16) was unexpected given its close relationship to *Bursera*. This result may have been caused by primer mismatch due to increased genetic change within this monotypic genus, as evidenced by its long branch within Burseraceae phylogeny (Weeks et al., 2014). In total, nine primer pairs worked for every Burseraceae taxon tested, and if *Aucoumea* is excluded as an outlier, the panel of familyuniversal primer pairs increases to 26. Thirty-four and 26 primer pairs generated product in Anacardiaceae and Rutaceae, respectively, while only two primer pairs worked in *Arabidopsis*. Comparing the Burseraceae panel to that of Anacardiaceae and Rutaceae reveals 16 and 12 successfully amplified regions in common, respectively, with eight shared among the three families. PCR chemistry may have suppressed amplification of markers, as high-fidelity PCR reagents were not used due to their high cost. Among the positive controls, high fidelity as compared to standard PCR reagents increased amplification success by 8% (*Bursera*, 83 to 90 primer pairs) and 85% (*Commiphora*, 39 to 72 primer pairs). Thus, our experimental results report a conservative baseline for the crossamplification success of these primer pairs.

CONCLUSIONS

Our study demonstrates that 90 of 91 primer pairs for novel low-copy nuclear loci developed by Gostel et al. (2015) for *B. simaruba* successfully amplify product in a broad range of Sapindalean taxa and effectively expand the phylogenomic toolkit for this order. Twenty-six markers amplify all Burseraceae taxa (excluding *Aucoumea*) and eight amplify all Sapindalean groups tested. Our results present a new source for universal targets or primers for phylogenetic reconstruction of taxa within Sapindales. Future efforts will include sequencing amplicons to determine the number of phylogenetically informative characters for each locus.

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Primer pair sequences and validation results by taxon. TABLE 1. Primer pair sequences and validation results by taxon. $T_{\rm ABLE}$ 1.

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TABLE 1. Continued.

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Table 2. Number of primer pairs amplified of the 91 primer pairs tested for each of the 11 taxa.

Species tested (Order; Family)	Primer pairs amplified/tested $(\%)$
Arabidopsis thaliana (Brassicales; Brassicaceae)	2/91(0.02)
Aucoumea klaineana (Sapindales; Burseraceae)	16/91 (17)
Beiselia mexicana (Sapindales; Burseraceae)	47/91 (52)
Boswellia neglecta (Sapindales; Burseraceae)	68/91 (75)
Bursera simaruba (Sapindales; Burseraceae)	90/91 (99)
Bursera tonkinensis (Sapindales; Burseraceae)	53/91 (58)
Canarium pilosum (Sapindales; Burseraceae)	71/91 (78)
Commiphora grandifolia (Sapindales; Burseraceae)	72/91 (79)
Phellodendron amurense (Sapindales; Rutaceae)	26/91 (28)
Protium guianense (Sapindales; Burseraceae)	54/91 (59)
Schinus fasciculatus (Sapindales; Anacardiaceae)	34/91 (37)

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^gUniversal Sapindales primer (excluding Aucoumea).

^hFaint double band observed

APPENDIX 1. Accession information for taxa used in this study, including voucher information, country of origin, and latitude and longitude coordinate data, if available, and DNA extraction method.

Note: NA = not available.

 a_1 = FastDNA, 2 = CTAB.