Complex evolution of novel red floral color in *Petunia*

Andrea E. Berardi, Korinna Esfeld, Lea Jäggi, Therese Mandel, Gina M. Cannarozzi, Cris Kuhlemeier

1 Institute of Plant Sciences, University of Bern, Bern 3013, Switzerland

*Author for correspondence: cris.kuhlemeier@ips.unibe.ch
†Present address: Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA
‡Senior author.

A.E.B., K.E., L.J., T.M., G.M.C. performed the experiments and analyzed the data; C.K. supervised the project. A.E.B. and C.K. wrote the manuscript. The author responsible for distribution of materials integral to the findings presented in this article in accordance with the policy described in the Instructions for Authors (https://academic.oup.com/plcell) is: Cris Kuhlemeier (cris.kuhlemeier@ips.unibe.ch).

Abstract

Red flower color has arisen multiple times and is generally associated with hummingbird pollination. The majority of evolutionary transitions to red color proceeded from purple lineages and tend to be genetically simple, almost always involving a few loss-of-function mutations of major phenotypic effect. Here we report on the complex evolution of a novel red floral color in the hummingbird-pollinated *Petunia exserta* (Solanaceae) from a colorless ancestor. The presence of a red color is remarkable because the genus cannot synthesize red anthocyanins and *P. exserta* retains a nonfunctional copy of the key MYB transcription factor AN2. We show that moderate upregulation and a shift in tissue specificity of an AN2 paralog, DEEP PURPLE, restores anthocyanin biosynthesis in *P. exserta*. An essential shift in anthocyanin hydroxylation occurred through rebalancing the expression of three hydroxylating genes. Furthermore, the downregulation of an acyltransferase promotes reddish hues in typically purple pigments by preventing acyl group decoration of anthocyanins. This study presents a rare case of a genetically complex evolutionary transition toward the gain of a novel red color.

Introduction

Whether adaptation involves single genes of large phenotypic effect or proceeds through many genes with small individual effects is a crucial question in evolutionary biology (Orr and Coyne, 1992; Orr, 2005; Chevin and Beckerman, 2012; Barton et al., 2016; Boyle et al., 2017). In his theoretical work, Fisher predicted that mutations of small effect were most likely to produce phenotypes with increased fitness (Fisher, 1918, 1930). However, contemporaries of Fisher as well as more recent theory suggest that a single bout of adaptation could involve loci with a distribution of effect sizes, with both large-effect and small-effect mutations (Orr, 1998; Orteu and Jiggins, 2020). Today, there is abundant experimental evidence that the genetic basis of natural variation in individual traits can be extremely complex with many loci involved (Atwell et al., 2010; Chan et al., 2010; Turchin et al., 2012; Kooke et al., 2016; Guo et al., 2018; Sohail et al., 2019).

At the same time, evidence for adaptation proceeding via few loci of large effect also abounds (Doebley, 2004; Hoekstra et al., 2006; Nadeau et al., 2016; Todesco et al., 2020). The relative importance of such large-effect mutations, however, remains contentious (Rockman, 2012) highlighting the need to examine genetic mechanisms with a critical eye.

A prime example of the relevance of mutations of large phenotypic effect has been pollinator-mediated selection on floral traits. Adaptation to shifts in pollinator availability is widely accepted to be a driving force in the rapid diversification of the angiosperms (Johnson, 2006; Sapir and...
Color is a trait that can be easily be quantitated and monitored in different tissues during development. Many studies have demonstrated the importance of flower color for pollinators (Yuan et al., 2013a) and some have directly linked single genes to pollinator preference (Hoballah et al., 2007; Hopkins and Rausher, 2011; Yuan et al., 2013b; Sheehan et al., 2016; Kellenberger et al., 2019).

Anthocyanins are the major floral pigments in the angiosperms and are produced by the flavonoid pathway (Winkel-Shirley, 2001). The two most common branches of the flavonoid pathway are the anthocyanins (red, purple, and blue pigments responsible for visible color) and flavonols (responsible for ultraviolet [UV] color). Flavonoids are synthesized as a part of the complex metabolic network of phenylpropanoids, which includes a large variety of primary and secondary compounds, such as lignins, volatile signals, developmental regulators, and defense compounds (Winkel, 2006; Yang et al., 2017). Extensive knowledge of flavonoid pathway biosynthesis and regulation provides a foundation to study process of floral color evolution.

In floral color adaptation there are three general types of phenotypic transitions as follows: loss of color, shifts in color hue, and gain of color (Rausher, 2008). Losses of pigmentation tend to be relatively simple, with loss-of-function mutations in single genes of major phenotypic effect. Between species, these mutations typically occur in transcription factors which leads to downregulation of anthocyanin biosynthetic genes (Quattrocchio et al., 1999; Schwinn et al., 2006; Hoballah et al., 2007; Lowry et al., 2012; Streisfeld et al., 2013; Yuan et al., 2013b; Esfeld et al., 2018). Shifts in color hue, which are typically from blue–purple to red, always involve a change in anthocyanin hydroxylation (in the case of blue–purple to red), a decrease in hydroxylation) and often also include transcription factors. Thus the genetic mechanisms of color shifts are more diverse, through both loss-of-function mutations and expression changes in biosynthetic and regulatory genes (Zufall and Rausher, 2004; Streisfeld and Rausher, 2009; Des Marais and Rausher, 2010; Hopkins and Rausher, 2011; Smith and Rausher, 2011; Wessinger and Rausher, 2015).

It has been suggested that floral color gains are frequent at macroevolutionary scales (Smith and Goldberg, 2015). Land plants have the ability to synthesize flavonoid and anthocyanin pigments (Campanella et al., 2014); given that floral color is an evolutionarily labile trait, the likelihood of several instances of floral color gains in the evolutionary history of a genus is considerable (i.e. Armbruster, 2002). The rarest case of floral color evolution is the regain of floral color in a lineage which has already lost color. Obviously, it is easier to break something than to fix it and with increasing time, it becomes more difficult to re-evolve a complex trait that is lost, as first stated in Dollo’s law (Dollo, 1893; Gould, 1970). Indeed, demonstrations of molecular–genetic mechanisms underlying interspecific floral color gains are not well represented in the literature (but see Cooley et al. (2011)), and most documented color gains are within-species polymorphisms (i.e. Streisfeld et al., 2013).

A genus with losses, shifts, and regain of floral color is Petunia (Solanaceae). The garden petunia, Petunia hybridra, is a horticultural hybrid with a remarkable diversity of colors and color patterns and a long history of research on the chemistry and genetics of anthocyanin biosynthesis (Figure 1; Koes et al., 2005; Quattrocchio et al., 2006a; Tornielli et al., 2009; Bombarely et al., 2016). The naturally occurring species of the genus Petunia are native to South America and have undergone several shifts in pollination system, resulting in two main clades, the short-tube and long-tube clades, so named based on their floral tube length (Reck-Kortmann et al., 2014). The species in the short-tube clade are bee-pollinated and have the ancestral purple flowers, whereas the species of the long-tube clade are diverse in flower color, scent, and morphology and are visited by different pollinators (Sheehan et al., 2012; Hermann et al., 2013; Reck-Kortmann et al., 2014). Petunia axillaris presents white UV-absorbent flowers pollinated by hawkmoths (Stehmann et al., 2009), P. secreta purple UV-reflective flowers pollinated by solitary bees (Stehmann and Semir, 2005; Rodrigues et al., 2018a,b), and P. exserta red UV-reflective flowers pollinated by hummingbirds (Lorenz-Lemke et al., 2006). These three species grow in the Serra do Sudeste region in the south of Brazil, where both P. secreta and P. exserta are strict endemics.

The most recent phylogeny robustly places the white P. axillaris as sister to the two colored species P. exserta and P. secreta (Figure 1E; Esfeld et al., 2018). The phylogenetic history of AN2 and MYB-FL—the key R2R3-MYB transcription factors that determine the spatial and temporal expression of the anthocyanin and flavonol biosynthetic pathways in Petunia—further supports the notion that P. secreta and P. exserta regained floral pigmentation from a colorless ancestor (Sheehan et al., 2016; Esfeld et al., 2018). Notably, the independent regains of color have resulted in two different colors: the ancestral purple in P. secreta and a red color unique to the genus in P. exserta. At the molecular level, P. secreta regained floral color by a compensatory deletion in the AN2 coding sequence that restored the AN2 reading frame. This gain-of-function mutation to a transcription factor is an “easy fix” to a difficult problem: to restore the synthesis of the ancestral purple color without additional changes to the essential biosynthetic genes (Esfeld et al., 2018).

Compared to the surprisingly simple pseudogene resurrection in P. secreta, reacquisition of color in P. exserta must be inherently more complex. First, all P. exserta accessions studied (Esfeld et al., 2018) contain one or more frameshifts in the AN2 coding region, and thus are unlikely to encode full-length functional proteins. Consequently, a substitute transcription factor must have been recruited. Second, additional modifications are required to obtain the distinct red color. Therefore, P. exserta represents both a regain in floral color and a transition from purple to red, a new color hue in the
Figure 1 Petunia exserta uses purple pigments to create a red flower color. A, Schematic representation of the Petunia flavonoid biosynthetic pathway, highlighting the end product groups flavonols and anthocyanidins, and the general chemical structure of the six common anthocyanidins. Flavonoids are classified into three groups according to their B-ring hydroxylation: monohydroxylated, dihydroxylated, and trihydroxylated, highlighted in yellow in figure diagram. The dihydroflavonols DHK, DHQ, and DHM are common precursors to both flavonols and anthocyanidins (anthocyanin aglycones). Enzymatic modification of phenylpropanoid precursors by F3H creates anthocyanidins and flavonols that are monohydroxylated on the flavonoid B-ring, while F3′H (encoded by HT1) activity creates dihydroxylated and F3′5′H (encoded by HF1 and HF2) trihydroxylated pigments; F3′5′H can also act upon DHK directly. FLS modifies dihydroflavonols into the flavonols kaempferol, quercetin, and myricetin, in increasing B-ring hydroxylation order. Anthocyanins are produced from dihydroflavonols by the sequential action of DFR and ANS. Further modifications by a suite of six enzymes yield five anthocyanin types, in increasing B-ring hydroxylation order: the brick-red to orange pelargonidin, the orange-red to magenta cyanidin and peonidin, as well as the blue to purple delphinidin, petunidin, and malvidin. The enzyme FLS has low activity on dihydroflavonols.

B, The LC–UV chromatogram of hydrolyzed extract of Petunia exserta. C, The LC–UV chromatogram of hydrolyzed extract of Petunia axillaris. D, Light microscopy of adaxial epidermal peel of Petunia inflata shows cells with yellow carotenoid-containing chromoplasts clustered around the edges of the cells, with anthocyanins in the vacuole from a single anthocyanin-pigmented vein cell. E, The species tree of the four focal species tree topology:

- P. inflata
- P. axillaris
- P. exserta
- P. secreta

Species tree topology

- P. inflata
- P. axillaris
- P. exserta
- P. secreta

Time (min)
genus. Red color can be achieved through different biochemical means, the main strategies being changes in anthocyanins, synthesis of carotenoids, alterations to vacuolar pH, or through any combination (Ng and Smith, 2016b). In *P. hybrida*, the key anthocyanin biosynthetic enzyme DFR has lost the ability to synthesize the orange–red pelargonidin anthocyanins (Johnson et al., 2001). This may also be true for its wild ancestors. Previously published pigment analyses do not discuss carotenoids and disagree on the composition and relative abundance of anthocyanins present in *P. exserta* flowers. Specifically, it is unclear whether the two major types of anthocyanins consist of pelargonidin and cyanidin (Griesbach et al., 1999), or cyanidin and delphinidin (Ando et al., 1999; Ando et al., 2000). These issues need to be resolved to understand how *P. exserta* makes red flowers. Here we present a chemical analysis of the floral pigments of *P. exserta* and an in depth molecular–genetic analysis, as well as functional validation. These led us to three candidate transcription factors and at least three candidate biosynthetic genes, which were validated by functional analysis. We conclude that the evolution of red floral color in *P. exserta* flowers proceeded through multiple and subtle genetic alterations.

**Results**

**Hydroxylation, methylation, and acylation modifications to *P. exserta* anthocyanins create the red color**

To characterize the biochemical aspects of the red color of *P. exserta*, we analyzed the flavonoid pigment profile in hydrolyzed petal limb extracts. Acid hydrolysis removes the O-glycoside and acyl decorations, but not B-ring hydroxylation or methylation, to reveal the flavonoid backbone (Harborne, 1998), here resulting in anthocyanidins (anthocyanin aglycones) and flavonol aglycones. Cyanidin and delphinidin were the most abundant anthocyanins (44% cyanidin, 40% delphinidin, 8% petunidin, 4% malvidin, 3% peonidin; Figure 1A and B). Notably, the orange–red pelargonidin was not detected (Figure 1C). Flavonol concentrations were low, as previously described in Sheehan et al. (2016). As fully decorated cyanidin and delphinidin typically produce magenta to blue hues, we proceeded to identify the anthocyanin compounds (anthocyanin aglycone and attached decorative moiety) in nonhydrolyzed extracts of *P. exserta* limbs. We identified four major compounds as follows: a delphinidin diglycoside, cyanidin diglycoside, petunidin diglycoside, and peonidin diglycoside, with traces of additional malvidin anthocyanins (all likely rutinosides, 6-O-α-L-rhamnosyl-O-glucose; Supplemental Figure S1). When UV–Vis (ultraviolet to visible) spectra were observed in the LC–MS (liquid chromatography – mass spectrometry) experiment (at low pH), the absorption maxima of these anthocyanins was between 519 and 522 nm, that is, red-shifted relative to purple-shifted maxima of 530–550 nm (Supplemental Figure S1B; Harborne, 1958; Mabry et al., 1970; Markham, 1982). In comparison, purple-colored *P. secret a* and *P. inflata* produce several types of acylated anthocyanins (acyl moieties are aromatic or aliphatic acids, such as p-coumaric acid; Supplemental Figure S2). In addition, the purple *Petunia* species produce methylated anthocyanidins petunidin and malvidin almost exclusively (Esfeld et al., 2018). We conclude that *P. exserta* does not produce monohydroxylated pelargonidin anthocyanins and that the anthocyanins produced are severely deficient in acylation and methylation.

