The complete chloroplast genome sequence of the water fern \textit{Ceratopteris thalictroides} (Pteridaceae)

Xing-Feng Liu\textsuperscript{a,} Xi-Le Zhou\textsuperscript{a,} Yu-Feng Gu\textsuperscript{b,c,} Si-Fan Liu\textsuperscript{d,} Jun-Hao Yu\textsuperscript{e,} Rui Zhang\textsuperscript{f} and Jiang-Ping Shu\textsuperscript{a,b,c,g}

\textsuperscript{a}Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture Forest Resources Monitoring Center, Jishou, Hunan, China; \textsuperscript{b}Key Laboratory of National Forestry and Grassland Administration for Orchid Conservation and Utilization, Shenzhen, China; \textsuperscript{c}The Orchid Conservation and Research Center of Shenzhen, Guangdong, China; \textsuperscript{d}Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture Institute of Forestry, Jishou, Hunan, China; \textsuperscript{e}Shanghai Center for Plant Stress Biology, National Key Laboratory of Plant Molecular Genetics, Center for Excellence in Molecular Plant Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai, China; \textsuperscript{f}Shanghai Chenshan Plant Research Center, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai, China; \textsuperscript{g}Key Laboratory of Plant Resources Conservation and Sustainable Utilization, South China Botanical Garden, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China

\textbf{ABSTRACT}

This work determined and analyzed the complete chloroplast genome sequence of \textit{Ceratopteris thalictroides} (Linnaeus) Brongniart 1822 (Pteridaceae). The results indicate that the total chloroplast genome size of \textit{C. thalictroides} is 149,399 bp in length, and the genome contains a large single-copy (LSC) region of 83,580 bp, a small single-copy (SSC) region of 21,241 bp, and a pair of inverted repeat (IR) regions of 22,289 bp. The GC content of \textit{C. thalictroides} is 36.7\%. The genome encodes a total of 131 unique genes, including 82 protein-coding genes, 38 tRNA genes, and 8 rRNA genes. The phylogenetic analysis results strongly suggest that \textit{C. thalictroides} is closely related to \textit{C. cornuta}.

The water fern \textit{Ceratopteris thalictroides} (Linnaeus) Brongniart 1822 grows in marshlands and paddy fields and sometimes floats on the water. It was previously classified as a member of Parkeriaceae (Ching 1978) but is now considered a member of Pteridaceae, which is located at the base of the order Polypodiales on the phylogenetic tree (Smith et al. 2006; PPG I 2016; Shen et al. 2018). It is widely distributed worldwide throughout the tropics. Because of the destruction of its habitat and extensive plundering for its edible, ornamental, and medicinal properties, \textit{C. thalictroides} is treated as a second-class protected wild plant in China (National Forestry Administration of the People's Republic of China & Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China 2021). \textit{C. thalictroides} is an excellent model plant because of its short life-span and diverse mechanisms of reproduction (Li and Wang 1997). To date, no studies on the complete chloroplast genome of \textit{C. thalictroides} have been published. Therefore, we analyzed the complete chloroplast genome of \textit{C. thalictroides} in this study for subsequent molecular phylogenetic analysis.

The \textit{C. thalictroides} sample used in this study was collected from Guantouzui, Hanshou County, Hunan Province, China (111, 58° 32.0641" E; 29, 1° 39.1464" N; altitude: 9 m); the specimen was deposited at the Chenshan Herbarium (CSH, Shanghai, China) and assigned voucher number Fern09721, Zhou XL, 2018 (Zhang Rui, 249967429@qq.com).

The genomic DNA was extracted from the silica gel dried leaf of \textit{C. thalictroides} and sequenced on the Illumina HiSeq platform (Shanghai Majorbio Bio-pharm Technology Co., Ltd., Shanghai, China). The plastid genome was assembled using GetOrganelle (Jin et al. 2018) with the chloroplast genome of \textit{C. cornuta} (accession number: MH173068) as the reference sequence. The assembled chloroplast genome was annotated by Geneious Prime (Biomatters Ltd., Auckland, New Zealand) (Kearse et al. 2012). Finally, the complete chloroplast genome of \textit{C. thalictroides} was obtained; the genome sequence data are openly available in the GenBank database of the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/ under accession number OK524221.

The results indicate that the chloroplast genome size of \textit{C. thalictroides} (OK524221) is 149,399 bp in length, and the genome contains a large single-copy (LSC) region of 83,580 bp, a small single-copy (SSC) region of 21,241 bp, and a pair of inverted repeat (IR) regions of 22,289 bp. The GC content of \textit{C. thalictroides} is 36.7\%. The genome encodes a total of 131 unique genes, including 82 protein-coding genes, 38 tRNA genes, and 8 rRNA genes.

For the molecular phylogenetic analysis, the complete chloroplast genomes of 15 ferns were downloaded from GenBank to obtain a phylogenetic tree containing \textit{C. thalictroides}. The sequences were aligned by MAFFT (Katoch and Standley 2013). The phylogenetic tree was constructed using the IQ-TREE (maximum likelihood) method in PhyloSuite, and branch supports were constructed with ultrafast bootstrap approximation (Guindon et al. 2010; Minh et al. 2013;}

\textbf{CONTACT} Liu Xing-Feng 405925253@qq.com 39.1464; 111, 58° 32.0641° E; 29, 1° 39.1464° N; altitude: 9 m; the specimen was deposited at the Chenshan Herbarium (CSH, Shanghai, China) and assigned voucher number Fern09721, Zhou XL, 2018 (Zhang Rui, 249967429@qq.com).

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Nguyen et al. 2015; Zhang et al. 2020). The results revealed that *C. thalictroides* is a sister of *C. cornuta* MH173068 (Figure 1). This is consistent with previous studies on the Pteridaceae phylogenetic tree.

**Ethical approval statement**

Research on plant chloroplast genome sequencing does not require ethical approval.

**Author contribution statement**

Liu Xing-Feng (corresponding author and first author): resources, conceptualization, investigation, and writing—original draft. Zhou Xi-Le (first author): investigation, funding acquisition, resources, supervision, writing—review & editing. Gu Yu-Feng: data curation, methodology, and visualization. Liu Si-Fan: resources, formal analysis, and validation. Yu Jun-Hao: data curation. Zhang Rui: funding acquisition and methodology. Shu Jiang-Ping: software. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Plant material collection statement**

The species is widely distributed in China; the plant materials were not obtained from nature reserves, and the chloroplast genome sequencing research did not affect the population, so collection licenses were not needed.

**Disclosure statement**

The authors report no conflicts of interest.

**Funding**

This work was financially supported by the Biodiversity Survey and Assessment Project of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, China [2019HJ2096001006].

**Data availability statement**

The genome sequence data that support the findings of this study are openly available in the GenBank database of NCBI at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov [accession no. OK524221.1] under accession no. OK524221. The associated BioProject, Sequence Read Archive, and BioSample numbers are PRJNA733526, SRR14683085, and SAMN19414834, respectively.

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