

Review paper

Nuclear, chloroplast, and mitochondrial DNA polymorphisms as biochemical markers in population genetic analyses of forest trees

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Application. Study of DNA polymorphisms in forest trees has provided new insights into basic biology. Chloroplast, mitochondrial, and nuclear DNA polymorphisms are expected to play increasingly important roles for forest population geneticists, and further investigation of these polymorphisms may lead to applications in germplasm improvement and conservation programs.

Abstract. DNA analyses have been used only occasionally to investigate genetic polymorphisms in forest tree populations. Nonetheless, these analyses have already contributed to significant discoveries, such as paternal chloroplast and maternal mitochondrial DNA inheritance in Pinaceae. DNA polymorphisms will be increasingly exploited in the future by forest population geneticists, because available technology permits large sample sizes and yields excellent resolution. The utility of chloroplast, mitochondrial, and nuclear DNA polymorphisms is expected to be greatest when less expensive genetic markers are unavailable, insufficiently numerous, or ineffectively polymorphic. For example, DNA fingerprinting may permit the unambiguous elucidation of genetic relationships within and among populations of woody species.

Introduction

A major goal of population geneticists is to understand evolutionary mechanisms (Hartl and Clark 1989), but applications of population genetics transcend evolutionary inference. For example, germplasm conservation strategies have benefited from knowledge of population genetic principles (e.g., Brown 1978; Millar and Westfall 1992). Also, studies of population variation have led to discovery of important and useful genes, such as “quantitative trait loci” (QTLs), which may increase gains in genetic improvement programs (e.g., Paterson et al. 1991).

Regardless of specific goals or applications, empirical population genet-

ics requires genetic variation (polymorphism). The most useful genetic polymorphisms for population genetic study vary qualitatively, permitting one-to-one mapping of phenotype onto genotype in large samples. Polymorphisms that provide this type of specific genotypic information can be considered "genetic markers." Population geneticists have traditionally employed unusual morphological phenotypes, proteins, or secondary compounds as genetic markers, but DNA analyses are now providing new markers (Leigh Brown 1989; Kreike et al. 1991; Szmids and Wang 1991).

One type of DNA variation is copy number polymorphism, which is due to differences in the number of genomic occurrences of a particular DNA sequence (e.g., Strauss and Tsai 1988). DNA variation can also occur in base sequence, length, and arrangement. These latter types of variation are often detected as restriction fragment length polymorphisms (RFLPs), using enzymes (restriction endonucleases) that cut DNA molecules into restriction fragments of varying lengths. RFLP methodologies are technically straightforward and permit analyses of large numbers of samples (e.g., Govindaraju et al. 1989a).

DNA variation can also be studied by direct determination of DNA base sequences in a genomic region of interest. In principle, comparison of individuals is then possible at each base pair, which is a level of resolution not attainable with copy number variation or RFLPs (e.g., Kreitman 1983). Collection of sequence data from population samples now appears feasible because of the efficiency of the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) in DNA amplification (Saiki et al. 1988; Leigh Brown 1989).

In general, DNA markers are especially powerful for several reasons, including the following:

- 1) Potentially, a large number of polymorphisms (some of which are selectively neutral and some of which are under selection) can be identified in any taxon.
- 2) Widely differing levels of polymorphism can be studied.
- 3) DNA analyses allow investigation of not only coding, but also non-coding, variation.
- 4) Both Mendelian and non-Mendelian markers can be identified, because DNA resides in chloroplasts and mitochondria as well as in the nuclei.
- 5) It is usually possible to determine the mutational differences among DNA variants (e.g., point mutations, insertions/deletions, or rearrangements), which strengthens population analyses.

These advantages have been convincingly demonstrated on occasions when traditional genetic markers were deficient (Leigh Brown 1989; Hartl and Clark 1989; Strauss et al. 1991; Szmids and Wang 1991). However,

DNA polymorphisms are not a panacea: other genetic markers are sometimes preferable because of their lower costs in personnel, reagents, laboratory facilities, and time.

DNA polymorphisms of forest tree populations have received only limited attention, in comparison with such variation in other organisms. Nevertheless, these new genetic markers have already permitted important insights into fundamental biological processes in forest trees. The purpose of this article is to describe the significant results and likely future roles of nuclear, chloroplast, and mitochondrial DNA analyses in population genetic studies of forest trees. This review will not address methodological choices or details of laboratory techniques, because these topics have been discussed previously (e.g., Gustafsson and Sitbon 1986; Strauss and Tsai 1988; Strauss et al. 1989; Neale and Williams 1991; Szmidt and Wang 1991).