*Petunia exserta* does not produce yellow–orange carotenoid copigments in the petal limb epidermis, although it does produce them in the inner floral tube epidermis (Figure 1D). Thus, *P. exserta* has the biosynthetic machinery to synthesize carotenoids but they do not contribute to the red hue of the petal limb. Neither does *P. exserta* have an especially low petal homogenate pH compared to sister taxa (Supplemental Figure S3), nor to those reported in various wild-type *P. hybrida* varieties (de Vlaming et al., 1983; Quattrocchio et al., 2006b). Although we cannot rule out an interaction between particular anthocyanins and vacuolar pH, we note that *P. exserta* and *P. secret a* have approximately the same petal homogenate pH. Given the major color difference between the two species (red versus purple), we conclude that the major biochemical basis of color differentiation between the two species is that of anthocyanin composition rather than vacuolar pH. Thus, *P. exserta*’s red color is due to its relatively simple flavonoid composition, highlighting changes in anthocyanin hydroxylation, methylation, and acylation. This indicates that protein function and/or expression of F3’H/HT1, F3’5’H/HF1, F3’5’H/HF2, AAT, 3’AMT/MT, and 3’5’AMT/MF might be compromised (many of the *Petunia* genes have specific names; we have added these after the forward slash, abbreviations in Figure 1A).

**No evidence for deficiencies in most anthocyanin biosynthetic protein sequences**

To assess potential functional divergence of proteins and genes, sequences of biosynthetic genes F3’H/HT1, F3’5’H/HF1, F3’5’H/HF2, FLS, DFR, ANS, 3GT, ART, AAT, 3’AMT/MT, 3’5’AMT/MF1, and 3’5’AMT/MF2 were compared. With the exception of MF1 and MF2, all flavonoid pathway genes in the four *Petunia* species in this study had low pairwise divergence, with ≤1.5% nucleotide divergence among the long-tube clade species (*P. exserta, P. axillaris, P. secret a*). Protein coding sequences showed no loss-of-function mutations in the four species examined, with two exceptions. *Petunia exserta* 3’5’AMT/MF1 harbors a frameshift mutation in the fifth exon leading to an early stop codon. *Petunia axillaris* features a different frameshift mutation in 3’5’AMT/MF1, and the gene cannot be found in *P. secreta*. Although *P. exserta* has a seemingly functional 3’5’AMT/MF2, both *P. axillaris* and *P. secreta* have nonsense mutations in 3’5’AMT/MF2. The low abundance of malvidin in *P. exserta* could be explained by an MF1 pseudogene, with residual product from 3’AMT/MT which can have anthocyanin 5’-O-methylation activity (Provenzano et al., 2014).
The complete absence of the orange–red pelargonidin suggests that the *P. exserta* DFR enzyme cannot reduce the monohydroxylated precursor DHK, as is the case in *P. hybrida* (Johnson et al., 2001). Indeed, the DFR amino acid sequences in the defined region of substrate specificity are identical between *P. hybrida* and the wild species, including *P. exserta* (Figure 1F; Supplemental Figure S4A; Johnson et al., 2001; Petit et al., 2007). We additionally examined conserved motifs and known active sites previously described in the literature for F3′H/HT1, F3′S′H/HT1, F3′S′H/HF2, and AAT (Nakayama et al., 2003; Seitz et al., 2007). All four *Petunia* species had identical active site sequences in these regions for each hydroxylating gene, altogether suggesting that *P. exserta* does not contain unique mutations in flavonoid biosynthetic loci that affect enzyme function. There are, however, significant amino acid changes in substrate recognition sites 1 and 2 between the F3′S′H genes HF1 and HF2 (Supplemental Figure S4B). This suggests a potential functional difference between these two F3′S′H paralogs. It follows that differential expression (DE) of the two HF copies could result in a different flavonoid composition. In summary, the in silico analysis of the protein sequences of all but one of the biosynthetic genes makes it plausible that they encode active proteins with conserved function in *Petunia*; the duplicate F3′S′H/HF proteins may recognize different substrates.

**Anthocyanin biosynthetic gene expression is restored in *P. exserta***

With the exception of the MF genes, all of the flavonoid biosynthetic genes encode functional proteins. We therefore compared gene expression in developing petal limbs between red *P. exserta*, white *P. axillaris*, and purple *P. secreta* with reverse transcription quantitative PCR (RT-qPCR; Figure 2A; Supplemental Table S1) and added additional purple species *P. inflata* with RNAseq (Supplemental Figure S5 and Table S2). Expression levels of phenylpropanoid and flavonoid early biosynthetic genes were generally lower in *P. exserta* than in *P. axillaris*, and similar to expression levels in *P. secreta* (Supplemental Figure S5 and Table S2). The first two committed anthocyanin biosynthetic genes, DFR and ANS, were higher in *P. exserta* than in *P. axillaris* but remained lower than in *P. secreta*, 2.4-fold for DFR and 1.4-fold for ANS (Figure 2A). We observed only moderate values (<0.65) of allele-specific expression (ASE) as measured in the F1 hybrid of *P. axillaris* × *P. exserta* for most of the flavonoid pathway biosynthetic genes, indicating that the DE observed is at least partly due to transregulatory effects (Figure 2B).

**Changes in flavonoid hydroxylation gene expression associated with shift to novel red color**

Expression of F3′H/HT1 was very high in white, UV-absorbing *P. axillaris*, in agreement with the high levels of the dihydroxylated flavonol quercetin in this species (Figure 2A; Supplemental Figure S5). Expression of F3′H/HT1 is reduced in the UV-reflective *P. exserta* and *P. secreta* related to *P. axillaris* due to the absence of MYB-FL activity as well as cis-acting mutations (Figure 2, A and B; Supplemental Figure S5; Sheehan et al., 2016; Esfeld et al., 2018). Comparison of F3′H/HT1 expression between *P. exserta* and *P. secreta* showed a 4.5-fold higher expression in *P. exserta*, promoting a shift from trihydroxylated toward dihydroxylated anthocyanins (e.g., cyanidin).

The F3′S′H/HF1 and F3′S′H/HF2 proteins synthesize trihydroxylated delphinidin, petunidin, and malvidin. That *P. exserta* requires F3′S′H at all is in line with the high concentration of delphinidin. We observed an unexpected pattern in the HF loci. Expression of both genes is low in *P. axillaris* and high in *P. secreta*. However, whereas F3′S′H/HF1 remained low in *P. exserta*, F3′S′H/HF2 was elevated to the expression level of *P. secreta* (Figure 2A; Supplemental Figure S5C). Interestingly, in slightly older petal limbs differences became more pronounced; *P. secreta* increased F3′S′H/HF1 expression while *P. exserta* increased F3′S′H/HF2 expression (Supplemental Figure S6). Thus, *P. exserta* preferentially expresses HF2 and *P. secreta* HF1. Together with divergence in the substrate recognition sites between HF1 and HF2 (Supplemental Figure S4B), this suggests that F3′S′H/HF1 and F3′S′H/HF2 have different properties. In summary, the higher F3′H/HT1 expression as well as the relative difference in expression between F3′S′H/HF1 and F3′S′H/HF2 between red *P. exserta* and purple *P. secreta* could lead to the difference in phenotype of dihydroxylated versus trihydroxylated anthocyanins.

**Reduced expression of anthocyanin late biosynthetic genes prevents acylation and most methylation**

Given the lack of acylated anthocyanins present in *P. exserta* (Supplemental Figure S1), we reasoned that one or more downstream anthocyanin modifying genes could be downregulated. The 3GT gene is prerequisite to obtain simple glucosylated anthocyanins (e.g., 3-O-glucosides), ART to obtain rhamnosylated anthocyanins, and AAT to obtain acylated anthocyanins. Levels of expression for 3GT and AAT in *P. exserta* were comparable to those of *P. axillaris* but importantly, much lower than in *P. secreta* (2.8× and 13.5× less, respectively; Figure 2; Supplemental Figures S5 and S6). We observed only moderate ASE for AAT (0.62) in the *P. axillaris* × *P. exserta* F1 hybrid, indicating regulation primarily in trans. *Petunia exserta* and *P. axillaris* have identical 3GT sequences, so no ASE could be calculated. However, given that the anthocyanins observed were glycosylated yet distinctly lacking in acylation, we conclude that the downregulation of AAT is an essential aspect of the *P. exserta* phenotype.

As anthocyanin biosynthesis in *Petunia* is thought to proceed in a sequential fashion due to strict substrate specificity, downregulation of AAT should prevent the majority of flux from downstream modifications (i.e., methylation; Tornielli et al., 2009). However, 8% of *P. exserta* anthocyanidins are petunidin, which is singly methylated on the B-ring.
Figure 2 Expression of *P. exserta* flavonoid biosynthetic pathway genes differ in comparison to the white *P. axillaris* and the purple *P. secreta*, and ASE in the F1 hybrids between *P. axillaris* and *P. exserta*. A, Relative expression as obtained by RT-qPCR of the biosynthetic genes of the flavonoid pathway conducted on stage 4 petal limb tissue. Expression is represented as the mean ratio of the gene relative to expression of the reference gene *SAND*. Box plots show medians of relative expression from three biological replicates, error bars ± SD. Statistics were calculated using aligned ranks transformation ANOVA with Tukey post hoc comparisons; letters indicate significantly different groups and full statistics are given in Supplemental Table S1. Stage 4 values for *P. axillaris* and *P. secreta* were previously published in Esfeld et al. (2018). B, ASE conducted on three biological replicate F1 hybrids between *P. axillaris* and *P. exserta* (representative photo of F1 hybrid shown in legend). Genes only shown if ASE could be calculated (presence of SNPs). For ASE, mapped RNAseq reads were realigned and averaged over SNPs between the parental alleles and counted (see “Materials and methods”), bars depict the mean read counts over all SNPs per gene, per species; points depict mean read counts per individual biological replicate. ASE, calculated as the major allele frequency ratio, is written above bars, error bars ± SE. We use a strict threshold of ASE values greater than or equal to 0.75 (indicating at least 3:1 ratio of allelic imbalance) to indicate cis-regulation of the alleles, ASE values less than this indicates regulation in trans (e.g. ASE of 0.50 indicating a 1:1 ratio of allelic expression and equal activation by a trans factor). *P < 0.01, **P < 0.001*
Identifying candidate replacement MYB transcription factors for anthocyanin biosynthesis

We previously showed that a frameshift mutation in the *P. exserta* MYB-FL gene underlies a major QTL (quantitative trait locus) for loss of UV-absorbing flavonols (Sheehan et al., 2016). A new analysis revealed that this QTL is also responsible for a gain of anthocyanin production (Figure 3A; Supplemental Table S3). MYB-FL belongs to MYB family subgroup (SG7) and is not an anthocyanin biosynthesis activator. Therefore, the loss of MYB-FL function in *P. exserta* may enable an increase in anthocyanin production by a trade-off between the anthocyanin and flavonol branches of the flavonoid biosynthesis pathway. Three minor QTLs on chromosomes 1, 3, and 7 exclusively affected anthocyanin production (Supplemental Tables S3 and S4).

Anthocyanin biosynthesis is activated by the MBW complex, comprising MYB, bHLH, and WD40 transcription factors. MYB family SG6 members specialize in anthocyanin biosynthesis and control spatial and temporal specificity (Dubos et al., 2010; Feller et al., 2011) and are easily identified by their specific amino acid signatures (Stracke et al., 2001; Zimmermann et al., 2004; Lin-Wang et al., 2010; Hickr et al., 2011). The long-tube clade of *Petunia* has four known paralogs belonging to this SG that target different aspects of anthocyanin patterning: AN2 (petal limb), AN4 (petal tube, present in duplicate copies), DPL (petal vein), and PHZ (light-induced petal blush and vegetative tissues), whose functions have been demonstrated in *P. hybrid* (Quattrocchio et al., 1993; Quattrocchio et al., 1999; Albert et al., 2014).

Given the main MYB transcription factor that activates anthocyanin biosynthesis in petal limbs, AN2, is a pseudogene in *P. exserta* (Esfeld et al., 2018), an obvious hypothesis is that a closely related MYB substitutes for AN2 in the MBW complex. This led us to focus first on MYB SG6, to which AN2 belongs. To define the MYB SGs, we identified 256 and 246 MYBs from the *P. exserta* and *P. axillaris* genomes, respectively, and constructed a maximum likelihood phylogenetic tree with annotated *Arabidopsis thaliana* MYBs from Dubos et al. (2010). MYB SG6 formed a well-supported clade with *A. thaliana* PAP1, PAP2, MYB113, and MYB114. SG6 contained additional *P. exserta* members (Supplemental Figure S7A). To determine whether the presence of additional SG6 MYBs is unique to *P. exserta* or any species with anthocyanin-based color, we searched for SG6 MYBs in sister species *P. secreta* (out of a total of 177 MYBs) and analyzed a SG6-specific phylogeny (Figure 3B; Supplemental Table S5). *Petunia axillaris*, *P. secreta*, and *P. exserta* each have single copies of AN2, PHZ, DPL, and two copies of AN4 (AN4-1, AN4-2). Six additional AN4-like sequences in the *P. exserta* genome are pseudogenes (Figure 3B). This absence of novel or functional duplicated SG6 MYBs in *P. exserta* suggests a potential shift in expression or tissue specificity of a current SG6 MYB.

To identify *de novo* upregulation of SG6 MYBs in petal limbs, we compared *P. exserta* to the white, anthocyaninless *P. axillaris*. We subsequently compared *P. exserta* expression patterns to purple species *P. secreta* and *P. inflata* to characterize whether any MYB expression in *P. exserta* is unique, or whether patterns simply reflect petal limbs with anthocyanin biosynthesis (Figure 3C; Supplemental Figure 8A). AN2 expression was elevated in *P. exserta*, but the encoded protein is nonfunctional in both *P. exserta* and *P. axillaris* (Esfeld et al. 2018). PHZ has no obvious changes in protein function, and was equally and weakly expressed in *P. axillaris*, *P. exserta*, and *P. secreta*, and even more reduced in *P. inflata*. The AN4 genes were not expressed in petal limbs (Figure 3C, Supplemental Figure 8A). In contrast, DPL encodes a functional protein and was more highly expressed in *P. exserta* than in *P. axillaris* (Figure 3C; Supplemental Tables S2 and Table S6). Furthermore, both *P. secreta* and *P. inflata* (which have functional AN2) expressed DPL less than *P. axillaris* in petal limbs. DPL has weak ASE (Figure 3D; Supplemental Figure 8C), suggesting that it is mostly regulated in trans. DPL is located on chromosome 7, which has a minor QTL for anthocyanin content (Figure 3A; Supplemental Table S4). We examined the DPL protein sequence and found only a single amino acid replacement unique to *P. exserta*, which is not in a functionally annotated area of the protein (Supplemental Figure S9). Taken together, DPL is a paralog of AN2 that is upregulated in *P. exserta* petal limbs and therefore a promising AN2-replacement.

