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Distribution of rDNA loci in the genus *Glycine* Willd.

Received: 10 October 2000 / Accepted: 6 December 2000

Abstract The objective of this study was to examine the distribution of rDNA loci in the genus *Glycine* Willd. by fluorescent in situ hybridization (FISH) using the internal transcribed spacer (ITS) region of nuclear ribosomal DNA as a probe. The hybridized rDNA probe produced two distinct yellow signals on reddish chromosomes representing two NORs in 16 diploid ($2n=40$) species. Aneudiploid ($2n=38$) and aneutetraploid ($2n=78$) *Glycine tomentella* Hayata also exhibited two rDNA sites. However, the probe hybridized with four chromosomes as evidenced by four signals in two diploid species (*Glycine curvata* Tind. and *Glycine cyrtoloba* Tind.) and tetraploid ($2n=80$) *G. tabacina* (Labill.) Benth. and *G. tomentella*. Synthesized amphiploids ($2n=80$) of *Glycine canescens* F. J. Herm. ($2n=40$) and the 40-chromosome *G. tomentella* also showed four signals. This study demonstrates that the distribution of the rDNA gene in the 16 *Glycine* species studied is highly conserved and that silence of the rDNA locus may be attributed to amphiplasty during diploidization and speciation.

Keywords Soybean · *Glycine* · rDNA · Fluorescent in situ hybridization · Polyploidy

Introduction

Soybean [*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.] is an economically important legume but is not considered as a model crop for cytogenetic studies (Singh and Hymowitz 1999). It contains a high ($2n=40$) chromosome number

(Karpechenko 1925; Veatch 1934). All chromosomes are symmetrical at mitotic metaphase, with chromosome size ranging from 1.42 μM to 2.8 μM (Sen and Vidyabhusan 1960) and a lack morphological distinguishing landmarks. Occasionally, a pair of satellite (SAT) chromosomes (nucleolus organizers, usually known as NORs) are visible by Feulgen staining (Palmer and Heer 1973). Giemsa C-banding failed to characterize individual soybean chromosomes because a single centromeric band was recorded in metaphase chromosomes (Ladizinsky et al. 1979).

Mitotic metaphase chromosomes of *Glycine soja* Sieb. and Zucc., a wild annual progenitor of the soybean, and 16 wild perennial species of the subgenus *Glycine* Willd., are karyotypically indistinguishable (Singh, unpublished data). However, pachytene chromosome analysis of an interspecific F_1 hybrid between soybean and *G. soja* created the first soybean chromosome map (Singh and Hymowitz 1988). This pioneering contribution laid the foundation for the production of primary trisomics (Xu et al. 2000b) and led to the association of the classical linkage map and several molecular maps with specific chromosomes in order to develop a universal map for the soybean.

Molecular cytogenetics in the soybean has lagged behind maize, wheat, barley, rice and tomato. Fluorescent in situ hybridization (FISH) was sporadically applied to locate rDNA sites in interphase cells (Skorupska et al. 1989) and metaphase chromosomes (Griffor et al. 1991). Genomic relationships among 16 wild perennial species have been determined based on cytogenetic (interspecific crossability rate, meiotic chromosome pairing, hybrid viability) and molecular methods (Hymowitz et al. 1998). Wild perennial species grow in diverse geographical areas and under a wide range of climatic conditions (Table 1), and harbor traits for resistance to pests and pathogens (Singh and Hymowitz 1999). The utilization of cytological molecular markers for re-confirming the biosystematic results in the genus *Glycine* is hampered due to the small and symmetrical mitotic metaphase chromosomes.