Nuclear DNA polymorphisms

The first direct analyses of DNA variation in forest trees were reported more than twenty years ago and detected variance in DNA content (e.g., Burley 1965; Mergen and Thielges 1967; Miksche 1968, 1971; El-Lakany and Sziklai 1971; Dhir and Miksche 1974). Nuclear DNA presumably contributes to this variance, but organellar DNA may also play a role.

Copy number variation of specific nuclear sequences is related to variance in DNA content but is more precise and informative. For example, the observed 20-fold range in ribosomal (r) RNA gene copy number in radiata pine (*Pinus radiata* D. Don) is due to 10 or more nuclear loci (Cullis et al. 1988a, b). Ribosomal RNA gene concentration appears stable within individuals of Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis* (Bong.) Carr.) (Strauss and Howe 1990), but exhibits geographic trends in Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Mirb.) Franco) (Strauss and Tsai 1988) and red spruce (*P. rubens* Sarg.) (Bobola et al. 1992b).

In addition to variation in copy number and genome size, nuclear RFLPs are available in forest trees. Scotch pine (*P. sylvestris* L.) (Sitbon and Gustafsson 1988), *P. radiata* (Cullis et al. 1988a), black spruce (*P. mariana* (Mill.) B.S.P.), *P. rubens* (Bobola et al. 1992a; Bobola et al. 1992b), poplars (*Populus* L.) (Smith and Sytsma 1990), and several oak (*Quercus* L.) species (Whittemore and Schaal 1991) provide examples of RFLPs in or near rRNA genes. Nuclear RFLP genotypes are variable in trembling aspen (*P. tremuloides* Michx.) and appear to distinguish this species from largetooth aspen (*P. grandidentata* Michx.) (G. R. Fournier,

pers. comm.). RFLPs of highly-repeated sequences, possibly nuclear in origin, differentiate half-sib cell lines of yellow poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera* L.) (Merkle et al. 1988).

Nuclear restriction fragments differ between two cottonwoods (*P. fremontii* Wats. and *P. angustifolia* James) and can be used to identify natural hybrids and hybrid derivatives. Joint analyses of RFLP and other data from these two species revealed that introgression is unidirectional and that susceptibility to aphid infestation is associated with repeated backcrossing to *P. angustifolia* (Keim et al. 1989a, b).

The greatest contribution of nuclear DNA markers to forest population genetics will likely be the large number of polymorphisms that can be studied. Nuclear genomes can be saturated with RFLPs (Paterson et al. 1991; Neale and Williams 1991), which would permit population genetic analyses of virtually any region of a forest tree genome. Random amplified polymorphic DNA (RAPD) markers, which are based on PCR amplification of DNA from arbitrary oligonucleotide primer sequences (Williams et al. 1990), may be more efficient and may ultimately become even more useful than RFLPs for the saturation of nuclear genomes with genetic markers. Saturated linkage maps, once available, can be used to resolve quantitative variation into Mendelian factors (Paterson et al. 1991). This would eventually allow direct study of allele frequencies of economically important traits. However, the cost of saturating a linkage map is high at present, and the benefits of such an investment are untested in forestry applications (e.g., Neale and Williams 1991).

In addition to the large number of polymorphisms that are identifiable by DNA analyses, each polymorphism is potentially highly variable. DNA fingerprinting now appears possible in woody taxa, including *Polyalthia glauca* (Hassk.) Mueller, orange (*Citrus sinensis* Osbeck), Torrey pine (*P. torreyana* C. Parry ex Carrière), *P. radiata*, eastern cottonwood (*P. deltoides* Marsh.), *P. tremuloides*, apple (*Malus x domestica* Borkh.), black cherry (*Prunus serotina* Ehrh.), blackberries and raspberries (*Rubus* L.), and box elder (*Acer negundo* L.) (Rogstad et al. 1988a, b; Ryskov et al. 1988; Nybom et al. 1989; Zimmerman et al. 1989; Nybom 1990; Nybom et al. 1990; Nybom and Schaal 1990a, b; Nybom and Rogstad 1990; Nybom and Hall 1991; Rogstad et al. 1991). DNA fingerprinting may eventually permit unambiguous elucidation of genetic relationships in forest tree populations.

