

Short communication

The karyotype of *Sophora tetraptera* (Fabaceae)

LAURA B. STIEFKENS

GABRIEL BERNARDELLO

Instituto Multidisciplinario de Biología Vegetal
(CONICET-UNC)

C.C. 495

5000 Córdoba, Argentina

GREGORY J. ANDERSON

The University of Connecticut

Department of Ecology and Evolutionary
Biology

Storrs, CT 06269-3043, USA

INTRODUCTION

Sophora (Fabaceae (Leguminosae), subfam. Papilionoideae) is included in Sophoreae, a tribe recently shown to be paraphyletic (Doyle et al. 2000). This genus is composed of 45–50 species of worldwide distribution with its centre of diversity in North America (Polhill 1981; Sousa S. & Rudd 1993; Peña et al. 2000). *Sophora* section *Edwardsia* (Salisb.) Taub. is considered monophyletic and well differentiated from other sections of the genus (Peña & Cassels 1996; Hurr et al. 1999; Peña et al. 2000). It includes 17 closely related, tree species of classical Antarctic-circumpolar distribution on islands across the Pacific, South Atlantic, and Indian Oceans and SW South America (Polhill 1981; Hurr et al. 1999; Peña et al. 2000).

In New Zealand, sect. *Edwardsia* is represented by eight species (Heenan et al. 2001). Among them, *S. tetraptera* J.S.Mill. (kowhai) is a tree up to 12 m tall with golden yellow flowers that inhabits the eastern North Island on terraces and hillslopes from East Cape (37°38'S) to 40°30'S (Allan 1961; Heenan et al. 2001).

About 30 species of *Sophora* have been counted worldwide with several chromosome numbers reported (e.g., Federov 1974; Goldblatt 1981a,b,c, 1984, 1988; Goldblatt & Johnson 1990, 1991, 1994, 1996, 1998). In New Zealand, all eight species have been examined for chromosome numbers (Atchison 1949; Rattenbury 1957; Hair & Beuzenberg 1966; de Lange & Murray 2002), including *S. tetraptera* ($2n = 18$; Atchison 1949; Rattenbury 1957; Hair & Beuzenberg 1966; Yeh et al. 1986) but no detailed karyotype data are available. The karyotypes of only nine *Sophora* species worldwide have been critically analysed so far (Kawakami 1930; Hsu & Huang 1985; Bernal Gonzalez & Martínez Almeraya 1989; Kodama 1989; Kumari & Bir 1990; Palomino et al. 1993; Tian et al. 1993; Stiefkens et al. 2001), a small number considering the size of the genus and the significance of karyotypic data in understanding the diversification of flowering plants (Stebbins 1971). In this paper, we provide data on the somatic

Abstract The karyotype of *Sophora tetraptera* (Fabaceae (Leguminosae), subfam. Papilionoideae) is reported for the first time. The chromosome number, $2n = 18$, coincides with former reports and is the most common number for the genus. The chromosomes are small (average length 1.65 μm). The karyotype is composed of 8 m (metacentric) + 1 sm (submetacentric) pairs. Microsatellites were observed on the short arm of the only sm pair. The intrachromosomal and interchromosomal asymmetry indices were $A_1 = 0.16$ and $A_2 = 0.12$, respectively. The nine species of *Sophora* analysed karyotypically so far in the literature suggest that karyotypic features are useful. The diversification of the group apparently has been accompanied by some chromosomal rearrangements yielding differences in karyotype formula and secondary constrictions. Thus, karyotypic data in *Sophora* are useful for elucidating its taxonomy and evolution.

Keywords chromosome numbers; karyotype; *Sophora tetraptera*; Fabaceae (Leguminosae); New Zealand flora

chromosome number and the karyotype of *S. tetraptera* to determine the importance of chromosomal changes in the evolution of the group.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Seeds were collected from a tree in Frasertown, Hawke's Bay (38°58'S, 177°24'E). A voucher specimen of the parent tree is deposited in CORD (Museo Botánico de Córdoba, Argentina).