Communicated by B.S. Gill

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Table 1 Number of rDNA Loci in the genus *Glycine*. *, Illinois number; + plant introduction number. Abbreviations: LAT, Latitude; LONG, Longitude; WA, Western Australia; QLD, Queensland; SA, South Australia; V, Victoria; PNG, Papua New Guinea; IL, Illinois

Species	Code	2n	Genome	Accessions	rDNA loci	LAT	LONG	Collection site
Subgenus <i>Glycine</i>								
<i>G. albicans</i>	ALB	40	I	889*	1	-14.82	125.83	0.5 km E Amex Mining Camp, WA
<i>G. arenaria</i>	ARE	40	H	505204+	1	-15.40	128.97	50 km W Kununurra, WA
<i>G. argyrea</i>	ARG	40	A ₂	505151	1	-25.90	153.08	3 km from Rainbow Beach, QLD
<i>G. canescens</i>	CAN	40	A	440932	1	-26.42	139.55	65 km S Birdsville, SA
<i>G. clandestina</i>	CLA	40	A ₁	440958	1	-37.07	148.25	Iandra Rd, Young, NSW
<i>G. curvata</i>	CUR	40	C ₁	505166	2	-20.38	145.62	30.5 km E Pentland, Homestead, QLD
<i>G. cyrtoloba</i>	CYR	40	C	440963	2	-20.82	149.28	Brampton Island, Track to lookout, QLD
<i>G. falcata</i>	FAL	40	F	505179	1	-24.88	146.25	Tambo, QLD
<i>G. latifolia</i>	LAT	40	B ₁	378709	1	-29.77	151.12	Inverell, NSW
<i>G. latrobeana</i>	LTR	40	A ₃	483196	1	-38.05	144.03	5.5 km NW Inverleigh, V
<i>G. microphylla</i>	MIC	40	B	440956	1	-17.22	145.55	Kairi Res. Stn. QLD
<i>G. pindanica</i>	PIN	40	H ₂	1251	1	-17.52	122.27	50 km N Broome, WA
<i>G. tabacina</i>	TAB	40	B ₂	373990	1	-30.92	152.58	Kempsey, NSW
<i>G. tomentella</i>	TOM	38	E	440998	1	-26.92	150.12	20 km E Condamine, QLD
<i>G. tomentella</i>	TOM	40	D ₃	505222	1	-12.97	143.07	Lockhart River Airport, Near terminal, QLD
<i>G. tomentella</i>	TOM	40	D	441000	1	-18.03	144.85	70 km SE Mt. Garnet, QLD
<i>G. tabacina</i>	TAB	80	BB ₁	373992	2	-29.65	150.83	Delungra, NSW
<i>G. tabacina</i>	TAB	80	AB	440996	2	-29.82	153.03	8 km SE Grafton, NSW
<i>G. tomentella</i>	TOM	78	D ₃ E	483218	1	-20.82	149.28	Brampton Island, QLD
<i>G. tomentella</i>	TOM	80	AD ₃	441005	2	-20.45	149.02	Lindeman Island, QLD
<i>G. tomentella</i>	TOM	80	A?	446988	2	-9.50	147.07	3 km from Boroko, PNG
Subgenus <i>Soja</i>								
<i>G. soja</i>	SOJ	40	G	81,762	1	ca 42.5	ca 135	Russia via Japan
<i>G. max</i>	MAX	40	G	Clark 63	1	40.11	-88.20	Urbana, IL

The SAT chromosome includes an NOR, the site of the rDNA gene. The labeled rDNA is precisely located on the chromosome and is quantified using FISH. Variation in NORs (rDNA sites) in the Triticeae was attributed to genome dominance, inactivity and suppression (amphiplasty) (Lewis et al. 1996; Linde-Laursen et al. 1996; Taketa et al. 1999), and in *Oryza* to the environment (Fukui et al. 1994). Since wild perennial species inhabit extremely diverse regions (desert to tropical rain forest) of Australia, the main objective of this study was to examine the distribution of rDNA gene in the genus *Glycine* and to ascertain whether variation in the number of rDNA loci is caused by genome dominance or by growing conditions. This investigation encouraged us to locate molecular markers on specific soybean chromosomes with the aid of primary trisomics and tetrasomics.