Broadening the search for potential transcription factors

Given that SG6 MYB proteins operate in a complex with additional protein partners (bHLH, WD40, other MYBs), we then expanded our search to identify any additional candidate genes from an entire transcription factor dataset (2,284 proteins from Yarahmadov et al. (2020)). We used the *P. axillaris* × *P. exserta* RNAseq dataset, filtering for statistically significant DE (1,388 genes), a base mean of ≥25 read counts (1,130 genes), and a log2 fold change (L2FC) of at least ±1.5 (153 genes). Along with ASE calculations, we
**Figure 3** QTL analysis and flavonoid pathway-related MYB SG6 and "G20": gene tree, expression in stage 4 petal limbs as obtained by RNAseq, and ASE in the F1 hybrids between *P. axillaris* and *P. exserta*. A, QTL analysis of anthocyanin and flavonol content in an F7 RIL (recombinant inbred lines) population of *P. axillaris* × *P. exserta*. QTLs are shown with allelic effects; LOD values greater than zero indicate *P. exserta* alleles ("BB") affect the phenotypic variance and below zero indicate *P. axillaris* alleles ("AA") affect the phenotypic variance; this calculated by multiplying the LOD value by the additive effect divided by the absolute value of the additive effect. A major QTL is located on chromosome 2, with minor QTL on chromosomes 1, 3, and 7. Percent variance estimated (PVE) listed per chromosome. B, Phylogenetic relationship of MYB proteins belonging to SG6 and the PH4 clade (“G20”) from *P. exserta*, *P. axillaris*, and *P. secreta*. The complete MYB tree for *P. exserta* and *P. axillaris* is in Supplemental Figure S7. MYB SG6 and G20 form monophyletic groups within the MYB tree. Support values shown are based on 1000 bootstraps from a RAxML maximum likelihood analysis. AN4 has two canonical copies in long-tube clade species, denoted as either "1" or "2"; *P. exserta* AN4-2 is a pseudo-gene (denoted b). Additional AN4-like genes (denoted “a”) were discovered in *P. exserta* but not in either *P. axillaris* or *P. secreta*; one copy was excluded due to an early nonsense mutation yielding a protein of only seven amino acids (Peex113Ctg05333g00001.1). None of the additional AN4-like genes have measurable expression in stage 4 limbs; gene IDs and accessions given in Supplemental Table S4. Branch length represents substitutions per site. B, Normalized read counts of candidate MYB from three RNAseq experiments; L2FC values provided in Supplemental Table S2, data provided in Supplemental Dataset S5. In each RNAseq experiment, a single-colored *Petunia* species (*P. exserta*, *P. secreta*, *P. inflata*) was compared to the white *P. axillaris* as control, with three biological replicates each, depicted as dots; see Supplemental Figure S8, error bars ± 2SE. C, Of the candidate MYBs, ASE in *P. axillaris* and *P. exserta* could be measured on SNPs in DPL, PHZ, and PH4 only; highly significant ASE was detected in PHZ and PH4. ASE bars depict the mean read counts over all SNPs per gene, per species; points depict mean read counts per individual biological replicate. Number of SNPs indicated in parentheses, ASE calculated as major allele frequency indicated above bars, error bars ± se. *P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001
assessed predicted functional variants (i.e. missense, nonsense, frameshift mutations, see Materials and methods).

Seven additional MYB transcription factors were differentially expressed, three of which were more highly expressed in *P. exserta* than in *P. axillaris* (Supplemental Table S6). Of these, two MYB transcription factors are known to influence or interact with floral color: PH4, which regulates vacuolar pH and influences floral color hue using the same bHLH and WD40 partners as AN2 (AN1/JAF13 bHLH and AN11 WD40) in SG “G20” (Quattrocchio et al., 2006b) (Figure 3C, Supplemental Figure S8A and Table S6) and MYBx, an R3 repressor of anthocyanin biosynthesis (Albert et al., 2014). The R2R3-MYB activator PH4 is more highly expressed in sister taxa *P. exserta* and *P. secreta* compared to *P. axillaris*, with the magnitude of difference greater in *P. exserta* (L2FC 1.85 *P. exserta* to *P. axillaris*, L2FC 0.89 *P. secreta* to *P. axillaris*; Supplemental Figure S8A; Supplemental Tables S2 and S6). PH4 additionally has moderate ASE (Figure 3D; Supplemental Figure S8C), suggesting both cis- and trans-regulation. The PH4 protein sequence contained one amino acid replacement which was shared between *P. inflata* and *P. exserta* (Supplemental Figure S10). The enhanced expression of PH4 in *P. exserta* qualifies PH4 as a valid non-SG6 candidate MYB.

Put in context with *P. secreta* and *P. inflata* expression, MYBx appears to be expressed similarly in *P. exserta* and *P. secreta* (L2FC 4.13 *P. exserta* to *P. axillaris*, L2FC 4.24 *P. secreta* to *P. axillaris*), but because it is a repressor that is more highly expressed in all of colored species rather than in white *P. axillaris*, it does not fit the candidate gene profile. Additionally, none of the MYBs expressed more highly in *P. axillaris* appear to be repressors.

Six bHLH and six WD40 transcription factors were differentially expressed. None of the WD40 functional annotations suggested an obvious interaction or role in floral color (Supplemental Table S7). Of the bHLH genes, JAF13 was less expressed in *P. exserta* than in *P. axillaris* (L2FC of 2.50; Supplemental Figure S8B and Table S8). As JAF13 is redundant with its more highly expressed paralog AN1 in the MBW complex (Quattrocchio et al., 1998; Spelt et al., 2000; Tornielli et al., 2009; Montefiori et al., 2015), it was not further considered. Of the remaining transcription factors, we considered only those transcription factors that have DE as well as ASE of ≥0.75 in order to locate genes with causal (in cis) mutations (Supplemental Table S9). Eleven genes were more highly expressed in *P. exserta* than *P. axillaris*, and ten genes more highly expressed in *P. axillaris* than *P. exserta*. Based on the detailed examination of the entire transcription factor dataset, we selected MYB-FL, DPL, and PH4 for functional validation.

**Transcription factor candidate gene validation**

To assess the contributions of each candidate gene to the floral pigmentation phenotype, functional validation was performed using virus-induced gene silencing (VIGS). MYB-FL silencing produced purple, anthocyanin-containing sectors in *P. axillaris*, demonstrating a negative association between flavonol and anthocyanin concentrations in the naturally occurring species, although it is not clear whether this is due to regulatory competition between the branches or dihydroflavonol substrate competition. DPL silencing produced white sectors; importantly, this phenotype was observed only in *P. exserta* and not in the other species tested (Figure 4A). Analysis of flavonoid concentrations in *P. exserta* showed a significant reduction of total anthocyanidins in DPL-silenced petal limbs (Figure 4B). Therefore, inactivation of DPL specifically interfered with anthocyanin production in *P. exserta* and had no effect in the purple species *P. secreta* and *P. inflata*.

Silencing of PH4 produced a shift from purple to blue in *P. inflata* (Figure 4A). This same phenotype was observed in *P. hybrida ph4* mutants (Quattrocchio et al., 2006b). Extensive studies of *P. hybrida* have shown that PH4 is an activator of vacuolar P-ATPase genes and that ph4 mutants have a reduced uptake of protons into the vacuole. When vacuoles become more basic, the same anthocyanins that appear red in acidic conditions appear more blue (Brouillard, 1988; Yoshida et al., 1995, 2003; Quattrocchio et al., 2006b). To our surprise, we observed white sectors in *P. exserta* as well as in sister species *P. secreta*. Indeed, PH4-silenced petals in *P. exserta* and *P. secreta* produced significantly lower levels of anthocyanidins, whereas PH4 silencing in *P. inflata* did not significantly lower the amount of anthocyanidins (Figure 4C).

We conclude that both DPL and PH4 are key transcription factors that are required for pigmentation in *P. exserta*. However, DPL inactivation exclusively affects *P. exserta*, whereas PH4 has a function in all three colored species.

**Anthocyanin biosynthetic candidate gene validation**

Biosynthetic genes F3′H/HT1, F3′5′H/HT5 F3′5′H/HF2, 3GT, and AAT were identified as promising candidates involved in the establishment of the red color. Silencing of the dihydroxylation F3′H/HT1 produced a visible phenotype in *P. exserta* (Figure 4A) with lighter-colored sectors. This subtle but highly reproducible phenotype could not be confirmed by chemical analysis of whole limbs, emphasizing the sensitivity of sector analysis (Figure 4D), and raising the possibility of redundant or compensatory 3′ B-ring hydroxylation by F3′5′H/HF. No change in phenotype was observed in *P. secreta* and *P. inflata*, which was to be expected as these species produce trihydroxylated purple pigments and do not express HT.

Next, we silenced the F3′5′H/HF trihydroxylation genes. Although HF1 and HF2 are not identical, the high sequence similarity prevented specific targeting of either one via VIGS-silencing (which uses siRNA molecules of 20–27 bp); thus, both HF1 and HF2 gene copies were simultaneously targeted. HF-silenced sectors in *P. exserta* were a light shade of red. When comparing the concentrations of anthocyanidins, the amount of delphinidin was reduced in the silenced sectors (Figure 4D). Further, the amount of cyanidin in F3′5′H/HF-silenced petals was significantly higher than in F3′H/HT1 silenced petals, demonstrating a shift in anthocyanidin hydroxylation. Thus, both F3′H/HT1 and F3′5′H/HF1/2 (and
Figure 4  VIGS phenotypes and chemistry in Petunia. A, Three candidate transcription factors and four candidate flavonoid biosynthetic pathway genes were silenced in the Petunia species using VIGS. Flowers where the visible phenotype was altered after gene silencing are indicated with a star. VIGS of DPL yielded a loss of color in P. exserta only, whereas VIGS of PH4 induced a loss of color in both P. exserta and P. secreta and a color shift in P. inflata. A color shift rather than a complete color loss (i.e. white sectors) was observed for the red P. exserta when either HT1 or HF genes were silenced. In the purple species, HT1 silencing did not yield a phenotype whereas a color loss (i.e. white sectors) were observed for HF silencing. VIGS of AAT yielded pink sectors in purple P. secreta and P. inflata. B, Total anthocyanidins (compounds shown as stacked bars in order from top to bottom: cyanidin, peonidin, delphinidin, petunidin, malvidin) were lower in P. exserta whole petal limbs (n = 5) where DPL was silenced compared to the control (pTRV2, n = 4), (Kruskal–Wallis $X^2 = 6.00, df = 1, P = 0.029$). Individual values for total anthocyanidins shown as points. C, Total anthocyanidins were lower in P. exserta and P. secreta whole petal limbs where PH4 was silenced (n = 3) compared to the control (pTRV2; same control as in DPL-VIGS), but were not significantly different in silenced versus control P. inflata (n = 7, 2 respectively; P. exserta Kruskal–Wallis $X^2 = 4.50, df = 1, P = 0.034$, P. secreta Kruskal–Wallis $X^2 = 3.857, df = 1, P = 0.049$, P. inflata Kruskal–Wallis $X^2 = 1.191, df = 1, P = 0.275$); individual values shown as points. D, Although silencing of HT1 in P. exserta petal limbs produces a slight decrease in cyanidin and delphinidin, a more drastic reduction of delphinidin is observed in HF silencing. Individual values for total anthocyanidins shown as points. E, For silencing of AAT in P. secreta, pooled petal limb sectors instead of entire petal limbs from three individuals per treatment were analyzed. Pink sectors contained lower concentrations of anthocyanidins than in purple sectors. Qualitatively, pink sectors also produced more delphinidin and less malvidin than did purple sectors, as well as small but detectable amounts of cyanidin in P. secreta. * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$, error bars ± sd.
thereby both dihydroxylated and trihydroxylated anthocyanins) contribute to the red color of *P. exserta*. In contrast, *F3’S/H/HF* silenced sectors in *P. secreta* and *P. inflata* were completely white, marking the absence of anthocyanidins. This result indicates that the *F3’S/H/HF* genes are responsible for the purple pigmentation of these species whereas *F3’H/HT1* activity is inconsequential.

The anthocyanin-modifying genes *3GT* and *AAT* yielded contrasting results. Silencing *3GT* produced no visible phenotype in any species, suggesting that it is not essential to either red or purple anthocyanin production (Figure 4A). Silencing *AAT* had no effect on the color phenotype in *P. exserta*, in line with its low expression (Figure 2; Supplemental Figures S5D and S6). In contrast, silencing *AAT* in the purple species *P. secreta* and *P. inflata* produced pink sectors (Figure 4A). The proportion of delphinidin increased in the pink sectors of both *P. secreta* and *P. inflata*, and additionally introduced dihydroxylated cyanidin in *P. secreta* pink sectors (Figure 4E). These results indicate not only that *AAT* is a key step in acylation of anthocyanins, but also that *AAT*-modified anthocyanins may act as substrate for methylated anthocyanins (i.e. petunidin, malvidin,peonidin) (Tornielli et al., 2009). Thus, both acylation and methylation strategies contribute to dark purple hues in *Petunia*. We conclude that *P. exserta* modifies expression of the hydroxylating enzymes *F3’H/HT1* and *F3’S/H/HF* to produce its red hue, and that the low expression of downstream decorating enzyme *AAT* prevents a purple hue.