Chloroplast (cp) DNA polymorphisms

The power of DNA analyses to identify polymorphisms extends beyond

the nuclear genome to the organellar genomes. In fact, cpDNA variation in forest trees has received greater attention than nuclear DNA polymorphisms for several reasons. Chloroplast DNA is readily detected because of its occurrence in multiple copies per cell. Also, the cpDNA molecule is smaller and structurally simpler than nuclear DNAs, which allows straightforward molecular interpretations of polymorphisms (e.g., Palmer et al. 1988).

Inheritance tests provided some of the first reports of cpDNA variation in forest trees, because knowledge of the mode of inheritance is important for any new polymorphic marker. This knowledge is critical for chloroplast polymorphisms, which do not obey the rules of Mendelian inheritance. These polymorphisms are inherited maternally in most angiosperms (Sears 1980), but paternal contributions can be variable in taxa with biparental chloroplast inheritance (e.g., Chiu et al. 1988).

Chloroplast DNA inheritance appears predominantly paternal in conifers, including *P. menziesii* (Neale et al. 1986), larch (*Larix* Mill.) hybrids (Szmidt et al. 1987), pine (*Pinus* L.) hybrids (Wagner et al. 1987; Neale and Sederoff 1989; Wagner et al. 1992), spruce (*Picea* A. Dietr.) hybrids (Szmidt et al. 1988; Neale and Sederoff 1988; Stine et al. 1989; Stine and Keathley 1990), coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens* D. Don Endl.) (Neale et al. 1989), jack pine (*P. banksiana* Lamb.) (Wagner et al. 1989b), incense-cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens* [Torr.] Florin) (Neale et al. 1991), and arbor-vitae (*Thuja* L.) hybrids (A. E. Szmidt, pers. comm.). The coniferous mode of cpDNA inheritance contrasts sharply with the norm in angiosperms, but is consistent with the inheritance of a plastid mutant in Sugi (*Cryptomeria japonica* D. Don) (Ohba et al. 1971) and with ultrastructural evidence (Chesnoy 1987; Owens and Morris 1990; Owens and Morris 1991). Unfortunately, cpDNA inheritance data has not been reported for non-coniferous forest trees.

It would be premature to conclude that chloroplast inheritance is strictly paternal in conifers, because the available sample sizes are usually small and do not exclude the possibility of maternal leakage. In fact, progeny with non-paternal cpDNA genotypes were observed in *C. japonica* (Ohba et al. 1971), *P. menziesii* (Neale et al. 1986), *Larix* hybrids (Szmidt et al. 1987), *P. banksiana* (Wagner et al. 1989b), and *C. decurrens* (Neale et al. 1991). The causes of these non-paternal cpDNA genotypes are unresolved in most cases, but germplasm contamination is at least partially responsible in *P. banksiana* (Wagner et al. 1989b).

Most attempts to identify intra-specific cpDNA polymorphism in forest trees have succeeded, even with small sample sizes (e.g., Ali et al. 1991). In addition to the examples represented by inheritance tests (cited above), cpDNA polymorphisms are also known in lodgepole pine (*P. contorta*

Dougl.) (Wagner et al. 1987), *P. sitchensis* (Szmidt et al. 1988), white spruce (*Picea glauca* (Moench) Voss), (Szmidt et al. 1988; Stine et al. 1989), *P. densata* Mast. (Wang and Szmidt 1990), western white pine (*P. monticola* Dougl. ex D. Don) (White 1990b), Engelmann spruce (*P. engelmannii* Parry ex Engelm.) (Stine and Keathley 1990), eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis* (L.) Carr.) (Wang 1990), *Liriodendron tulipifera* (Parks and Wendel 1990), white oak (*Q. alba* L.), bur oak (*Q. macrocarpa* Michx.), swamp chestnut oak (*Q. michauxii* Nutt.), post oak (*Q. stellata* Wang.) (Whittemore and Schaal 1991), sessile oak (*Q. petraea* (Matt.) Liebl.), pedunculate oak (*Q. robur* L.) (Kremer et al. 1991), loblolly pine (*P. taeda* L.), slash pine (*P. elliotii* Engelm.) (Wagner et al. 1992), Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum* Sarg.), eastern red cedar (*J. virginiana* L.) (S. G. Ernst, pers. comm.), Hartweg pine (*P. hartwegii* Lindl.) (J. A. Matos and B. A. Schaal, pers. comm.), and pinyon (*P. edulis* Engelm.) (P. Keim, pers. comm.).