Material and methods

Plant materials

The *Glycine* species used in this study, the three letter code, the 2n chromosome numbers, the genome, the plant introduction identification number, and the collection sites are listed in Table 1. Information on latitude (LAT) and longitude (LONG) helps locate precisely each *Glycine* species collection site used in this study. Wild perennial *Glycine* species were collected from the desert (ARE), tropical rain forest (MIC, TOM), tropical grass lands (ALB, ARG, CUR, CYR, FAL, PIN), temperate forest (CAN, LTR, TAB, LAT) and open Eucalypt forest (CLA). *Glycine hirticaulis* Tind. & Craven and *Glycine lactovirens* Tind. & Craven were not studied due to the lack of seed. One synthesized amphiploid (AA D₃D₃) from an interspecific F₁ hy-

brid of CAN (AA) and TOM (D₃D₃) was also included. Soybean cv Clark 63, was bred at Urbana, Illinois (temperate region), and *G. soja* (PI 81762) was introduced into the United States from Japan. The latter accession was initially collected from the North East region of Russia. These accessions were grown for several generations in the greenhouse of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and used for establishing genomic relationships among *Glycine* species by cytogenetic and molecular methods (Singh and Hymowitz 1985; Singh et al. 1988, 1992; Kollipara et al. 1997).

Methods

Mitotic chromosomes of the accessions listed in Table 1 were stained according to the Feulgen procedure described by Singh (1993) and Singh et al. (1998), and by the FISH method of Ahmad et al. (1999) with some modifications described below:

Seeds of wild perennial *Glycine* species and *G. soja* were scarified and germinated at room temperature (RT) in Petri plates on moist filter paper. Seeds of soybean cv Clark 63 were germinated in sterilized vermiculite in the greenhouse and kept moist with distilled water. Actively growing roots were collected and pre-treated in 0.5% 8-hydroxyquinoline for 5 h at 16°C. Roots were fixed in a freshly prepared mixture of 3 (95% ethanol):1 (propionic acid) and stored in a refrigerator for at least 24 h. Roots were washed twice (5-min each) with 0.01 M CA-SC buffer (2 parts 0.01 M citric acid+3 parts 0.01 M sodium citrate; pH 4.5) and were allowed to sit in buffer for 30 min at RT. Roots were softened for 1 h at 37°C in an enzyme solution composed of 0.02 g cellulose "Onozuka" R-10, 0.01 g pectinase (Sigma # P-2401) in 1 ml of CA-SC buffer. Roots were washed twice (5-min each) with 1 ml of CA-SC buffer and kept in a refrigerator for 1 to 2 h. A root tip was cut and squashed on a clean slide under a clean cover slip with a drop of 45% acetic acid. Slides were scanned for prometaphase and metaphase chromosome spreads by a phase-contrast lens. Cover slips were removed after dipping slides in liquid nitrogen for a few seconds. Slides were treated with 45% acetic acid for 10 min at RT and air-dried overnight at RT.