**DPL, but not PH4, restores anthocyanin biosynthesis in white *P. axillaris***

To determine whether DPL can activate anthocyanin biosynthesis, transgenic lines expressing DPL under the control of the *CaMV3SS* promoter were generated in the *P. axillaris* background. Of the nine independent lines, two representative lines were chosen for further analysis. Transgenic and nontransgenic siblings were compared from each line. The *3SSpro:DPL* plants were intensely pigmented in all visible parts of the plant including vegetative tissue (Figure 5A, Supplemental Figure S11). *Petunia axillaris* is white-flowered (genotype *an2 an4 MYB-FL*; Figure 5A) and *3SSpro:DPL* expression complements the *an2* and *an4* mutations, restoring anthocyanin biosynthesis to the corolla (petal limb and petal tube; Figure 5A; Supplemental Figure S11). Total anthocyanin concentration increased in *P. axillaris* *3SSpro:DPL* petal limbs (Figure 5B).

As expected, DPL transcript levels were highly increased in the transgenic line. Anthocyanin-specific biosynthetic genes were upregulated (*DFR*, *ANS*, *3GT*, *ART*, *AAT*, *SGT*, *3’AMT/MT*, but not *MF*; Figure 5C). Expression of genes dedicated to flavonol biosynthesis, namely, *MYB-FL*, *FLS* and *F3’H/HT1*, were not significantly different in the overexpression lines compared to *P. axillaris*. Both *F3’S/H/HF1*, and *F3’S/H/HF2* remained lowly expressed (Figure 5C). Thus, similar to *P. exserta* (Figure 2A), DPL overexpression in a *P. axillaris* background upregulated the genes of the anthocyanin pathway.

However, DPL overexpression with the *CaMV3SS* promoter appeared to upregulate all of the anthocyanin-modifying genes whereas this did not occur in *P. exserta* (low expression of *3GT* and *AAT*; Figure 2A). We conclude that DPL can activate anthocyanin biosynthesis, but additional genetic variation in *P. exserta* as well as further degeneration in *P. axillaris* anthocyanin transcriptional network likely contributed to the red versus purple color.

We next investigated the potential role of PH4 in the transcriptional activation of the biosynthetic genes. Inactivation of *PH4* by VIGS in the *P. axillaris* *3SSpro:DPL* transgenic background induced white sectors, as it did in the wild-type *P. exserta* and *P. secreta* backgrounds (Figure 5D, 4A). Thus, *PH4* is indispensable for color formation even in a background where DPL is constitutively active. *PH4* has been shown not to induce biosynthetic gene expression in *P. hybrida* (Quattrrocchio et al., 2006b), but it could be an activator of DPL expression in *P. exserta*. However, transient expression of *3SSpro:PH4* in the wild-type *P. axillaris* background did not induce anthocyanin pigmentation (Figure 5E), which strongly argues against *PH4* as an upstream regulator of DPL.

**Discussion**

In a scenario of shifts in pollinator competition and availability, selection for floral color is likely to be strong, favoring genetic changes of large phenotypic effect. Indeed, there is a rich and diverse literature on such large-effect genes. However, almost all documented cases of floral color changes involve loss-of-function mutations or severely reduced expression of the identified genes. In *Petunia*, we identified two cases of reacquisition of color from a colorless ancestor. Reacquisition of the ancestral purple color in *P. secreta* was by a simple 2-bp compensatory deletion in the R2R3-MYB transcription factor *AN2* (Esfeld et al., 2018). Acquisition of red floral color in *P. exserta* turned out to be far from simple.

**Balanced shift in activities of three hydroxylation enzymes**

Documented shifts to red floral color are caused either by addition of carotenoids or by redirecting anthocyanin synthesis to the orange-red pelargonidins. Our new LC–MS analyses clearly show that *P. exserta* contains neither carotenoids nor pelargonidins (Figure 1; Supplemental Figure S1), but instead cyanidin and delphinidin are the major pigments. The presence of delphinidins is surprising as they tend to be blue/purple (Holton and Cornish, 1995). How then can *P. exserta* flowers be red?

The high abundance of dihydroxylated cyanidin and trihydroxylated delphinidin in *P. exserta* implies balanced activities of *F3’H/HT1* and the two *F3’S’* hydroxylases, *F3’S’H/HF1* and *F3’S’H/HF2*. Compared with its sister species *P. secreta*, *P. exserta* displays a substantially increased expression of *F3’H/HT1*, in line with high cyanidin concentrations. In the case of the two *F3’S’* hydroxylases, expression of *F3’S’H/HF1*
Figure 5 Stable overexpression of 35Spro:DPL in P. axillaris. A, Overexpression of DPL yields purple flowers instead of white flowers in P. axillaris. B, The purple color is due to an increase in delphinidin anthocyanins with a small increase in cyanidin. The flavonol composition only changes slightly, with an increase in the monohydroxylated kaempferol. Petunia axillaris n = 3, 35Spro:DPL n = 6 (three each from two independent lines). C, Gene expression analysis of transcription factors and biosynthetic genes for flavonoid biosynthesis in 35Spro:DPL transgenic lines (abbreviated as OE) compared to transgene negative P. axillaris (abbreviated as AX). Expression is represented as the mean ratio of the gene relative to expression.
is decreased and expression of F3′5′H/HF2 is increased. Detailed analysis of the genetic interactions of these three genes in Petunia hybrida has shown that HF1 is fully epistatic over both HT1 and HF2; that is, in the presence of HF1 activity, anthocyanins are always trihydroxylated irrespective of the allelic state of the two other genes (Wiering and De Vlamings, 1984). Genotypes without HF1 but with HT1 and HF2 produced both dihydroxylated and trihydroxylated anthocyanidins. Therefore, we propose that reduction of F3′5′H/HF1 activity was a prerequisite for the accumulation of dihydroxylated cyanidins by F3′H/HT1. In addition, the Petunia-specific duplication of F3′5′H and subsequent functional divergence of HF1 and HF2 specificity was also vital to the delphinidin-based contribution to the red color in Petunia exserta.

Anthocyanin acylation and methylation are further contributors to the purple-to-red continuum

Shifts in floral color from blue to red across the angiosperms always involve a decrease in anthocyanin hydroxylation. But to the best of our knowledge, Petunia exserta is the only red-flowering species in the Solanaceae and possibly in the eudicots that retains delphinidin production and still produces a red hue (Berardi et al., 2016; Ng and Smith, 2016a, 2016b; McCarthy et al., 2017; Larter et al., 2018; Ng et al., 2018). To resolve this conundrum, we focused our attention on the sugar, acyl or methyl modifications of the anthocyanidin backbone. Without acylation, the simply glycosylated versions of cyanidin and delphinidin appear redder in situ than do their acylated versions (Curaba et al., 2019; Tasaki et al., 2019). In support of this, when anthocyanin acyltransferase AAT was silenced in purple Petunia secreta or P. inflata, the silenced sectors appeared pink (Figure 4).

We propose that in addition to essential changes in anthocyanin hydroxylation, Petunia exserta is red because it lacks decoration of the anthocyanidin backbone by acylation (AAT), and as a consequence color hue shifts toward red (Fukui et al., 1998; Slimestad et al., 1999; Hashimoto et al., 2002). Indeed, there may be many undetected cases where important anthocyanin modifying genes, such as AAT contribute to shifts in floral color, and considering the full complexity of the anthocyanin biosynthetic pathway could be rewarding.

Regain of color from a colorless ancestor

Unlike sister species Petunia secreta, Petunia exserta did not resurrect the AN2 pseudogene, raising the question of which transcription factor(s) induce the anthocyanin biosynthetic genes in floral tissue. Genetic analysis identified a strong QTL on chromosome 2, with opposing effects on visible and UV color (Figure 3A). We previously identified transcription factor MYB-FL as the gene underlying the UV color QTL (Sheehan et al., 2016). Transposon insertions in MYB-FL yielded UV-reflective pink sectors in the white UV-absorbing background, most likely due to substrate competition between flavonol and anthocyanin biosynthesis. It is highly plausible that MYB-FL underlies the visible color QTL on chromosome 2, as well. UV-absorbing flowers stand out against the foliage background and are an important guide for night-active hawkmoths, whereas UV color has little effect on day-active pollinators (Chittka et al., 1994; White et al., 1994; Raguso and Willis, 2005). Thus, MYB-FL activity is dispensable for daytime pollination by hummingbirds, and its loss is necessary to free up substrate for anthocyanin biosynthesis. It is a rare example of gain of function by a loss-of-function mutation.

DPL reinstates anthocyanin biosynthesis

AN2 being nonfunctional, we searched for substitute transcriptional activators that intensify visible flower color by activating the anthocyanin biosynthetic genes (Figure 2B). Within the R2R3-MYB SG6 clade to which AN2 belongs, we found a single candidate, DPL. DPL is moderately upregulated relative to Petunia axillaris, whereas it is low in purple Petunia secreta and P. inflata (Figure 3C). Silencing of DPL strongly reduced color in Petunia exserta but not in P. secreta and P. inflata (Figure 4, A and B), providing functional validation of its unique role in Petunia exserta. We further demonstrated that DPL is capable of reinstating anthocyanin biosynthesis in the anthocyaninless species Petunia axillaris (Figure 5).

In Petunia hybrida Mitchell (which is mostly Petunia axillaris-like) DPL is responsible for vein pigmentation in the petal tube but has no role in the limb (Albert et al., 2011). We conclude that DPL has shifted from activating anthocyanin biosynthesis in the veins of the floral tube to activating anthocyanin biosynthesis in the limb. Duplication and diversification of MYBs is pervasive in floral color diversification (Des Marais and Rausher, 2008; Yuan et al., 2014; D’Amelia et al., 2018). The duplication of the ancestral SG6 MYB presumably took place in the Petunia ancestor given the presence in all Petunia lineages and phylogenetic relatedness of the four anthocyanin-MYB paralogs (AN2, DPL, PHZ, AN4; Figure 3B). The upregulation of DPL in the Petunia exserta lineage is an essential step in the regaining of intense anthocyanin pigmentation in its flowers, and is an example of the gain of a new expression pattern (regulatory neofunctionalization) rather than partitioning of ancestral expression patterns (subfunctionalization) (Moore and Purugganan, 2005).

A novel role of PH4 in the Petunia long-tube clade

PH4 is 3.6-fold upregulated in Petunia exserta compared to Petunia axillaris and has moderate ASE (0.64), suggesting it may be a candidate AN2 substitute (Figure 3C). Silencing the gene in of the reference gene SAND. Statistics were calculated using two sample or Welch t tests, ⁎⁎ P < 0.01, ⁎⁎⁎ P < 0.001. The full statistical analysis is given in Supplemental Table S1. D. VIGS of PH4 of in 35Spro:DPL lines induced white sectors compared to the control (pTRV2). E. Transient overexpression of 35Spro:PH4 and 35Spro:DPL in wild-type Petunia axillaris, shown together with buffer and wounding control. Box plots depict medians of relative expression from three biological replicates, error bars ± so. ⁎ P < 0.01, ⁎⁎⁎ P < 0.001.
the short-tube species *P. inflata* yielded the expected shift to blue, presumably through disruption of vacuolar pH acidification. In contrast, PH4 silencing results in white sectors in *P. exserta* as well as *P. secreta*, indicating a new function specific to the long-tube clade (Figure 4, A and C). Could this new function be transcriptional activation of anthocyanin biosynthesis, either directly or indirectly? PH4 does not induce anthocyanin biosynthetic genes in *P. hybrida* (Quattrocchio et al., 2006b) and neither does it induce anthocyanin biosynthesis in *P. axillaris* (Figure 5E). Moreover, silencing of PH4 causes white sectors even when DPL is constitutively expressed (Figure 5D). Therefore, PH4 does affect pigment accumulation, but not by direct transcriptional activation of the biosynthetic genes nor indirectly by activating DPL. We conclude that PH4 induces anthocyanin accumulation by an independent mechanism. What could this be? In *P. hybrida*, PH4 is required for acidification of the vacuole as well as for volatile transport out of the vacuole (Quattrocchio et al., 2006b; Cna'ani et al., 2015). We speculate that PH4 activates a transporter that exports anthocyanins from the cytoplasm into the vacuole.

A complex molecular mechanism in the shift to hummingbird pollination

Most transitions in floral color studied at the molecular level appear to be relatively simple. The most complex transition described to date is the blue to red shift in *Iochroma* (Solanaceae), which involved modifications of *DFR*, *F3'H*, and *F3'S'H* (Smith and Rausher, 2011; Larter et al., 2018). That *P. exserta* retains delphinidin production, yet presents a red color, qualifies it as more complicated than a transition that goes from delphinidin (blue–purple) to pelargonidin (brick red). In the case of *P. exserta*, our major conclusions are that the evolution of red color in *P. exserta* involved (1) inactivation of a competing biosynthetic pathway by loss of function of its specific transcriptional activator MYB-FL; (2) upregulation of DPL to replace the ancestral function of AN2 in petal limbs; (3) reshuffling of the expression patterns of the hydroxylating genes *F3'H/HT1, F3'S'H/HF1* and *F3'S'H/HF2*; and (4) absence of anthocyanin acylation due to low expression of the responsible enzyme, AAT (Figure 6).

Finally, there must be additional levels of complexity. First, overexpression of DPL behind the strong 35S promoter in *P. axillaris* induces high expression of all late biosynthetic genes, including 3GT and AAT which are not expressed in *P. exserta* (Figures 5 and 2). This hints at additional genetic diversity between the *P. axillaris* and *P. exserta* backgrounds. It is also possible that the *P. exserta* DPL expression level (Figure 3C) is insufficient to induce certain target genes. In that case, a precise intermediate level of DPL expression would be functionally relevant. Second, ASE analysis shows that DPL is largely activated in *trans* (Figure 3D). A plausible candidate upstream activator was PH4, but we have confidently ruled it out (Figure 5, D and E). Broadening the search to the entire transcription factor data set yielded 21 potential candidates. That none of them is annotated as even remotely related to flavonoids does not necessarily disqualify them as candidates. Indeed, it has been well

---

**Figure 6** Schematic for the mechanism of red flower color in *P. exserta*. The evolution of red flower color in *P. exserta* involved the loss of function in the flavonol biosynthetic transcription factor MYB-FL and a loss of function in the ancestral anthocyanin transcription factor AN2. To compensate for the loss of AN2, related MYB transcription factor DPL is upregulated in petal limbs to activate anthocyanin biosynthesis. Expression of the transcription factor PH4 is essential for anthocyanin pigmentation in *P. exserta*, although its function is not directly related to biosynthesis but potentially anthocyanin transport. Together with re-activation of anthocyanin biosynthesis, other essential changes in gene expression are necessary to achieve red pigmentation relative to sister taxa: moderate expression of AN2 sate for the loss of transcription factor MYB-FL in the flavonol biosynthetic transcription factor.
established—also in plants—that many different transcription factors bind to many different promoter elements (Franco-Zorrilla et al., 2014; Taylor-Teeples et al., 2015; Gaudinier et al., 2018), potentially creating large and complex transcriptional networks. Mutational effects in such networks result in a continuum of large to small effects in a given phenotype and may diffuse through the network causing subtle changes in unrelated pathways (Boyle et al., 2017), in line with theoretical models (Orr, 1998, 2005). To what extent such a scenario is relevant for the evolution of red color in *P. exserta* case remains an interesting question.