Identification of cpDNA polymorphisms is encouraging, but the actual utility of these new genetic markers can only be evaluated in population surveys. Although such surveys are rare in forest trees, cpDNA polymorphisms are already clearly informative. For example, cpDNA variants provide markers of hybridization in *Picea* and *Pinus* (Szmidt et al. 1988; Sigurgeirsson et al. 1991; Wang and Szmidt 1990; Wagner et al. 1992). These markers provide evolutionary insights and also may reduce economic costs resulting from inappropriate deployment of cryptic hybrid seedlots (El-Kassaby et al. 1988, Wang and Szmidt 1990; Sutton et al. 1991a).

In contrast to the *Picea* and *Pinus* examples, cpDNA polymorphisms fail to distinguish closely related *Quercus* species in either North America or Europe, possibly because of inter-specific hybridization in *Quercus* (Whittemore and Schaal 1991; Kremer et al. 1991). This result indicates that cpDNA diversity within taxonomic groups has the potential to confound cpDNA phylogenies (Whittemore and Schaal 1991). Nonetheless, the *Quercus* cpDNA variability is geographically structured on both continents and may be informative for seed zone delineation.

The largest population survey of DNA variation in forest trees has examined cpDNA insertion/deletion polymorphisms in more than 1300 individuals from 152 populations of *P. banksiana* and *P. contorta*. Chloroplast DNA variability differentiates these two species and also resides within subspecies of *P. contorta*, within allopatric and sympatric populations, and even within chimeric individuals (Wagner et al. 1987; Govindaraju et al. 1988). Chloroplast DNA is also variable within individuals in *P. monticola* and *Picea*, and the hypothesis of occasional biparental inheritance has been advanced to account for these observa-

tions (White 1990b; Sutton et al. 1991a; but see Stine et al. 1989). This hypothesis is consistent with the reports of infrequent non-paternal cpDNA genotypes in coniferous progeny arrays (e.g., Wagner et al. 1989b). Although the significance of within-individual genetic variation has been debated at length (e.g., Painter 1966; Libby et al. 1969; Klekowski 1988), cpDNA markers may now facilitate further analyses of this type of variation.

One of the *P. banksiana* — *P. contorta* cpDNA polymorphisms has at least 27 distinct genotypes, 19 of which are associated with a region of natural hybridization (Govindaraju et al. 1989a), and mutation mapping experiments have revealed even greater levels of variation (Govindaraju et al. 1989b). Formally, cpDNA recombination is a possible cause of the unusual chloroplast genotypes that occur in sympatric populations of *P. banksiana* — *P. contorta* (Govindaraju et al. 1989a). These unusual genotypes are of special interest, because recombination between parental chloroplast genomes has not been observed in controlled matings of any land plant (e.g., Chiu and Sears 1985). If cpDNA recombination between parental genotypes is extremely rare, one would predict that recombinants might be detectable only in populations that have persisted for many generations. Thus, geographic regions of natural hybridization could permit detection and rigorous tests of cpDNA recombination, if an adequate number of parental markers can be identified in the chloroplast genome.

Several *P. banksiana* — *P. contorta* cpDNA genotypes are spatially patterned within sympatric populations (Wagner et al. 1991b). This pattern would ordinarily be unexpected for paternally-inherited factors in outcrossers (Epperson and Allard 1984; Cheliak et al. 1985; Epperson and Allard 1989), but effective gene flow between *P. banksiana* and *P. contorta* may be limited (Saylor and Smith 1966; Righter and Stockwell 1949). Inter-specific gene flow constraints could also explain the observed concordance within sympatric individuals of morphological taxonomic classification and cpDNA genotype (Wagner and Govindaraju 1988; D. B. Wagner and D. R. Govindaraju, unpubl. data). However, such constraints would not simultaneously explain the predominantly random association of allozymes and cpDNA genotypes in the same individuals (Wagner et al. 1989a; D. B. Wagner and B. P. Dancik, unpubl. data). Although several questions will remain unanswered until more data is available, it is clear that cpDNA variation is a significant component of a complex population genetic architecture in sympatric populations of *P. banksiana* — *P. contorta*.

The evolutionary conservatism of the chloroplast genome (Palmer et al. 1988; Clegg et al. 1991) appears to contradict the numerous examples of intra-specific cpDNA polymorphisms in forest trees. However, coniferous

chloroplast genomes lack an inverted repeat that is typical of other plants (Strauss et al. 1988; Lidholm et al. 1988). This physical characteristic may contribute to the occurrence of DNA rearrangements in conifers (Ali et al. 1991). Moreover, cpDNA variability may be restricted to only a few mutation hotspots within a particular species (Ali et al. 1991), in which case there would be no contradiction.