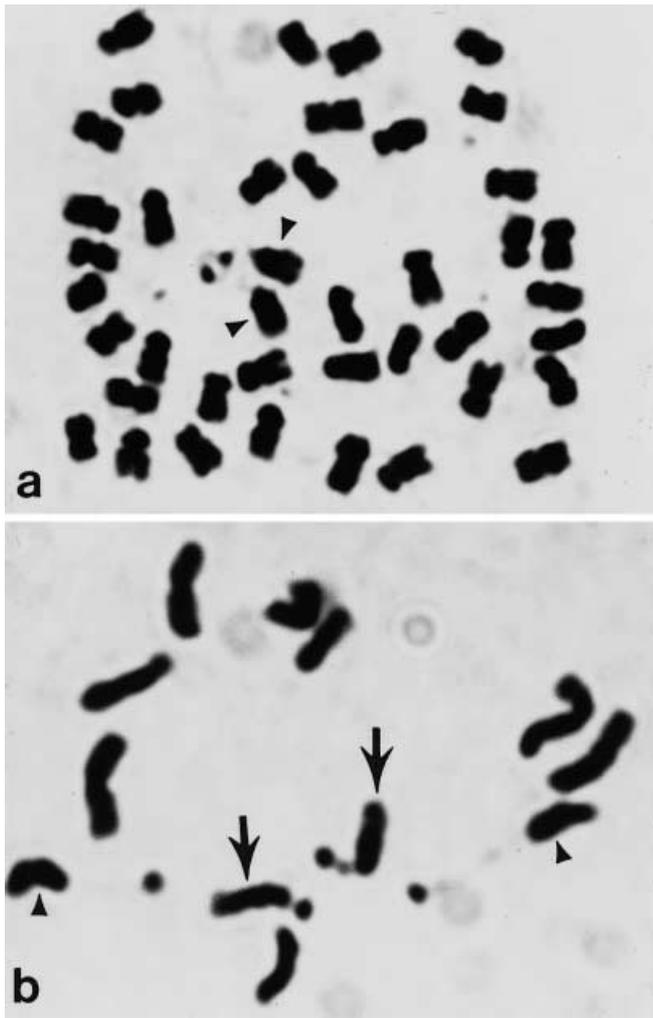


Fig. 1a, b Feulgen-stained mitotic metaphase chromosomes of *G. tomentella* (a), and *G. cyrtoloba* (b). **a** A metaphase plate of 40-chromosome *G. tomentella* (PI 505222) showing one pair of SAT (chromosome 13) chromosomes with NORs (arrowheads); **b** A partial metaphase plate of *G. cyrtoloba* (PI 440963) showing two pairs of SAT chromosomes with NORs. The visual karyomorphology of one pair is chromosome 13 (arrowheads) and the second pair (arrows) is an unidentified chromosome

A total of eight slides were processed in a single batch at a given time using Coplin jars. Each slide was treated with 100 μ l of RNase (30 μ g/ml in 2 \times SSC; 1 \times SSC=0.15 M NaCl+0.015 M sodium citrate; pH 7.0). The RNase solution on the specimen was overlaid with rectangular plastic cover slips (24 mm \times 24 mm) and the slides were incubated in a moist chamber at 37 $^{\circ}$ C for 1 h. The slides were then subjected to denaturation with 70% formamide in 2 \times SSC for 2 min at 70 $^{\circ}$ C, followed by dehydration at -20 $^{\circ}$ C in a series of 70%, 80%, 95% (5-min each) and 100% (30 s) ethanol. The hybridization solution (400 μ l) consists of 10 μ l of a biotin-labeled ITS region (ITS1, 5.8 S, ITS2; approximately 700 nucleotides) probe DNA (BioPrime DNA Labeling System, Life Technologies, Gaithersburg, Md.; cat # 18094-011), 17 μ l of unlabeled nonspecific ssDNA (salmon sperm DNA), 200 μ l of 50% formamide, 40 μ l of 20 \times SSC, 80 μ l of 50% dextran sulfate and 50 μ l of TE buffer. Each slide was treated with a 50- μ l solution and was overlaid with a plastic cover slip and incubated at 80 $^{\circ}$ C for 8 min followed by overnight incubation at 37 $^{\circ}$ C in a moist chamber. The post-hybridization steps, such as washing, fluorescent labeling, amplification, and visualization of fluo-