**Materials and methods**

**Plant material and growth conditions**

Wild *Petunia* accessions have been previously described (Segatto et al., 2014; Turchetto et al., 2014, 2016; Sheehan et al., 2016). The reference accession *P. axillaris* N is from the Rostock Botanical Garden (Germany) and is registered in the Amsterdam collection under the designation of *P. axillaris* S26; *P. inflata* S6 (hereafter referred to as *P. inflata*) was provided by R. Koes (University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands); *P. exserta* from R.J. Griesbach (USDA, Beltsville, USA). *Petunia secreta* was collected in its natural habitat and maintained through laboratory crossings (Esfeld et al., 2018). Plants were grown in a growth chamber under a light:dark regime of 15:9 h using 400-W Clean Ace Daylight metal halide lamps (Eye Lighting International; two bulbs per square meter giving 200–250 μmol m⁻² s⁻¹) at 22°C:17°C at 60%–80% relative humidity, in commercial soil (70% Klasman substrate, 15% Seramis clay granules, 15% quartz sand), and fertilized once a week.

**Color and UV images**

Color images were recorded using a Panasonic DMC-TZ10 camera. UV pictures were recorded using a Nikon 60-mm lens camera converted to record UV light using a UV-specific filter (blocking visible and infrared light).

**DNA sequencing and reference genomes**

Reference draft genomes of *P. axillaris* and *P. exserta* used were taken from DNAZoo (https://www.dnazoo.org/assemblies/Petunia_axillaris and https://www.dnazoo.org/assemblies/Petunia_exserta) and modified, detailed in Supplemental Methods S1, to reflect correct chromosome arrangement and names. The reference genome for *P. inflata* was v1.0.1 from (Bombarely et al., 2016), assembly and annotation files accessible on the SolGenomics website (https://solgenomics.net/organism/Petunia_inflata/genome). We additionally completed a draft genome assembly and annotation of *P. secreta* for this article. This Whole Genome Shotgun project has been deposited at NCBI GenBank under the accession JAFBX000000000, project PRJNA674325. The version described in this article is version JAFBX010000000, and annotation is deposited at Dryad (https://doi.org/10.5061/dryad.jskxns083). Further methods on DNA sequencing and assembly are detailed in Supplemental Methods S1.

**RNA sequencing**

To detect differential gene expression and ASE in *P. exserta*, *P. axillaris*, the *P. axillaris × P. exserta* F1, and *P. secreta*, petal limb tissue was harvested via dissection of petal limbs from stage 4 buds (*P. axillaris/P. secreta*: 22–30 mm, *P. exserta/P. axillaris × P. exserta* F1, 25–34 mm) from plants grown under controlled conditions. For each species or hybrid, petal limbs from three biological replicates (individual plants) were collected. RNA was extracted using the Qiagen RNaseasy Plant Mini Kit. RNA was prepared and sequenced in the Lausanne Genomic Technologies Facility (Lausanne, Switzerland) in two separate experiments. Experiment 1: *P. axillaris, P. exserta, P. axillaris × P. exserta* F1; Experiment 2: *P. axillaris, P. secreta*. Quality of RNA was checked using a Fragment Analyzer (Advanced Analytical). Libraries were prepared using Illumina TruSeq PE Cluster Kit v3 and each experiment was sequenced on a single lane of an Illumina HiSeq 2500 as single-end 100-nt reads. Sequencing data were processed using the Illumina Pipeline Software v1.18. Reads were uploaded to NCBI SRA database under PRJNA674380.

Transcriptomes from Illumina data were assembled for *P. axillaris, P. exserta, P. secreta* using Trinity v2.4.0 in genome-guided mode with *P. axillaris* v3.0.4 as the reference genome (Grabherr et al., 2011; Haas et al., 2013) for the purposes of examining predicted transcripts.

**DE analysis**

Although we collected material for RNAseq data from *Petunia* species from the same tissue type at the same developmental stage (petal limbs from bud stage 4) and under controlled growth conditions, samples were not sequenced in the same experiment. Thus, to avoid any experimental or platform-based biases, we did not analyze all datasets together. Each colored species (*P. exserta, P. secreta, P. inflata*) was always sequenced with the white *P. axillaris*. We carried out DE analysis for each of the three experiments (*P. exserta, P. secreta, P. inflata* compared with *P. axillaris*) in parallel, and statistical analysis was only carried out within experiments (colored species compared with *P. axillaris*). The *P. inflata/P. axillaris* experimental files are NCBI SRA accession PRJNA300613.

All read data were processed with Trimomatic v0.36 (Bolger et al., 2014) to remove Illumina adaptor sequences and trim low-quality regions. These preprocessed reads were mapped against the draft reference genome of *P. axillaris* (v3.0.4, described above) using STAR v2.6.0c in two-pass mode, with splice junctions—sjdbOverhang 100 and ignoring reads that map more than 20 times in total (Dobin et al., 2013). Reads were counted per gene using featureCounts v.1.5.2 (Liao et al., 2014).

DE analysis was performed with DESeq2 v.1.26.0 (Love et al., 2014) in R v.3.6.0 (R Core Team, 2019) using RStudio v.1.3.1073. Counts were normalized using rlog-transform in
DESeq2 and for each gene mean counts were computed over the sample replicates. For each comparison, the colored species (P. exserta, P. secreta, P. inflata) was compared with the P. axillaris from the same experiment.

ASE in the P. axillaris × P. exserta F1 hybrids
We performed ASE analysis as in Esfeld et al. (2018) and Yarahmadov et al. (2020). The bamfiles of three P. axillaris × P. exserta F1 hybrids were used to detect variants according to GATK Best Practices for RNA-seq data (Van der Auwera et al., 2013). In short, after duplicate marking with Picard-tools v2.18.11 (http://broadinstitute.github.io/picard/) and splitting reads with N in their CIGAR string, local realignment around indels was undertaken and base quality scores were recalibrated, using a set of high-quality SNPs determined by an initial run of the HaplotypeCaller (DePristo et al., 2011). Variants were filtered using hard thresholds, selecting for biallelic alleles and removing variants matching DP < 10, AF < 0.75, QD < 2.0, MQ < 40.0, FS > 60.0. Clustered SNPs with more than three occurrences in a window of five were also removed.

Allelic coverage for variant positions was detected with ASEReadCounter implemented in GATK v3.5.0 (Van der Auwera et al., 2013; Castel et al., 2015) using -mmq 50 and -mindepth 20 filters on rounded read counts averaged over the biological replicates. Analyses of allelic imbalance were conducted in R (v3.6.0) with the package MBASED (v1.20.0) (Mayba et al., 2014). Parameters of read count over-dispersion were estimated with a custom R script provided by the author of the MBASED package. P-values of ASE and heterogeneity were corrected for multiple comparisons using the p.adjust function with the Benjamini–Hochberg method in R base package “stats” (v3.6.0). ASE scripts are made available on https://github.com/Kuhlemeier-lab/Exserta-red/.

Analysis of functionally relevant SNPs in the coding region of candidate transcription factors
To identify functional SNPs between P. exserta and P. axillaris, variant files of the parental species obtained from ASE analysis described above were scanned using SNPeff v.4.3T (Cingolani et al., 2012). Detected mutations classified as high-impact, frameshift, loss and gain of stop codon, and missense variants were considered for further analysis.

RIL population, GBS, and genetic map
An F7 recombinant inbred line (RIL) mapping population of 195 progenies were bred from selfed progeny of an F2 population of the parental species P. axillaris × P. exserta. These individuals were sequenced and genotyped using a GBS (genotyping by sequencing) protocol (Elshire et al., 2011); details further described in Supplemental Methods S2. Raw sequence reads are available at the NCBI SRA database under PRJNA704924.

Genetic maps were constructed using packages R/qtl v1.46-2 (Broman et al., 2003) and ASMap v.1.0-4 (Taylor and Butler, 2017) in R v3.6.0 and RStudio v1.3.1073 (R Core Team, 2016). Individuals with <70% genotypes were removed. Markers in initial draft genetic maps with identical genotypes over all individuals were binned for a second round of map construction using a cutoff of P-value of 1 × 10^{-9}. A genetic map of 714.1 cM was generated with Kosambi mapping function and was used to group 1,409 markers into seven linkage groups. The finalized genetic map is summarized in Supplemental Table S10. The genetic map generation script is made available on https://github.com/Kuhlemeier-lab/Exserta-red/.

Phenotyping and QTL analysis of P. axillaris × P. exserta F7 RIL population
Anthocyanin and flavonol absorbances were measured in the P. axillaris × P. exserta F7 RIL population using the same protocol as described by Sheehan et al. (2016). For each plant, five flowers were phenotyped. For each flower, a disk 8 mm in diameter of petal limb tissue was sampled and placed into 1 mL of MAW extraction buffer (2:1 methanol:acetic acid:water). After 48 h in the dark, absorption spectra were measured on a spectrophotometer (Ultraspec 3100 pro, Amersham Biosciences, England, UK). Anthocyanin values represent summed absorbance values over 445–595 nm and flavonol values represent summed absorbance values over 315–378 nm.

Anthocyanins and flavonols were evaluated for the identification of QTLs based on their phenotypic distribution using the “scanone” function in R/qtl v1.46-2 (Broman et al., 2003). Anthocyanins were normally distributed and analyzed with the “hk” Haley–Knott regression method. Flavonols showed a bimodal distribution reflecting groups with high and low concentrations and were analyzed using the “2part” method. Genome-wide significance level was established using 10,000 permutations using the “n.perm” argument for each of the anthocyanin and flavonol phenotypes at α = 0.05. The R/qtl script is made available on https://github.com/Kuhlemeier-lab/Exserta-red/.

Identification and filtering for candidate MYB, bHLH, WD40, and global transcription factors
MYB transcription factors were detected in the P. exserta, P. axillaris, and P. secreta genomes using HMMER v3.1b2 (Eddy, 2009); P. secreta MYBs were only used to identify SG6 MYBs. The alignment of A. thaliana MYBs from Dubos et al. (2010) was used to create a MYB hmm profile, and then searched against each genome. A cutoff of E-value of 0.01 for the full sequence was used. WD40 and bHLH transcription factors were identified in P. exserta and P. axillaris only. Identification of WD40 proteins was performed with HMMER as described for MYBs above, but the hmm profile showed a bimodal distribution reflecting groups with high and low concentrations and were analyzed using the “2part” method. Genome-wide significance level was established using 10,000 permutations using the “n.perm” argument for each of the anthocyanin and flavonol phenotypes at α = 0.05. The R/qtl script is made available on https://github.com/Kuhlemeier-lab/Exserta-red/.

Once identified, we extracted the MYB, bHLH, and WD40 transcription factors present in the DE gene dataset from
the RNAseq experiment of *P. exserta*, *P. axillaris*, and their F1 hybrid, and then applied strict filters (DE, filtering for ±1.5 LFC, and only considering genes that had a baseMean of at least 25 normalized read counts).

We additionally scanned a *Petunia* global transcription factor dataset (2,284 proteins from Yarahmadov et al. (2020)) to extend the search outside of potential MBW candidates to any possible transcription factor (thus including other major transcription factor families, such as WRKY or Zinc fingers). We applied the same DE filters but additionally applied a filter for an ASE value of 0.75; this would detect mutations in cis. This approach served to narrow down the candidate gene list and would capture additional candidate transcription factors.

**Phylogenetic analysis: MYB tree estimation**

Two gene trees were estimated: one for all MYBs to define the MYB SGs, and a second tree focused on MYB SG6. For the entire-MYB tree, MYBs from *P. exserta*, *P. axillaris*, and *A. thaliana* were aligned using Clustal and MAFFT algorithms in Geneious v9.1.8 (Biomatters Ltd.). We included the recently discovered SG6 MYB ASR3 from *P. inflata* (Genbank accession MF623311) and used the C-myb protein from *Danio rerio* as an outgroup (Genbank accession AAH59803) as in Gates et al. (2018). A neighbor-joining tree was generated in Geneious using default parameters to serve as a starting tree for phylogenetic estimation. A Perl script for model selection available with RAxML estimated the best protein evolution model as PROTGAMMAVT. The phylogeny was estimated in RAxML v8.2.10 (Stamatakis, 2014) by estimating the best-scoring maximum likelihood tree with 1,000 bootstrap replicates (using the standard RAxML bootstrapping algorithm, -f b) with raxmlHPC. *Petunia* MYBs were classified into the canonical MYB SGs if they formed discrete clades with known *A. thaliana* proteins, as well as by using motifs defined in Stracke et al. (2001).

The second gene tree focused on MYB SG6 and the PH4 clade (“G20”), and included protein sequences from *P. exserta*, *P. axillaris*, and *P. secreta*. MYBs from SG6 were identified from the larger MYB tree by their well-known motifs: the bHLH interacting motif [D/E]Lx3[R/K]x4Lx4Lx3R, the ANDV motif, and the C-terminal SG6-defining motif [R/K]PxP[A/R]x3F/Y/L/R (Stracke et al., 2001; Zimmermann et al., 2004; Lin-Wang et al., 2010; Hichri et al., 2011). The PH4 sequences were identified using the same bHLH interaction motif as well as two “G20” conserved motifs (Quattrocchio et al., 2006b). The full protein sequences of these genes were extracted, realigned using the MAFFT algorithm, and then a neighbor-joining tree was constructed in Geneious v9.1.8 (Biomatters Ltd.). The gene tree was estimated with raxmlHPC program using the rapid bootstrap approach (-f a) with 1,000 bootstraps, PROTGAMMAAUTO model selection (JTT was selected), and with the neighbor-joining starting tree.