Hotspots of chloroplast polymorphism are associated with the presence of cpDNA repeat units in several plants, including *P. menziesii* (Blasko et al. 1988; Strauss et al. 1988; Tsai and Strauss 1989; Ali et al. 1991). Theory predicts that within-individual organellar variation may be frequent when DNA repeats are responsible for polymorphism (Clark 1988). Therefore, the duplicated and repeated DNA sequences that occur in the chloroplast genomes of *P. banksiana*—*P. contorta* and *P. monticola* (Govindaraju et al. 1989b; White 1990a; Lidholm et al. 1991) are especially intriguing, because these taxa harbor cpDNA variation within individuals (Govindaraju et al. 1988; White 1990b).

Although most attempts to identify intra-specific cpDNA RFLPs in forest trees have succeeded, failure have been reported for European larch (*Larix decidua* Mill.), Japanese larch (*Larix leptolepis* Sieb. and Zucc.) (Szmidt et al. 1987), blue spruce (*P. pungens* Engelm.) (Stine et al. 1989), *P. taeda* (Neale and Sederoff 1989; Ali et al. 1991), Chinese pine (*P. tabulaeformis* Carr.), Yunnan pine (*P. yunnanensis* Franch.), Masson pine (*P. massoniana* Lamb.) (Wang and Szmidt 1990), *Liriodendron chinense* (Hemsl.) Sarg. (Parks and Wendel 1990), *P. deltoides*, black poplar (*P. nigra* L.) (Smith and Sytsma 1990), *Q. virginiana* var. *fusiformis* (Small) Sarg. (Whittemore and Schaal 1991), longleaf pine (*P. palustris* Mill.) (Wagner et al. 1992), and Michoacán pine (*P. michoacana* Martínez) (J. A. Matos and B. A. Schaal, pers. comm.). Within shortleaf pine (*P. echinata* Mill.), the only observed cpDNA variation is explainable by inter-specific hybridization (Wagner et al. 1991a). Despite their failure to detect intra-specific cpDNA polymorphism, most of the above investigations identified distinctions among closely-related species. For example, Szmidt et al. (1987) found three cpDNA variants in a total sample of only 11 individuals from species crosses of *Larix*.

Additional study of the above examples would be appropriate prior to concluding that cpDNA is monomorphic intra-specifically, because sample sizes were usually small in terms of numbers of trees and numbers of cpDNA base pairs. A priori, one would expect to screen a very large number of base pairs in the chloroplast genome before finding any polymorphism, because cpDNA evolves slowly (Palmer et al. 1988; Clegg et al. 1991).

The role of the long-lived, woody-perennial life form in producing and

maintaining cpDNA polymorphisms is entirely unknown. Similarly, we understand little of the similarities and/or differences in gymnosperm vs. angiosperm cpDNA polymorphisms and in inter- vs. intra-specific cpDNA polymorphisms. Expanded investigation would be enlightening on these topics.

Mitochondrial (mt) DNA polymorphisms

Male sterility is one of the best known effects of plant mitochondrial polymorphisms (Pring and Lonsdale 1985). Consequently, current understanding of mitochondrial population genetics in plants arises primarily from analyses of male sterility polymorphisms (i.e., gynodioecy) (e.g., van Damme 1986).

Maternal inheritance of mitochondrial genomes predominates in angiosperms (Conde et al. 1979; Soliman et al. 1987), but conifers differ in this regard. Ultrastructural evidence indicates that mitochondria are contributed solely by the pollen donor in Cupressaceae and Taxodiaceae, while both paternal and maternal mitochondria are present at fertilization in Pinaceae and Taxaceae (Chesnoy 1987; Owens and Morris 1990, 1991). Mitochondrial restriction fragments are predominantly maternally inherited in *Pinus* species hybrids (Neale and Sederoff 1988; Wagner et al. 1991c), *P. taeda* (Neale and Sederoff 1989), *P. contorta* (Wagner et al. 1991c), and *Picea* species hybrids (Sutton et al. 1991b; M. Stine, pers. comm.). In contrast, mtDNA RELPs appear paternally inherited in *S. sempervirens* and *C. decurrens* (Neale et al. 1989, 1991). These RFLP results are consistent with the ultrastructural evidence, because they represent assays of "net" outcomes after reproduction and development. Mitochondrial inheritance data from non-coniferous trees are unavailable for comparison.