Mitotic chromosomes in the somatic cells of root-tips were analysed from squashes of primary roots from germinating seeds. Seeds were soaked in tap water for 24 hours. They were then put in Petri dishes lined with filter paper moistened with gibberellic acid (GA3, 1000 ppm) and were regularly watered with the same solution. Petri dishes containing seeds were kept in the dark at 30°C. Root-tips were collected when the primary roots were 2–10 mm long and were pretreated at room temperature for 2 h in a saturated solution of p-dichlorobenzene in water. Root-tips were rinsed in distilled water and were fixed in freshly made ethanol:glacial acetic acid (3:1) at room temperature for 24 h. Following fixation, they were hydrolysed with 5N HCl for 40 min at room temperature and put in Feulgen solution (basic fuchsin) for 2 h at room temperature in the dark. Root-tip meristem cells were isolated on a slide and squashed. Slides were made permanent in Euparal by removing the cover slips through freezing with carbon dioxide.

Cells selected for measurements were photographed with phase contrast optics and Kodak T-Max film. Ten selected cells, each from a different

individual, were photographed and the photographs were used to take measurements of the following for each chromosome pair: s (short arm), l (long arm), and c (total chromosome length). The centromeric index ($I = 100s/c$) and the arm ratio ($r = l/s$) were then calculated and used to classify the chromosomes, and determine homologues, as recognised by Levan et al. (1964). Karyograms were constructed by organising the chromosomes into groups according to their arm ratio (from m to sm), and ordering them by decreasing length within each category. The resulting idiogram was based on the mean values obtained. Karyotype asymmetry was estimated using the indices of Romero Zarco (1986) and Stebbins' (1971) classification.

RESULTS

The observation of 30 cells, from 10 individuals, confirmed that the somatic chromosome number of *S. tetraptera* is $2n = 18$ (Fig. 1). The chromosomes are small (Table 1) and quite homogeneous in size, ranging from 1.3 to 2 μm , with an average chromosome length of 1.65 μm . The total haploid chromosome length of the karyotype based on the mean chromosome length was 14.85 μm . The karyotype is symmetrical with 8 m (metacentric) + 1 sm (submetacentric) chromosome pairs (Fig. 2). The intrachromosomal and interchromosomal asymmetry indices were $A_1 = 0.16$ and $A_2 = 0.12$, respectively. According to Stebbins (1971) classification, the karyotype falls in the "1A" category. Small satellites were frequently observed on both of the short arms of the only submetacentric pair (Fig. 1).

Table 1 Measurements in μm (mean \pm standard deviation) and chromosomic indices (r, arm ratio; i, centromeric index) of somatic chromosomes of *Sophora tetraptera*. Abbreviations after Levan et al. (1964): s, short arm; l, long arm; c, total chromosome length; r, arm ratio; i, centromeric index; m, metacentric; sm, submetacentric; *, indicates a microsatellite on the short arm.

Pair	s	l	c	r	i	Chromosome type
1	0.95 \pm 0.14	1.05 \pm 0.07	2.00 \pm 0.20	1.13	46.85	m
2	0.89 \pm 0.12	0.92 \pm 0.08	1.81 \pm 0.21	1.04	48.96	m
3	0.86 \pm 0.12	0.92 \pm 0.10	1.78 \pm 0.21	1.06	48.42	m
4	0.79 \pm 0.10	0.90 \pm 0.11	1.69 \pm 0.19	1.14	46.66	m
5	0.73 \pm 0.08	0.89 \pm 0.13	1.62 \pm 0.17	1.21	45.17	m
6	0.74 \pm 0.07	0.81 \pm 0.10	1.55 \pm 0.15	1.09	47.79	m
7	0.66 \pm 0.06	0.79 \pm 0.09	1.45 \pm 0.12	1.20	45.25	m
8	0.60 \pm 0.07	0.70 \pm 0.09	1.30 \pm 0.15	1.18	45.89	m
9	0.54 \pm 0.05	1.14 \pm 0.15	1.68 \pm 0.19	2.12	32.08	sm*

Fig. 1 Photomicrograph of a mitotic metaphase of *Sophora tetraptera*, $2n = 18$. Arrow points to a satellite. Scale bar = 2 μm .