Fasta alignments and newick tree files for both trees are provided as Supplemental Datasets S1–S4.

**Coding sequences of flavonoid biosynthetic loci and transcription factors**

We used known sequences from *P. hybridra* as well as those previously identified in Supplemental Note 7 from Bombarely et al. (2016) and in Esfeld et al. (2018), and used BLAST to find orthologs in *P. axillaris*, *P. inflata*, *P. secreta*, and *P. exserta*. Genes were aligned first with the MAFFT algorithm and then by codon in Geneious v9.1.8 (Biomatters Ltd.). We manually examined the coding sequences of flavonoid biosynthetic loci HT1 (F3′H), HF1 (F3′5′H), HF2 (F3′5′H second copy), FLS, DFR, ANS, 3GT, ART, AAT, SGT, MT (3′AMT), MF1 (3′5′AMT), and MF2 (3′5′AMT second copy) for any loss-of-function mutations and estimated sequence divergence using the “Distances” function in Geneious. Protein alignments are available on Dryad.

The DFR, HT1, HF2, and AAT coding sequences were translated to amino acid sequences and aligned using the MAFFT algorithm in Geneious v9.1.8 (Biomatters Ltd.). The DFR protein alignment of *P. inflata*, *P. axillaris*, *P. secreta*, *P. exserta*, and *P. hybridra* (Genbank KC140107.1) were realigned to the sequence and crystal structure of *Vitis vinifera* DFR (Petit et al., 2007). Protein active and binding sites are known for the hydroxylating genes F3′H and F3′5′H and AAT (Nakayama et al., 2003; Seitz et al., 2007). We examined these sites in amino acid alignments of HT1, HF1, HF2, and AAT for any amino acid changes unique to *P. exserta*.

Coding sequences for DPL and PH4 in *P. exserta*, *P. axillaris*, and *P. secreta* were cloned during the Gateway cloning procedure (described below) and verified by Sanger sequencing. Exons and introns were defined by aligning the resulting sequences to the respective genome drafts, as well as manually examining Illumina read mapping and assembled transcripts (transcriptomes described above).

**Virus induced gene silencing**

VIGS was performed as described in (Spitzer-Rimon et al., 2013) with the Tobacco mosaic virus (TRV). Briefly, pTRV1, pHTR2-MCS (multiple cloning site), and pTRV2-NtPDS (phytoene desaturase from *Nicotiana tabacum*, which causes photobleaching) plasmids were obtained from the Arabidopsis Biological Resource Center (ABRC accessions CD3-1039, CD3-1040, CD3-1045, respectively). We selected coding region fragments in the targeted genes that are the most specific to avoid off-targets (~200–350 bp). These fragments were either synthesized by Genewiz (Leipzig, Germany) or amplified by PCR from cDNA using forward and reverse primers containing BamHI and EcoRI restriction sites (summarized in Supplemental Tables S12 and S13). Fragments were cloned into the pTRV2-MCS plasmid and transformed into *A. tumefaciens* strain GV3101. pTRV1 was mixed with each pTRV2 derivative in a 1:1 ratio prior to infection of *Petunia* plants (at approximately a six-leaf stage). Infection was carried out by removing the shoot apex and applying 40 μL inoculum to the cut surface of the stem. Only flowers from the branches arising from infected meristems were phenotyped.
For each species/gene combination, three plants each were infiltrated with pTRV2 derivative, empty vector (pTRV2-MCS) as a negative control, and one pTRV2-NtPDS positive control (for VIGS efficiency). At the time of flowering, at least 25 consecutive flowers per plant (at least ~75 total flowers per gene/species) were phenotyped 2 d postthesis at the same time every day. Silenced sector phenotypes were determined when the same phenotype arose in all three biological replicates per species and produced in the majority (>50%) of flowers for P. axillaris, P. exserta, and P. inflata. Petunia secretta is more susceptible to TRV and tended to produce silenced sectors at a lower, but consistent rate (~25%-30%).

**Overexpression constructs and transformation in P. axillaris**

The construct used for stable transformation, pNWA12 (3Spre:DPL) from Albert et al. (2011), was kindly gifted by Nick Albert. Stable transgenic P. axillaris lines were generated by leaf disk transformation with Agrobacterium tumefaciens strain LBA4404 following an adapted version of the protocol described by Conner et al. (2009). Nine independent lines from the T1 generation were established with two independent lines selected for characterization. Further methods are described in Supplemental Methods S3.

The P. exserta ORFs for DPL and PH4 were amplified and cloned into the Gateway-compatible binary vector pGWB402 (Addgene plasmid #74796) with a CaMV35S promoter. Transient transformation of petals using A. tumefaciens strain GV3101 was performed as in Van Moerkercke et al. (2011). One-day open flowers were syringe-infiltrated at each of the five petal midveins, and 3 d later phenotypes were observed and photographed.

**Reverse transcription-quantitative PCR**

Expression levels of biosynthetic genes were measured for stages 4 and 6 petal limb material in P. axillaris, P. exserta, and P. secreta. Primer sequences not previously reported in Esfeld et al. (2018) are included in Supplemental Table S12. Stage 4 expression levels of P. axillaris and P. secreta are published in Esfeld et al. (2018), but were conducted in the same experiment as presented in this manuscript, including bud stage 4 data from P. exserta as well as bud stage 6 data.

Petal limbs were collected from buds at stage 4 only from P. axillaris and P. inflata, and at stages 4 and 6 from P. exserta and P. secreta (n = 12); P. axillaris and P. secreta (bud length stage 4: 22–30 mm; bud length stage 6: 40–50 mm), P. exserta (bud length stage 4: 25–35 mm; bud length stage 6: 50–65 mm). Samples were frozen in liquid nitrogen and stored at −80°C until extraction. RNA was extracted with the RNeasy Plant Mini Kit (Qiagen), replacing β-mercaptoethanol with dithiothreitol. RNA was treated with DNase I (Sigma-Aldrich), and quantified with a Nanodrop ND-1000 (Thermo Fisher); RNA was additionally analyzed on a Bioanalyzer 2100 (Agilent Technologies) prior to cDNA preparation.

Random hexamer primers were used for first-strand synthesis using the Transcriptor Universal cDNA Master (Roche) kit according to the supplier. Quantitative RT-PCR experiments were performed using the LightCycler 96 Real-Time PCR System (Roche) with KAPA SYBR_FAST qPCR Kit optimized for LightCycler 480 (KAPA Biosystems), according to the manufacturer’s recommendations. Technical replicates were obtained by running each sample in triplicate, means of these were taken as the value for the biological replicate. Cycle of quantification (Cq) thresholds and normalization calculations were determined by the LightCycler 480 Software (v.1.1.0.1320; Roche). Standard curves were used to determine the PCR efficiencies. The SAND reference gene (Mallona et al., 2010) and controls with no-reverse transcription were included for each sample. For each of the flavonoid genes of interest, pairwise comparisons of the mean relative gene expression values were made among the three species and bud stages in R (v3.6.0) using the TukeyHSD function.

For RT-qPCR expression analyses in the stable transgenic lines (35Spre:DPL in P. axillaris), the experiment was conducted as described above with the following adaptations. Petal limbs were collected from buds at stage 4 only from three stable transgenic plants and from three negative transformants (n = 6); bud length 22–30 mm. The experiment was conducted as described above with the following adaptations. First strand synthesis was performed with random hexamer primers using the qScriber cDNA Synthesis Kit (HighQu) according to the supplier. qPCR experiments were performed using the LightCycler 96 Real-Time PCR System (Roche) with ORA qPCR Green ROX L Mix, 2X (HighQu), according to the manufacturer’s recommendations but reducing the reaction volume by half. For each of the genes, comparisons of the mean relative gene expression values were made using two sample t tests (if heterogeneity of variances) or Welch two sample t tests (if heterogeneity of variances) in R (v3.6.0).

**Extraction and identification of flavonoid pigments**

To quantitate and identify anthocyanidins (anthocyanin glycones) and flavonol aglycones, acid hydrolysis procedure was followed as described in Esfeld et al. (2018) based on Harborne (1998). Briefly, fresh petal limb tissue was dissected from three flowers from three individual plants per species (or per VIGS treatment: either whole limbs or sectors were sampled, sectors when possible; on average, n = 9 for each treatment presented) was weighed and placed overnight at 4°C in 1 mL of 2 M HCl in a darkened 2-mL screw-cap tube. Flavonoid extraction was performed via acid hydrolysis for 90 min with phase separation using ethyl acetate and isooamyl alcohol, resulting in two fractions per sample: one containing flavonols and the other containing anthocyanidins. Final extracts were dried at 4°C and stored at −20°C until analysis. Samples were resuspended in 75% MeOH with 1% formic acid (v/v) and the two flavonoid fractions per sample were combined for analysis, except for P. axillaris samples which were analyzed separately due to the disparate
concentrations of flavonols and anthocyanidins. Further analyses are described in Supplemental Methods S4.

To qualitatively identify intact anthocyanins, three second-day open flowers each of *P. exserta*, *P. secreta*, and *P. inflata* were sampled and combined per species. Care was taken to avoid or remove pollen from the fresh petals used. Fresh petals were ground on ice in 1 mL of methanol 1% HCl (v/v), diluted, and immediately analyzed using LC–MS. Further methods are described in Supplemental Methods S4.

Crude petal pH measurements

To measure the pH of crude petal homogenates, we followed the protocol described in Spelt et al. (2002). The petal limbs of two flowers (*P. exserta*, *P. axillaris*, *P. secreta*) or three flowers (*P. inflata*; approximately three *P. inflata* corollas equals the weight of two flowers for the other species) were ground with a pestle and mortar in 4 mL of distilled water, and the pH of the homogenate was measured immediately (to avoid alkalization by uptake of atmospheric carbon dioxide) with a pH electrode that corrects for temperature (Hanna Instruments H1991001).

Accession numbers

Sequence data from this article can be found under the accession numbers listed in Supplemental Table S14. Additional Genbank/GenPept accession numbers for reference proteins used in this work are as follows: *P. inflata* ASR3 (MF623311.1), *P. hybrida* DFR (KC140107.1), *Vitis vinifera* DFR (PS51110.1), *P. hybrida* Mitchell DPL (ADW94950.1), *P. hybrida* R27 PH4 (AAY51377.1), and *Danio rerio* C-MYB (AAH59803.1). The *P. inflata*/*P. axillaris* experimental files are NCBI SRA accession PRJNA300613. Raw sequence reads for the F7 mapping population of *P. axillaris* × *P. exserta* are available at the NCBI SRA database under PRJNA704924. The Whole Genome Shotgun project has been deposited at NCBI GenBank under the accession JAFBXY000000000, project PRJNA674325. The version described in this paper is version JAFBXY010000000, and annotation is deposited at Dryad (https://doi.org/10.5061/dryad.jsxksn083).

Supplemental data

**Supplemental Figure S1.** Identification of four main anthocyanins in *P. exserta* methanolic extracts.

**Supplemental Figure S2.** Identification of an acylated anthocyanin present in purple *P. secreta* and *P. inflata* methanolic extracts.

**Supplemental Figure S3.** Determination of crude petal extract pH in four *Petunia* species.

**Supplemental Figure S4.** Protein alignments of *Petunia* DFR, HT/HF1/HF2, and AAT against known crystal structures, binding sites, and motifs.

**Supplemental Figure S5.** RNAseq expression of phenylpropanoid and flavonoid biosynthetic genes.

**Supplemental Figure S6.** Expression of flavonoid biosynthetic pathway genes in petals from bud stages 4 and stage 6.

**Supplemental Figure S7.** Maximum likelihood (ML) phylogenetic tree of MYBs and SG relationships.

**Supplemental Figure S8.** RNAseq and ASE in the F1 hybrid between *P. axillaris* and *P. exserta* of known flavonoid transcription factors.

**Supplemental Figure S9.** Protein alignment of DPL.

**Supplemental Figure S10.** Protein alignment of PH4.

**Supplemental Figure S11.** Overexpression of DPL under the control of the CaMV35S promoter in *P. axillaris*.

**Supplemental Table S1.** RT-qPCR statistics for *Petunia* biosynthetic gene expression.

**Supplemental Table S2.** L2FC values and statistics for three RNAseq experiments.

**Supplemental Table S3.** Summary of QTL analysis of anthocyanin and flavonol quantity in petal limbs.

**Supplemental Table S4.** Chromosomal locations of phenylpropanoid, flavonoid pathway structural genes and transcription factors based on the *P. axillaris* and *P. exserta* draft genomes.

**Supplemental Table S5.** Gene IDs for MYB SG6 and PH4 clade phylogeny.

**Supplemental Table S6.** Filtering for MYB candidate transcription factors.

**Supplemental Table S7.** Filtering for WD40 candidate transcription factors.

**Supplemental Table S8.** Filtering for bHLH candidate transcription factors.

**Supplemental Table S9.** Filtering for transcription factors with ASE.

**Supplemental Table S10.** Summary statistics of the genetic map for F7 RILs population of *P. axillaris* × *P. exserta*.

**Supplemental Table S11.** RT-qPCR statistics for 35Spro:DPL experiment biosynthetic gene expression.

**Supplemental Table S12.** Primers used for RT-qPCR, PCR, and cloning.

**Supplemental Table S13.** Gene fragment sequences for cloning.

**Supplemental Table S14.** List of deposited data and accessions.

**Supplemental Methods S1.** DNA sequencing and reference genomes.

**Supplemental Methods S2.** RIL population generation, GBS sequencing, and genetic map estimation.

**Supplemental Methods S3.** Stable Agrobacterium-mediated transformation of *P. axillaris*.

**Supplemental Methods S4.** LC-UV and LC-MS chromatographic methods.

**Supplemental Datasets S1-S4:** Also available on Dryad: https://doi.org/10.5061/dryad.jsxksn083.
Supplemental Dataset S3. Fasta alignment of entire MYB tree.

Supplemental Dataset S4. Newick tree file for entire MYB tree.