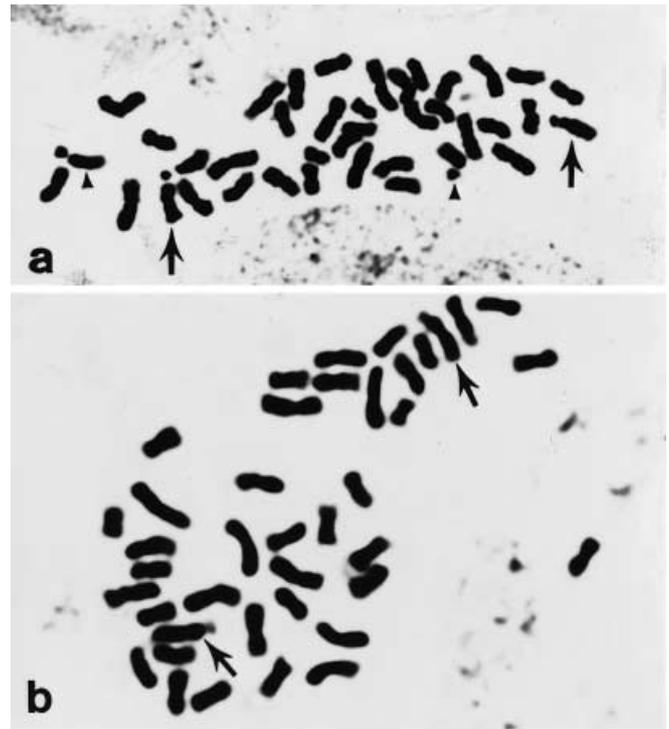


Fig. 2a, b Karyotypic comparison of complete metaphase cells of CYR and CUR after Feulgen staining. **a** A metaphase plate of CYR with 36+4 SAT chromosomes. Two of the SAT (arrowheads) chromosomes involve chromosome 13, not visible in CUR (b), while a pair of SAT (arrows) chromosomes is common to both CYR and CUR. The remaining chromosomes are alike

rescent signals, were the same as those described by Ahmad et al. (1999). FISH slides were observed with a Zeiss Axioskop microscope equipped with neutral density filters. Photographs (\times 100 oil immersion lens) were taken by using Fujichrome (color slide) Sensia II film, ASA 400.

Results

Distribution of NORs in the genus *Glycine* by Feulgen staining

Karyomorphology at mitotic metaphase of 16 diploid ($2n=40$) species, listed in Table 1, of the genus *Glycine* did not express morphological distinguishing landmarks after Feulgen staining. Most of the chromosomes were metacentric and occasionally a pair of satellite (SAT) chromosomes was observed (Fig. 1a). The SAT chromosome has been designated as chromosome 13 by Singh and Hymowitz (1988) following pachytene chromosome analysis of an interspecific F_1 hybrid of *G. max* (MAX) and *G. soja* (SOJ). The nucleolous organizer region (NOR) is often not visible in over-contracted mitotic metaphase chromosomes. The kinetochore in all pro-metaphase chromosomes was usually flanked by heterochromatin.

Glycine cyrtoloba (CYR) clearly showed four SAT chromosomes (Figs. 1b, 2a); one pair was chromosome