Despite the availability of mtDNA polymorphisms within at least six conifer species (see articles cited above), we know little about the genomic, taxonomic, or geographic distributions of mitochondrial variation. The molecular nature of mtDNA polymorphism has been inferred in only one forest tree species, *C. decurrens* (Neale et al. 1991), and the use of mitochondrial markers in population surveys is just beginning (e.g., Sutton et al. 1991b). However, mtDNA polymorphisms are under investigation in several laboratories (e.g., S. H. Strauss et al., pers. comm.; J. Dong, pers. comm.; T. Li, pers. comm.), and we can expect substantive new information in the near future.

Conclusions

Despite the limited resources directed toward population surveys of DNA polymorphisms in forest trees, DNA as a biochemical marker has advanced our understanding of biology and provides additional opportunities to enhance the quantity and quality of genetic markers. The new markers are expected to be of greatest value when other polymorphisms are inadequate, such as in studies of taxa that appear genetically depauperate. For example, although isoenzyme variation is unknown within *P. torreyana* populations (Ledig and Conkle 1983), DNA polymorphisms revealed two genotypes in a sample of only three individuals of this species (Rogstad et al. 1988b)!

Future searches for DNA polymorphisms are likely to benefit from a variety of technical advances, such as DNA amplification by PCR and the use of RAPD technology. The polymerase chain reaction has already been used successfully in forest trees (Bousquet et al. 1990) and could be combined with DNA sequencing to reveal polymorphism in genomic regions that appear monomorphic by less sophisticated approaches (Leigh Brown 1989). A practical consideration is that PCR permits production of virtually unlimited quantities of DNA from very small amounts of stable materials (e.g., seeds), thereby reducing or eliminating the need to collect and transport large quantities of comparatively unstable tissues (e.g., leaves).

The potentially large number and widely varying diversities of nuclear DNA polymorphisms will be useful for solving a variety of problems in forest genetics. Identification and analysis of QTLs (e.g., Neale and Williams 1991) may be one of the most significant applications of these polymorphisms. Nuclear DNA markers could also increase the resolution of parentage analyses (Adams 1991) and permit more thorough investigation of linkage disequilibrium (Bush and Smouse 1992). However, the future roles of nuclear DNA polymorphisms should themselves be considered critical topics for current research. The most appropriate roles will likely depend on important details regarding cost and distribution of polymorphism.

Recombinant DNA technology has provided the first markers suitable for organellar population genetics in trees. Organellar polymorphisms may now be identifiable in nearly any species of choice, and these markers promise much information. For example, we should expect gene flow studies to benefit from organellar markers, because current gene flow estimators often fail to distinguish gene flow by pollen vs. gene flow by seed in natural populations (Ellstrand 1992). In particular, the contrasting modes of cpDNA and mtDNA inheritance in Pinaceae may enhance

simultaneous analyses of paternal and maternal lineages (Neale and Sederoff 1989).

Multilocus population genetics will benefit substantially from the availability of organellar markers. Cytonuclear disequilibria have been defined recently and can be more enlightening than the corresponding nuclear parameters (Asmussen et al. 1987; Schnabel and Asmussen 1989). Forest trees may be among the most informative of all organisms for empirical applications of the new cytonuclear theory, because they represent three inheritance patterns in a single life-form, i.e., mtDNA paternal, cpDNA paternal, nuclear loci Mendelian (as in *S. sempervirens* and *C. decurrens*); mtDNA maternal, cpDNA paternal, nuclear loci Mendelian (as in *Pinus* and *Picea*); and mtDNA maternal, cpDNA maternal, nuclear loci Mendelian (assuming that angiospermous forest trees behave as most other flowering plants).

Organellar polymorphisms should not be overlooked as a potential source of economically useful variation (McDaniel 1984; Pring and Lonsdale 1985; Börner and Sears 1986). Indeed, reciprocal effects occur in forest trees, although it is not yet known if these effects are due to cytoplasmic factors (e.g., Perry 1976; Wilcox 1983). Identification and detailed molecular investigation of organellar DNA polymorphisms, in concert with classical genetic experiments, may elucidate the causes of these reciprocal effects.

Clearly, DNA polymorphisms have enhanced the wide array of methodologies available to forest geneticists. It now appears possible to choose appropriate genetic markers based on questions at hand, rather than the reverse.

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