Supplemental Dataset S5. Normalized read counts for flavonoid and phenylpropanoid gene expression across *Petunia* species.

Acknowledgments

We thank Martina Lüthi, Mathieu Hanemian, Diane Bonnet, Jens Schroeder, Fabrizio Strasser, Marta Binaghi, Tracey Tenreira, Christopher Ball, Jasmin Sekulovski, Roman Köpfl, and Peter von Ballmoos for technical support; Michel Moser for bioinformatic advice; Tobias Züst and Matthias Erb for biochemical support; Loreta Freitas, Hester Sheehan, and Avichai Amrad for helpful discussion. Computationally demanding processes were performed on the HPC cluster of the University of Bern (http://www.id.unibe.ch/hpc).

Funding

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program grant agreement No. 741354 and the Swiss National Science Foundation (Grants 31003A_159493 and 31003A_1823403 to C.K.).

Conflict of interest statement. None declared.

References

Albert NW, Lewis DH, Zhang H, Schwinn KE, Jameson PE, Davies KM (2011) Members of an R2R3-MYB transcription factor family in *Petunia* are developmentally and environmentally regulated to control complex floral and vegetative pigmentation patterning. Plant J 65: 771–784

Albert NW, Davies KM, Lewis DH, Zhang, H, Montefiori M, Brendolise C, Boase MR, Ngo H, Jameson PE, Schwinn KE (2014) A conserved network of transcriptional activators and repressors regulates anthocyanin pigmentation in eudicots. Plant Cell 26: 962–980

Ando T, Tatsuzawa F, Saito N, Takahashi M, Tsumashima Y, Numajir H, Watanabe H, Kokubun H, Hara R, Seki H, et al. (2000) Differences in the floral anthocyanin content of red petunias and Petunia exserta. Phytochemistry 54: 495–501

Ando T, Saito N, Tatsuzawa F, Kakufuda T, Yamakage K, Ohtani E, Koshi-iishi M, Matsusake Y, Kokubun H, Watanabe H, et al. (1999) Floral anthocyanins in wild taxa of *Petunia exserta*. Biochem System Ecol 27: 623–650

Armbruster WS (2002). Can indirect selection and genetic context contribute to trait diversification? A transition-probability study of blossom-colour evolution in two genera. J Evol Biol 15: 468–486.

Atwell S, Huang YS, Vilhjalmsdottir BJ, Willems G, Horton M, Li Y, Meng D, Platt A, Tarone AM, Hu TT, et al. (2010) Genome-wide association study of 107 phenotypes in *Arabidopsis thaliana* inbred lines. Nature 465: 627–631

Barton NH, Etheridge AM, Véber A (2016) The infinitesimal model. bioRxiv 039769

Berardi AE, Hildreth SB, Helm RF, Winkel BSJ, Smith SD (2016) Evolutionary correlations in flavonoid production across flowers and leaves in the lobeliochaeae (Solanaceae). Phytochemistry 130: 119–127

Bolger AM, Lohse M, Usadel B (2014) Trimmmomatic: a flexible trimmer for illumina sequence data. Bioinformatics 30: 2144–2142

Bombarely A, Moser M, Amrad A, Bao M, Bapaume L, Barry CS, Blik M, Boersma MR, Borgli H, Bruggmann R, et al. (2016) Insight into the evolution of the Solanaceae from the parental genomes of *Petunia hybrida*. Nat Plants 2: 16074

Boyle EA, Li YI, Pritchard JK (2017) An expanded view of complex traits: from polygenic to omnigenic. Cell 169: 1177–1186

Broman KW, Wu H, Sen S, Churchill GA (2003) R/qtl: QTL mapping in experimental crosses. Bioinformatics 19: 889–890

Brouillard R (1988) Flavonoids and flower colour. In JB Harborne, ed. The Flavonoids: Advances in research since 1980. Springer US, Boston, MA, pp 525–538

Campanella JJ, Smalley JV, Dempsey ME (2014) A phylogenetic examination of the primary anthocyanin production pathway of the Plantae. Bot Stud 55: 10–10

Castel SE, Levy-Moonshine A, Mohammad P, Banks E, Lappalainen T (2015) Tools and best practices for data processing in allelic expression analysis. Genome Biol 16: 195

Chan EKF., Rowe HC, Kliebenstein DJ (2010) Understanding the evolution of defense metabolites in *Arabidopsis thaliana* using genome-wide association mapping. Genetics 185: 991–1007

Chevin LM, Beckerman AP (2012) From adaptation to molecular evolution. Heredity 108: 457–459

Chittka L, Shmida A, Troje N, Menzel R (1994) Ultraviolet as a component of flower reflections, and the colour perception of Hymenoptera. Vis Res 34: 1489–1508

Cingolani P, Platts A, Wang LL, Coon M, Nguyen T, Wang L, Land SJ, Lu X, Ruden DM (2012) A program for annotating and predicting the effects of single nucleotide polymorphisms, SnpEff: SNPs in the genome of *Drosophila melanogaster* strain w1118; iso-2; iso-3. Fly (Austin) 6: 80–92

Cna‘ani A, Spitzer-Rimon B, Ravid J, Farhi M, Masci T, Aravena-Calvo J, Ovadis M, Vainstein A (2015) Two showy traits, scent emission and pigmentation, are finely coregulated by the MYB transcription factor PH4 in *Petunia* flowers. New Phytol 208: 708–714

Conner AJ, Albert NW, Deroles SC (2009) Transformation and regeneration of *Petunia*. In T Gerats and J Strommer, eds, Petunia: Evolutionary, Developmental and Physiological Genetics. Springer New York, New York, NY, pp 395–409

Cooley AM, Modliszewski JL, Rommel ML, Willis JH (2011) Gene duplication in *Mimulus* underlies parallel floral evolution via independent trans-regulatory changes. Curr Biol 21: 700–704

Curaba J, Bostan H, Cavagnaro PF, Senalik D, Mengist MF, Zhao Y, Simon PW, Iorizzo M (2019) Identification of an SCPL gene controlling anthocyanin acylation in carrot (*Daucus carota L.*) root. Front Plant Sci 10: 1770

D’Amelia V, Aversano R, Ruggiero A, Batelli G, Appelhagen I, Dinacci C, Hill L, Martin C, Carputo D (2018) Subfunctionalization of duplicate MYB genes in *Solanum commersonii* generated the cold-induced ScAN2 and the anthocyanin regulator ScAN1. Plant Cell Environ 41: 1038–1051

de Vlaming P, Schram AW, Wiering H (1983) Genes affecting flower colour and pH of flower limb homogenates in *Petunia hybrida*. Theor Appl Genet 66: 271–278

DePrisco MA, Banks E, Poplin R, Garimella KV, Maguire JR, Hartl C, Philippakis AA, Del Angel G, Rivers MA, Hanna M, et al. (2011) A framework for variation discovery and genotyping using next-generation DNA sequencing data. Nat Genet 43: 491–498

Des Marais DL, Rausher MD (2008) Escape from adaptive conflict after duplication in an anthocyanin pathway gene. Nature 454: 762–765

Des Marais DL, Rausher MD (2010) Parallel evolution at multiple levels in the origin of hummingbird pollinated flowers in *Ipomoea*. Evolution 64: 2044–2054

Dobin A, Davis CA, Schlesinger F, Drenkow J, Zaleski C, Jha S, Batut P, Chaisson M, Gingeras TR (2013) STAR: ultrafast universal RNA-seq aligner. Bioinformatics 29: 15–21
Doebley J (2004) The genetics of maize evolution. Annu Rev Genet 38: 37–59

Dollo L (1893) Les lois de l’évolution. Bull Soc belge Géol Paléont 7: 164–166

Dubos C, Stracke R, Grotewold E, Weisshaar B, Martin C, Lepiniec L (2010) MYB transcription factors in Arabidopsis. Trends Plant Sci 15: 573–581

Elbridge SR (2009). A new generation of homology search tools based on probabilistic inference. Genome Inform 23: 205–211

Elshire RJ, Glaubitz JC, Sun Q, Poland JA, Kawamoto K, Buckler Eddy SR (2011) Pseudogenization and resurrection of a speciation gene. Curr Biol 21: 3776–3786

Feller A, Machemer K, Braun EL, Grotewold E (2011) Evolutionary and comparative analysis of MYB and bHLH plant transcription factors. Plant J 66: 94–116

Fisher RA (1918) XV.—The correlation between relatives on the supposition of Mendelian inheritance. Trans R Soc Edinburgh 52: 399–433

Fisher RAS (1930) The Genetical Theory of Natural Selection. Clarendon Press, Oxford

Franco-Zorrilla JM, Lopez-Vidriero I, Carrasco JL, Godoy M, Vera (2011) The genetics of maize evolution. Annu Rev Genet 38: 259–264

Fukui Y, Kusumi T, Yoshioka K, Kondo T, Matsuda C, Nomoto K (1998) Structures of two dicarboxylic anthocyanins from Petunia hybrids cv Surfinia Violet Mini. Phytochemistry 47: 1409–1416

Gates, DJ, Olson BJSC, Clemente TE, Smith MD (2018) A novel R3 MYB transcriptional repressor associated with the loss of floral pigmentation in lycopersicum. New Plant Biol 217: 1346–1356

Gaudinier A, Rodriguez-Medina J, Zhang L, Olson A, Liseron-Monfils C, Bagman AM, Foret J, Abbitt S, Tang M, Li B, et al. (2018) Transcriptional regulation of nitrogen-associated metabolism and growth. Nature 563: 259–264

Gould SJ (1970) Dollo on Dollo’s law: irreversibility and the status of evolutionary laws. J Hist Biol 3: 189–212

Grabherr MG, Haas BJ, Yassour M, Levin JZ, Thompson DA, Amit I, Adiconis X, Fan L, Raychowdhury R, Zeng Q, et al. (2011) Full-length transcriptome assembly from RNA-Seq data without a reference genome. Nat Biotechnol 29: 644–652

Griesbach RJ, Stehmann JR, Meyer, F. (1999) Anthocyanins in the “red” flowers of Petunia extensa. Phytochemistry 51: 525–528

Guo J, Yang J, Visscher PM (2018) Leveraging GWAS for complex traits to detect signatures of natural selection in humans. Curr Opin Genetics Dev 53: 9–14

Haas BJ, Papanicolaou A, Yassour M, Grabherr M, Blood PD, Bowden J, Couger MB, Eccles D, Li B, Lieber M, et al. (2013) De novo transcript sequence reconstruction from RNA-seq using the Trinity platform for reference generation and analysis. Nat Protoc 8: 1494–1512

Harborne JB (1958) Spectral methods of characterizing anthocyanins. Biochem J 70: 22–28

Harborne JB (1998) Phytochemical Methods: A Guide to Modern Techniques of Plant Analysis. Chapman & Hall, London.

Hashimoto F, Tanaka M, Maeda H, Fukuda S, Shimizu K, Sakata Y (2002) Changes in flower coloration and sepal anthocyanins of cyanic Delphinium cultivars during flowering. Biosci Biotechnol Biochem 66: 1652–1659

Hermann K, Klahre U, Moser M, Sheehan H, Mandel T, Kuhlemeier C (2013) Tight genetic linkage of prezygotic barrier loci creates a multifunctional speciation island in Petunia. Curr Biol 23: 873–877

Hichri I, Barriee F, Bogs J, Kappel C, Delrot S, Lavergne V (2011) Recent advances in the transcriptional regulation of the flavonoid biosynthetic pathway. J Exp Bot 62: 2465–2483

Hoballah ME, Gubitiz T, Stuurman J, Broger L, Barone M, Mandel T, Dell’Olio A, Arnold M, Kuhlemeier C (2007) Single gene-mediated shift in pollinator attraction in Petunia. Plant Cell 19: 779–790

Hoeckstra HE, Hirschmann RJ, Bundey RA, Insel PA, Crossland JP (2006) A single amino acid mutation contributes to adaptive beach mouse color pattern. Science 313: 101–104

Holton TA, Cornish EC (1995) Genetics and biochemistry of anthocyanin biosynthesis. Plant Cell 7: 1071–1083

Hopkins R, Rausher MD (2011) Identification of two genes causing reinforcement in the Texas wildflower Phlox drummondii. Nature 469: 411–414

Johnson ET, Ryu S, Yi H, Shin B, Cheong H, Choi G (2001) Alteration of a single amino acid changes the substrate specificity of dihydroflavonol 4-reductase. Plant J 25: 325–333

Johnson SD (2006) Pollinator-driven speciation in plants. In LD Harder and SCH Barrett, eds, The Ecology and Evolution of Flowers. Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp 295–310

Kellenberger RT, Byers K, De Brito Francisco RM, Staedler YM, LaFountain AM, Schonengerber J, Schiestl FP, Schuler PM (2019) Emergence of a floral colour polymorphism by pollinator-mediated overdominance. Nat Commun 10: 63

Koes R, Verweij W, Quattrocchio F (2005) Flavonoids: a colorful model for the regulation and evolution of biochemical pathways. Trends Plant Sci 10: 236–242

Koole R, Kruijer W, Bours R, Becker F, Kuhn A, van de Geest H, Buntjer J, Doeswijk T, Guerra J, Bouwmeester H, et al. (2016) Genome-wide association mapping and genomic prediction elucidate the genetic architecture of morphological traits in Arabidopsis. Plant Physiol 170: 2187–2203

Larter M, Dunbar-Wallis A, Berardi AE, Smith SD (2018) Convergent evolution at the pathway level: predictable regulatory changes during flower color transitions. Mol Biol Evol 35: 923–930

Lin-Wang K, Bolitho K, Crafton K, Kortstee A, Karunairetnam S, McGhie TK, Espley RV, Hellens RP, Allan AC (2010) An R2R3 MYB transcription factor associated with regulation of the anthocyanin biosynthetic pathway in Rosaceae. BMC Plant Biol 10: 50

Lorenz-Lemke AP, Mader G, Muschner VC, Stehmann JR, Bonatto SL, Salzano FM, Freitas LB (2006) Diversity and natural hybridization in a highly endemic species of Petunia (Solanaceae): a molecular and ecological analysis. Mol Ecol 15: 4487–4497

Love MI, Huber W, Anders S (2014) Moderated estimation of fold change and dispersion for RNA-seq data with DESeq2. Genome Biol 15: 550

Lowry DB, Sheng CC, Lasky JR, Willis JH (2012) Five anthocyanin polymorphisms are associated with an R2R3-MYB cluster in Mimulus guttatus (Phrymaceae). Am J Bot 99: 82–91

Mabry TJ, Markham KR, Thomas MB (1970) The Systematic Identification of Flavonoids. Springer-Verlag, Berlin

Mallona I, Lischewski S, Weiss J, Hause B, Egea-Cortines M (2010) Validation of reference genes for quantitative real-time PCR during leaf and flower development in Petunia hybrid. BMC Plant Biol 10: 11

Markham KR (1982). Techniques of Flavonoid Identification. Elsevier, London.