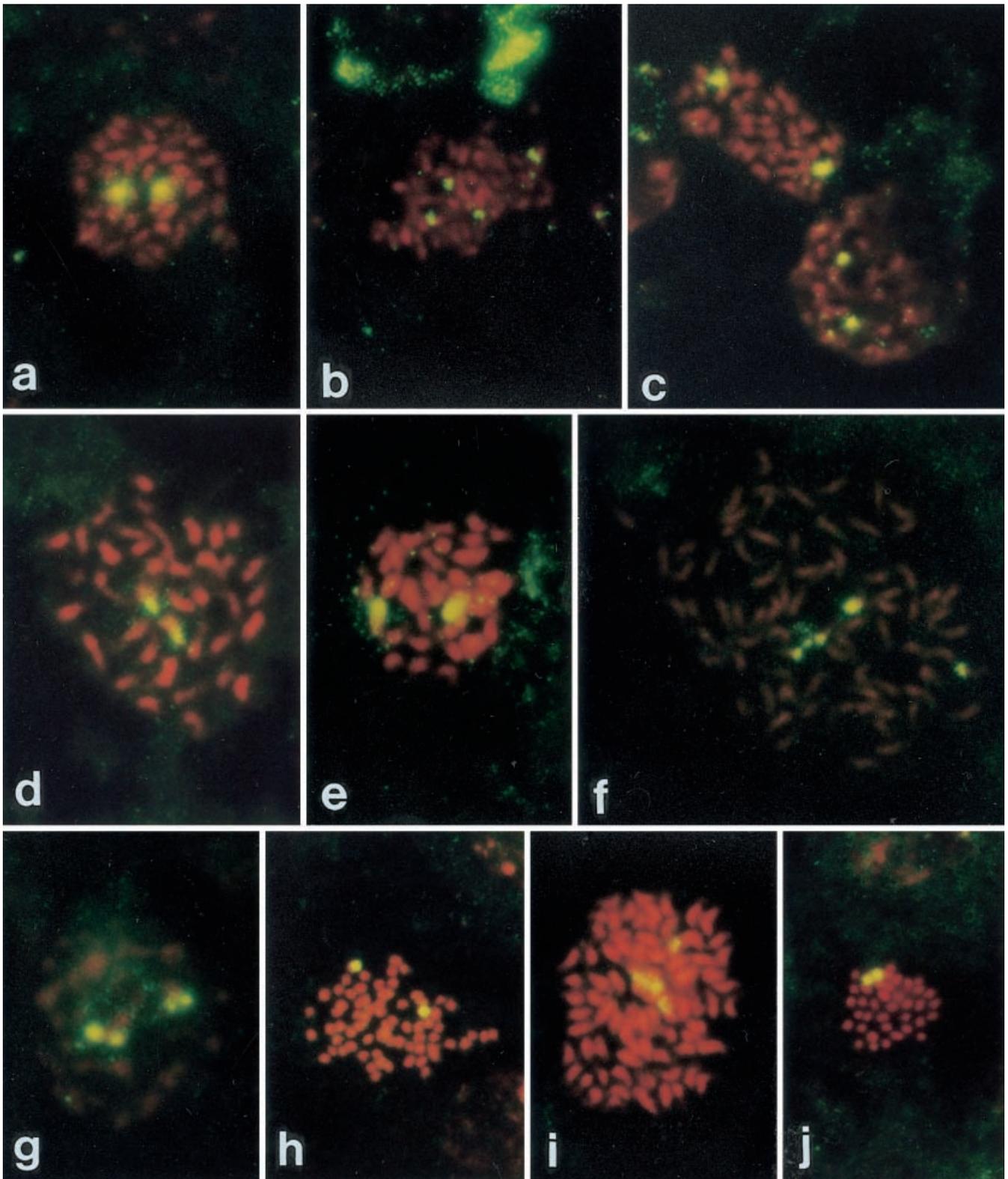


Fig. 3a–j FISH of mitotic metaphase and interphase from seven species of the genus *Glycine*. **a** CAN; **b** CUR; **c** MIC; **d** 40-chromosome TOM; **e** 38-chromosome TOM; **f** 80-chromosome TAB; **g** 80-chromosome TOM; **h** 78-chromosome TOM; **i** Synthesized amphiploid ($2n=80$) of CAN and TOM ($2n=40$); **j** MAX cv Clark 63

13 (arrow heads) and the other pair (arrows) was karyotypically unidentified. However, the NORs of chromosome 13 were absent at metaphase in *Glycine curvata* (CUR) but the other SAT pair that was present in CYR (Fig. 2a, arrows) was visible in CUR (Fig. 2b; arrows). We confirmed these results by examining cytologically

three additional accessions of CUR (IL 793, IL836, IL1306) and CYR (IL1312, IL1313, IL1318) after Feulgen staining.

Feulgen stain failed to exhibit the expected four SAT chromosomes at metaphase of the 80-chromosome *Glycine tabacina* (TAB) and the 78- and 80-chromosome *Glycine tomentella* (TOM). Mitotic-chromosome cells selected for precise chromosome counts were highly contracted and NORs were not detectable.

Distribution of rDNA in the genus *Glycine* by FISH

Molecular cytogenetic methods, and particularly FISH, determine precisely the number of NORs (rDNA loci) in an organism. Table 1 shows the distribution of rDNA loci in the genus *Glycine* as determined by FISH. Two bright yellow signals on reddish chromosomes were observed in 14 diploid wild perennial *Glycine* species (Fig. 3a, c, d, e, j) and the 78-chromosome TOM (Fig. 3h). The rDNA probe hybridized with four chromosomes of CUR (Fig. 3b) and CYR. The expression of four signals in CUR was unexpected because two NORs were recorded from Feulgen staining. However, both species are alike taxonomically and genomically (Table 1). The intensity and sharpness of hybridization signals varied from slide to slide, sample to sample, and cell to cell. Figure 3c contains two cells of MIC. The upper metaphase cell shows two stronger hybridization sites than those recorded in the bottom prometaphase cell.