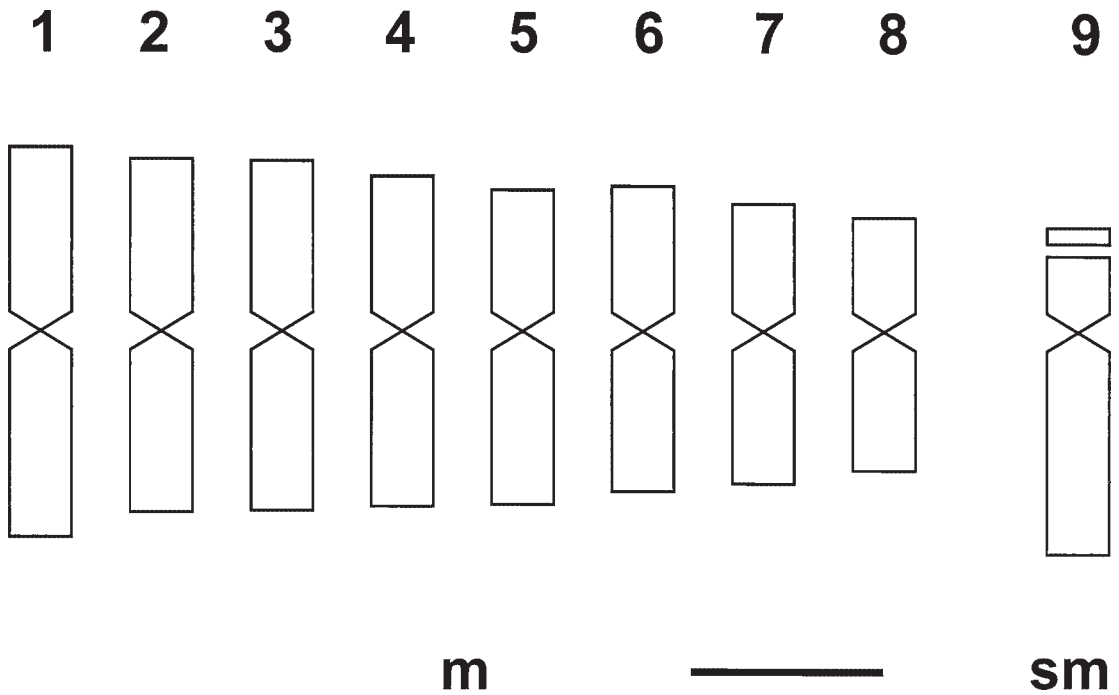


Fig. 2 Idiogram of *Sophora tetraptera* based on mean chromosome values (see Table 1). Scale bar = 1 μm .

DISCUSSION

The chromosome number of $2n = 18$ for *S. tetraptera* is diploid, and the most common number reported for *Sophora*. For this genus, several chromosome numbers have been reported: $n = 9, 18, 11$, and $2n = 18, 28, 36, 16, 32, 22, 54$, in decreasing order of frequency in each case (e.g., Federov 1974; Goldblatt 1981a,b,c, 1984, 1988; Goldblatt & Johnson 1990, 1991, 1994, 1996, 1998). Goldblatt (1981a) suggested that tribe Sophoreae probably had a polyploid origin with the basic number $x = 14$, from whence a decreasing aneuploid series might have originated, resulting in $x = 8, 9$, and 11.

The karyotype of *S. tetraptera* is clearly symmetrical, a known trend in the family as a whole and in woody taxa from subfam. Papilionoideae in particular, where st chromosomes are rare and t chromosomes have never been detected (Bairiganjan & Patnaik 1989; Kumari & Bir 1990).

The nine species of *Sophora* karyotypically analysed so far are also mostly composed of m pairs with fewer sm pairs (Kawakami 1930; Hsu & Huang 1985; Bernal Gonzalez & Martínez Almeraya 1989; Kodama 1989; Kumari & Bir 1990; Palomino et al. 1993; Tian et al. 1993; Stiefkens et al. 2001). Karyotypic features seem to be taxonomically useful because data available indicate that there are differences in karyotype formula and in the presence and position of the secondary constrictions among them; for instance, *Sophora fernandeziana* (Phil.) Skotts. was considered to be closely to *S. tetraptera* (Hemsley 1884; Johow 1896), but their karyotypes proved to be different (Stiefkens et al. 2001; this work): *S. fernandeziana* has two sm chromosome pairs and there are no satellited chromosomes. In addition, basic chromosome numbers were important in recognising the closely related genus *Styphnolobium* Schott (Palomino et al. 1993; Sousa S. & Rudd 1993). These data taken together suggest that the diversification of *Sophora* has been accompanied by chromosomal rearrangements and that cytological investigation is useful in elucidating its taxonomic and phylogenetic relationships.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the University of Connecticut Research Foundation and CONICET (Argentina) for support.

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