Mayba O, Gilbert HN, Liu JF, Haverty PM, Jhunjhunwala S, Jiang (2018). Techniques of Flavonoid Identification. Elsevier, London.

McCarthy EW, Berardi AE, Smith SD, Litt A (2017) Related allopolyploids display distinct floral pigment profiles and transgressive pigments. Am J Bot 104: 92–101

Montefiori M, Brendolise C, Dare AP, Lin-Wang K, Davies KM, Hellens RP, Allan AC (2015) In the Solanaceae, a hierarchy of bHLHs confer distinct target specificity to the anthocyanin regulatory complex. J Exp Bot 66: 1427–1436
Moore RC, Purugganan MD (2005) The evolutionary dynamics of plant duplicate genes. Curr Opin Plant Biol 8: 122–128

Nadeau NJ, Pardo-Diaz C, Whibley A, Supple MA, Saenko SV, Wallbank WRR, Wu GC, Maroja L, Ferguson L, Hanly JJ, et al. (2016) The gene cortex controls mimicry and crypsis in butterflies and moths. Nature 534: 106–110

Nakayama T, Suzuki H, Nishino T (2003) Anthocyanin acety transferases: specificities, mechanism, phylogenetics, and applications. J Mol Catal B Environ 23: 117–132

Ng J, Smith SD (2016a) Widespread flower color convergence in Solanaceae via alternate biochemical pathways. New Phytol 209: 407–417

Ng J, Smith SD (2016b) How to make a red flower: the combinatorial effect of pigments. AoB Plants 8

Ng J, Freitas LB, Smith SD (2018) Stepwise evolution of floral pigmentation predicted by biochemical pathway structure. Evolution 72: 2792–2802

Orr HA (1998) The population genetics of adaptation: the distribution of factors fixed during adaptive evolution. Evolution 52: 935–949

Orr HA (2005) The genetic theory of adaptation: a brief history. Nat Rev Genet 6: 119–127

Orr HA, Coyne JA (1992) The genetics of adaptation—a reassessment. Am Nat 140: 725–742

Orteu A, Jiggins CD (2020) The genomics of coloration provides insights into adaptive evolution. Nat Rev Genet 21: 461–475

Petit P, Granier T, d’Estaintot BL, Manigand C, Bathany K, Orteu A, Jiggins CD (2020) The genomics of coloration provides insights into adaptive evolution. Nat Rev Genet 21: 461–475

Quattrocchio F, Verweij W, Kroon A, Spelt C, Mol J, Koes R (2006b) PH4 of Petunia is an R2R3 MYB protein that activates transcription of structural anthocyanin genes. Plant Cell 18: 1274–1291

Quattrocchio F, Wing JF, van der Woude K, Mol JN, Koes R (1998) Analysis of bHLH and MYB domain proteins: species-specific regulatory differences are caused by divergent evolution of target anthocyanin genes. Plant Cell 5: 1497–1512

Quattrocchio F, Wing JF, van der Woude K, Mol JN, Koes R (1998) Analysis of bHLH and MYB domain proteins: species-specific regulatory differences are caused by divergent evolution of target anthocyanin genes. Plant Cell 5: 1497–1512

Quattrocchio F, Verweij W, Kroon A, Spelt C, Mol J, Koes R (2006b) PH4 of Petunia is an R2R3 MYB protein that activates vacuolar acidification through interactions with basic-helix-loop-helix transcription factors of the anthocyanin pathway. Plant Cell 18: 1274–1291

Quattrocchio F, Wing JF, van der Woude K, Souer E, de Vetten N, Mol J, Koes R (1999) Molecular analysis of the anthocyanin2 gene of Petunia and its role in the evolution of flower color. Plant Cell 11: 1433–1444

Raguso RA, Willis MA (2005) Synergy between visual and olfactory cues in nectar feeding by wild hawkmoths, Manduca sexta. Anim Behav 69: 407–418

Rausher MD (2008) Evolutionary transitions in floral color. Int J Plant Sci 169: 7–21

Reck-Kortmann M, Silva-Arias GA, Segatto AL, Mader G, Bonatto SL, de Freitas LB (2014) Multilocus phylogeny reconstruction: new insights into the evolutionary history of the genus Petunia. Mol Phylogenet Evol 81: 19–28

Rockman MV (2012) The QTN program and the alleles that matter for evolution: all that is gold does not glitter. Evolution 66: 1–17

Rodrigues DM, Turchetto C, Callegari-Jacques SM, Freitas LB (2018a) Can the reproductive system of a rare and narrowly endemic plant species explain its high genetic diversity? Acta Bot Bras 32: 180–187

Rodrigues DM, Caballero-Villalobos L, Turchetto C, Assis Jacques R, Kuhlemeier C, Freitas LB (2018b) Do we truly understand pollination syndromes in Petunia as much as we suppose? AoB Plants 10: plo057

Sapir Y, Armbruster WS (2010) Commentary: pollinator-mediated selection and floral evolution: from pollination ecology to macro-evolution. New Phytol 188: 303–306

Schiestl FP, Johnson SD (2013) Pollinator-mediated evolution of floral signals. Trends Ecol Evol 28: 307–315

Schwind K, Venail J, Shang Y, Mackay S, Alm V, Butelli E, Oyama R, Bailey P, Davies K, Martin C (2006) A small family of MYB-regulatory genes controls floral pigmentation intensity and patterning in the genus Antirrhinum. Plant Cell 18: 831–851

Segatto ALA., Ramos Caze AL, Turchetto C, Klahre U, Kuhlemeier C, Bonatto SL, Freitas LB (2014) Nuclear and plastid markers reveal the persistence of genetic identity: a new perspective on the evolutionary history of Petunia exserta. Mol Phylogenet Evol 70: 504–519

Seitz C, Amores S, Forkmann G (2007) Identification of the molecular basis for the functional difference between flavonoid 3’-hydroxylase and flavonoid 3’,5’-hydroxylase. FEBS Lett 581: 3429–3434

Sheehan H, Herrmann K, Kuhlemeier C (2012) Color and scent: how single genes influence pollinator attraction. Cold Spring Harb Symp Quant Biol 77: 117–133

Sheehan H, Moser M, Klahre U, Esfeld K, Dell’Olivo A, Mandel T, Metzger S, Vandenbussche M, Freitas L, Kuhlemeier C (2016) MYB-FL controls gain and loss of floral UV absorbance, a key trait affecting pollinator preference and reproductive isolation. Nat Genet 48

Slimestad R, Aaberg A, Andersen OM (1999) Acylated anthocyanins from petunia flowers. Phytochemistry 50: 1081–1086

Smith SD, Rausher MD (2011) Gene loss and parallel evolution contribute to species difference in flower color. Mol Biol Evol 28: 2799–2810

Smith SD, Goldberg EE (2015) Tempo and mode of flower color evolution. Am J Bot 102: 1014–1025

Soohail M, Maier RM, Ganna A, Bloemendal A, Martin AR, Turchin MC, Chiang CW, Hirschhorn J, Daly MJ, Patterson N, et al. (2019) Polygenic adaptation on height is overestimated due to uncorrected stratification in genome-wide association studies. Elife e83902

Spelt C, Quattrocchio F, Mol JN, Koes R (2000) ANTHOCYANIN1 of Petunia encodes a basic helix-loop-helix protein that directly activates transcription of structural anthocyanin genes. Plant Cell 12: 1619–1632

Spelt C, Quattrocchio F, Mol J, Koes R (2002) ANTHOCYANIN1 of Petunia controls pigment synthesis, vacuolar pH, and seed coat development by genetically distinct mechanisms. Plant Cell 14: 2121–2135

Spitzer-Rimon B, Cna’ani A, Vainstein A (2013) Virus-aided gene expression and silencing using TRV for functional analysis of floral scent-related genes. In A Becker, ed, Virus-Induced Gene Silencing: Methods and Protocols.Humana Press Totowa, NJ, pp 139–148

Stamatakis A (2014) RAxML version 8: a tool for phylogenetic analysis and post-analysis of large phylogenies. Bioinformatics 30: 1312–1313

Stehmann JR, Semir J (2005) New species of Calibrachoa and Petunia (Solanaceae) from subtropical South America. In RC Keating, VC Hollowell, TB Croat, eds, Festschrift for William G. Darcy: The Legacy of a Taxonomist. Missouri Bot. Garden Press, Missouri, pp 341–348.

Stehmann JR, Lorenz-Lemke AP, Freitas LB, Semir J (2009) The genus Petunia. In T Gerats and J. Strommer, eds, Petunia: Evolutionary, Developmental and Physiological Genetics. Springer New York, New York, NY, pp 1–28
Stracke R, Werber M, Weisshaar B (2001) The R2R3-MYB gene family in Arabidopsis thaliana. Curr Opin Plant Biol 4: 447–456

Streiffeld MA, Rausher MD (2009) Genetic changes contributing to the parallel evolution of red floral pigmentation among Ipomoea species. New Phytol 183: 751–763

Streiffeld MA, Young WN, Sobel JM (2013) Divergent selection drives genetic differentiation in an R2R3-MYB transcription factor that contributes to incipient speciation in Mimulus aurantiacus. PLoS Genet 9: e1003385

Tasaki K, Higuchi A, Watanabe A, Sasaki N, Nishihara M (2019) Effects of knocking out three anthocyanin modification genes on the blue pigmentation of gentian flowers. Sci Rep 9: 15831

Taylor J, Butler D (2017). R Package ASMap: efficient genetic linkage map construction and diagnosis. J Stat Softw 1

Taylor-Teeples M, Lin L, de Lucas M, Turco G, Toal TW, Taylor J, Butler D, Streisfeld MA, Young WN, Sobel JM (2013) Divergent selection drives genetic differentiation in an R2R3-MYB transcription factor that contributes to incipient speciation in Mimulus aurantiacus. PLoS Genet 9: e1003385

Taylor-Teeples M, Lin L, de Lucas M, Turco G, Toal TW, Taylor J, Butler D, Streisfeld MA, Young WN, Sobel JM (2013) Divergent selection drives genetic differentiation in an R2R3-MYB transcription factor that contributes to incipient speciation in Mimulus aurantiacus. PLoS Genet 9: e1003385

Van der Auwera GA, Carneiro MO, Hartl C, Pohl C, Poplin R, Del Angel G, Levy-Moonshine A, Jordan T, Shakir K, Roazen D, Thibault J, et al. (2013) From FastQ data to high confidence variant calls: the Genome Analysis Toolkit best practices pipeline. Curr Proto Bioinform 43: 11.10.11–33

van der Niet T, Peakall R, Johnson SD (2014) Pollinator-driven ecological speciation in plants: new evidence and future perspectives. Ann Bot 113: 199–211

Van Moerkercke A, Haring MA, Schuurink RC (2011) The transcription factor EMISSION OF BENZENOIDS II activates the MYB ODORANT1 promoter at a MYB binding site specific for fragrant petunias. Plant J 67: 917–928

Wessinger CA, Rausher MD (2015) Ecological transition predictably associated with gene degeneration. Mol Biol Evol 32: 347–354

White RH, Stevenson RD, Bennett RR, Cutler DE, Haber WA (1994) Wavelength discrimination and the role of ultraviolet vision in the feeding behavior of Hawkmoths. Biotropica 26: 427–435

Wiering H, De Vlaming P (1984) Inheritance and biochemistry of pigments. In: K Sink, ed, Petunia . Springer, Berlin, pp 49–67

Winkel BSJ (2006) The biosynthesis of flavonoids. In: E Grotewold, ed, The Science of Flavonoids. Springer New York, New York, NY, pp 71–95

Winkel-Shirley B (2001) Flavonoid biosynthesis. A colorful model for genetics, biochemistry, cell biology, and biotechnology. Plant Physiol 126: 485–493

Yang F, Li W, Jiang N, Yu HD, Morohashi K, Ouma WZ, Morales-Mantilla DE, Gomez-Cano FA, Mukundi E, Prada-Salcedo LD, et al. (2017) A maize gene regulatory network for phenolic metabolism. Mol Plant 10: 498–515

Yarhamadov T, Robinson SJ, Hanemian M, Pulver V, Kuhlemeier C (2020) Identification of transcription factors controlling floral morphology in wild Petunia species with contrasting pollination syndromes. Plant J

Yoshida K, Kondo T, Okazaki Y, Katou K (1995) Cause of blue petal colour. Nature 373: 291–291.

Yoshida K, Toyama-Kato Y, Kameda K, Kondo T (2003) Sepal color variation of Hydrangea macrophylla and vascular pH measured with a proton-selective microelectrode. Plant Cell Physiol 44: 262–268

Yuan Y-W, Sagawa JM, Frost L, Vela JP, Bradshaw HD (2014). Transcriptional control of floral anthocyanin pigmentation in monkeyflowers (Mimulus). New Phytol

Yuan YW, Byers KJ, Bradshaw HD, Jr (2013a) The genetic control of flower-pollinator specificity. Curr Opin Plant Biol 16: 422–428

Yuan YW, Sagawa JM, Young RC, Christensen BJ, Bradshaw HD, Jr (2013b) Genetic dissection of a major anthocyanin QTL contributing to pollinator-mediated reproductive isolation between sister species of Mimulus. Genetics 194: 255–263

Zimmermann IM, Heim MA, Weisshaar B, Uhrig JF (2004) Comprehensive identification of Arabidopsis thaliana MYB transcription factors interacting with R/B-like BHLH proteins. Plant J 40: 22–34

Zufall RA, Rausher MD (2004) Genetic changes associated with floral adaptation restrict future evolutionary potential. Nature 428: 847–850