

The genus *Neottia*, an early step in shift from autotrophy to mycoheterotrophy in orchids?

TAMARA MALINOVÁ^{1,2}, MILAN KOTILÍNEK¹, JANA JERSÁKOVÁ^{1,2*}, FRANCOIS-XAVIER JOLY¹
& MARC-ANDRÉ SELOSSE³

¹Faculty of Science, University of South Bohemia, Branišovská 31, CZ-370 05 České Budějovice, Czech Republic;

²CzechGlobe, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Bělidla 986, CZ-603 00 Brno, Czech Republic; ³Centre d'Ecologie Fonctionnelle et Evolutive (CNRS, UMR 5175) 1919 Route de Mende, Montpellier, France

*Author for correspondence: jersa@centrum.cz

Many plant families evolved mycoheterotrophy as a way of gaining nutrients, but the evolution of such nutritional shift has been little studied. We investigated mycorrhizal associations and a nutritional mode of two orchid species, a common ecological generalist *Neottia ovata* and *N. cordata*, a species of peatbog spruce forests. The species are closely related to a non-green *N. nidus-avis*, associated with ectomycorrhizal Sebaciales, clade A. We investigated the course of germination at 18 sites in the Czech Republic, analyzed fungal spectra of both seedlings and 39 *N. ovata* and 21 *N. cordata* adults growing in 32 European sites in different habitats and measured the natural content of stable isotopes. Seeds of both species suffered high mortality during two years of *in situ* germination. Whereas *N. ovata* produced few protocorms at both

N. ovata and *N. cordata* localities, *N. cordata* never reached a protocorm stage. We found Sebaciales, clade B, in both seedlings and adults, independent of habitat type and site geography. The spectra of accompanying fungal species differed according to habitat: the meadow individuals associated frequently with saprophytic Tulasnellaceae, whereas the forest individuals associated more often with ectomycorrhizal fungi. Natural content of stable ¹³C and ¹⁵N isotopes in forest specimens, however, did not indicate significant nutrient gain by mycoheterotrophy. *Neottia* species form mycorrhiza with Sebaciales, clade B, in various habitats. This association together with the co-occurrence of ectomycorrhizal fungi at forest sites could serve as a predisposition for the shift to full mycoheterotrophy in *Neottia*.

Endophytic fungi associated with natural populations of *Vanilla* species in south-west Colombia

ANA TERESA MOSQUERA-ESPINOSA^{1,2*}, J. TUPAC OTERO^{1,3,4} & NICOLA S. FLANAGAN^{1,2}

¹Research Group in Orchids, Ecology and Plant Systematics, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Palmira, Colombia; ²Biology Program, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Cali, Colombia; ³Biological Sciences Department, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Palmira, Colombia; ⁴Environmental Studies Institute (IDEA Palmira), Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Palmira, Colombia; *Author for correspondence: fitopatologia@hotmail.com

The genus *Vanilla* (Orchidaceae) is of economic interest as the source of the natural vanilla fragrance, derived principally from cultivated plants of the species *V. planifolia*. The clade of fragrant species (*V.* subgenus *Xanata*, section *Xanata*) has a natural distribution in the Neotropics. Work in this research group has identified populations of ten *Vanilla* species in the region. Orchid species, including those of *Vanilla*, have an intimate relationship with mycorrhizal fungi to provide nutrients during seedling establishment and often in mature plants. Colombia has over 3,300 orchid species, but

little is known regarding the diversity of orchid mycorrhizal fungi essential for the establishment and survival of these species. We aim to characterize the diversity of fungi associated with the root system of adult plants of *Vanilla* species native to the diverse ecosystems of south-west Colombia, which include both humid tropical rainforest and sub-xerophytic habitats. Three methodologies are being implemented: 1) isolation of fungi from root portions colonized with mycorrhizal fungi; 2) isolation from single pelotons; and 3) identification of fungi present through direct PCR amplification using