The rDNA probe hybridized with four chromosomes of the 80-chromosome TAB [with (PI 373992) and without (PI 440996) adventitious roots (Fig. 3f)] and TOM (Fig. 3i). Adventitious roots are a morphological distinguishing trait for B-genome species (Costanza and Hymowitz 1987) and nature of their inheritance is recessive (Singh et al. 1992). One chromosome expressed the strongest site of hybridization than the other three chromosomes (Fig. 3f, g). A cautionary note is for Fig. 3f which showed one weakest signal observed occasionally. This is not a rDNA site but is the stretched secondary constriction region that fluoresced. Signals were terminal as observed clearly in a prometaphase cell (Fig. 3d). The entire chromosome exhibited a strong hybridization signal in condensed small metaphase chromosomes (Fig. 3a).

It was expected to record two pairs of hybridization sites in 78-chromosome TOM because it is an allotetraploid (Singh et al. 1989). However, Fig. 3 h showed two strong signals. This suggests that only a single pair of rDNA loci is active in the 78-chromosome TOM. This molecular trait could be useful in identifying the 78-chromosome from the 80- chromosome TOM without counting metaphase spreads. Morphologically, both cytotypes are alike and often it takes a tremendous effort to distinguish them cytologically.

Soybean cv Clark 63 showed a pair of rDNA sites after FISH (Fig. 3j). Both signals were equally strong in interphase and metaphase cells. Similar hybridization sites were recorded in its wild annual progenitor *G. soja*.

Discussion

Fluorescent in situ hybridization is an excellent, reliable, and effective molecular cytogenetic tool for biosystematic studies in *Lens* and *Cicer* (Abbo et al. 1994), *Phaseolus* and *Vigna* (Zheng et al. 1994), *Oryza* (Fukui et al. 1994) and *Hordeum* (Taketa et al. 1999); as well as for physical mapping of molecular markers on chromosomes and genome analysis (Jiang and Gill 1994; Ørgaard and Heslop-Harrison 1994). This report for the first time examines the distribution of NORs after Feulgen staining and of rDNA loci by FISH in the genus *Glycine*. A pair of rDNA loci was observed in 14 diploid ($2n=40$) wild perennial species of the subgenus *Glycine* and in soybean and its wild annual progenitor *G. soja*. This is congruent with the results obtained after Feulgen staining which also uncovered two SAT chromosomes in these species. Based on pachytene chromosome analysis of a MAX and SOJ interspecific F_1 hybrid, Singh and Hymowitz (1988) assigned number 13 to the SAT chromosome. The NOR in chromosome 13 is in the short arm and is frequently embedded in the nucleolus. Pachytene chromosome lengths of both species are similar. Yanagisawa et al. (1991) identified marker chromosomes in the genus *Glycine* by using a chromosome image analyzing system (CHIAS) after Giemsa N-banding. They examined MAX, SOJ, CAN, CLA, FAL, LAT, TAB and TOM, and found a similar karyotype. By contrast, Ahmad et al. (1984) based on mitotic metaphase chromosome measurement, reported, that *G. soja* chromosomes were about 6–7% smaller than those of *G. max*.

Darlington and Wylie (1955) proposed a $x=10$ basic chromosome number for the cultivated soybean. Based on this proposal we may hypothesize a putative ancestor with $2n=20$ chromosomes for the genus *Glycine* and carrying at least a pair of NORs. However, such a progenitor is either unknown or extinct, or else may be thriving in South East Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam) and has not been collected and identified so far. Teraploidization ($2n=4x=40$) through auto (spontaneous chromosome doubling)- or allo (interspecific hybridization followed by chromosome doubling)- polyploidy of the progenitor species either occurred prior to dissemination or after, and cannot be substantiated experimentally because we do not know where the progenitor of the genus *Glycine* originated. The progenitor of the wild perennial species of the subgenus *Glycine* radiated out into several morphotypes depending on the growing conditions in the Australian subcontinent. These species have never been domesticated and remain as wild perennials. By contrast, the pathway of migration from a common progenitor to China is assumed as; wild perennial ($2n=4x=40$; unknown or extinct) → wild annual ($2n=4x=40$; *G. soja*) → soybean ($2n=4x=40$; *G. max*; cultigen). All known species of the genus *Glycine* exhibit diploid – like meiosis and are cleistogamous and inbreeders (Singh and Hymowitz 1985).

Allopolyploidization probably played a major role in the speciation of the genus *Glycine*. This assumption

implies that the 40-chromosome *Glycine* species and the 80-chromosome TAB and TOM are tetraploid and octoploid, respectively. The expression of four rDNA loci in CUR and CYR strongly supports the hypothesis of the allotetraploid origin that was suggested by cytogenetic (Hadley and Hymowitz 1973; Singh and Hymowitz 1985; Xu et al. 2000a) and molecular studies (Lee and Verma 1984; Shoemaker et al. 1996).

Of the 16 wild perennial species of the subgenus *Glycine*, CUR and CYR are the only two species that possess curved pods, while other species harbor straight pods (Tindale 1984, 1986). The species are extremely difficult to hybridize with their relatives as pod abortion 21 days post-pollination is common, and interspecific F₁ plants exhibit seedling and vegetative lethality and total seed sterility (Singh et al. 1988). We can not substantiate experimentally that four dosages of rDNA hinder hybridization with the allied species having two rDNA loci.

Glycine max, *G. soja* and 12 wild perennial *Glycine* species (2n=40) showed one pair of rDNA loci, whereas the 80-chromosome TAB and TOM contain four rDNA loci (Table 1). A pair of rDNA loci was reported in soybean cultivars by Skorupska et al. (1989) and Griffor et al. (1991). It is interesting to note that the 78-chromosome TOM has a single pair of rDNA loci (Fig. 3h). This suggests that the activity of rDNA loci is probably silenced, lost, inactivated, or suppressed (amphiplasty) during diploidization. Such a phenomenon is prevalent in the Triticeae (Gerlach et al. 1980; Miller et al. 1983; Linares et al. 1992; Cabrera et al. 1995; Lewis et al. 1996; Linc et al. 1999), as well as in *Arabidopsis* (Maluszynska and Heslop-Harrison 1993), *Allium* (Ricroch et al. 1992) and *Capsicum* (Moscone et al. 1996).

Although diploid wild perennial species are distinct taxonomically and genomically and grow in diverse agroclimatic geographical regions (desert to tropical rain forest) of Australia (Table 1), only a single rDNA locus predominates. This suggests that the rDNA gene is highly conserved in the genus *Glycine*. On the other hand, a variable number of rDNA loci is common in the genus *Oryza* (Fukui et al. 1994). *Oryza sativa* ssp. *Indica* contains two rDNA loci while in ssp. *Japonica* the number of rDNA loci range from one (mostly) to two. Furthermore, variability was much greater (range 1–3) in the wild perennial diploid species. These authors suggested that the temperate-region cultivars had one rDNA locus while those in tropical and subtropical regions contained two rDNA loci. This pattern was not recorded in the *Glycine* species. This report therefore recommends the physical mapping of molecular markers on the soybean chromosomes by utilizing primary trisomics (Xu et al. 2000b) and tetrasomics using an improved FISH procedure.

Acknowledgments Research was supported in part by the Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station, and a grant from the Illinois Soybean Program Operating Board No. 96–22–168–3HY. We are grateful to Drs. Krishna Kollipara and S. J. Xu for technical advice. We thank the Korean Sahmyook University for granting H. H. K. sabbatical leave to conduct research at the University of Illinois.

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