RESEARCH PAPER

Parallel origins of photoperiod adaptation following dual domestinations of common bean

James L. Weller1,*, Jacqueline K. Vander Schoor1, Emilie C. Perez-Wright1, Valérie Hecht1, Ana M. González2, Carmen Capel3, Fernando J. Yuste-Lisbona3, Rafael Lozano3, and Marta Santalla2,
1 School of Natural Sciences, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia
2 Grupo de Genética del Desarrollo de Plantas, Misión Biológica de Galicia-CSIC, PO Box 28, 36080 Pontevedra, Spain
3 Centro de Investigación en Biotecnología Agroalimentaria (BITAL), Universidad de Almería, 04120 Almería, Spain

* Correspondence: jim.weller@utas.edu.au

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Abstract

Common bean (Phaseolus vulgaris L.) is an important grain legume domesticated independently in Mexico and Andean South America approximately 8000 years ago. Wild forms are obligate short-day plants, and relaxation of photoperiod sensitivity was important for expansion to higher latitudes and subsequent global spread. To better understand the nature and origin of this key adaptation, we examined its genetic control in progeny of a wide cross between a wild accession and a photoperiod-insensitive cultivar. We found that photoperiod sensitivity is under oligogenic control, and confirm a major effect of the Ppd locus on chromosome 1. The red/far-red photoreceptor gene PHYTOCHROME A3 (PHYA3) was identified as a strong positional candidate for Ppd, and sequencing revealed distinct deleterious PHYA3 mutations in photoperiod-insensitive Andean and Mesoamerican accessions. These results reveal the independent origins of photoperiod insensitivity within the two major common bean gene pools and demonstrate the conserved importance of PHYA genes in photoperiod adaptation of short-day legume species.

Keywords: Common bean, florigen, flowering, Phaseolus, photoperiod, phytochrome.

Introduction

Common bean (Phaseolus vulgaris L.) is a major legume crop that is widely grown around the world as a dry grain and fresh vegetable. It is arguably the most important grain legume for human consumption globally, and throughout large parts of the developing world it is a staple food providing essential protein and nutrients and a significant proportion of complex carbohydrates. The recent sequencing of the common bean genome is beginning to provide new insights into its diversity and origins, and is opening new avenues for crop improvement.

Most recent data suggest that wild P. vulgaris originated in Mesoamerica and subsequently spread to Andean South America, giving rise to two distinct wild gene pools by approximately 100 000 years ago (Schmutz et al., 2014; Rendón-Anaya et al., 2017). The substantially lower genetic diversity in Andean relative to Mesoamerican wild germplasm is consistent with the occurrence of a narrow bottleneck, potentially imposed by refugial survival during the last glacial maximum (Bitocchi et al., 2013; Schmutz et al., 2014; Rendón-Anaya et al., 2017). Common bean was independently domesticated from the Mesoamerican and Andean gene pools around 8000 years ago (Gepts et al., 1986; Kwak and Gepts, 2009) and, as in many crop species, key initial steps in domestication of common bean are
likely to have been a reduction in seed dispersal and dormancy (Gepts and Debouck, 1991). Two other developmental features have clearly been important during domestication and early expansion, and are the outcome of selection for adaptation to cultivated environments: these are the acquisition of a determinate growth habit and a reduction in photoperiod sensitivity (Smartt, 1990; Gepts, 2014). Wild bean typically has an indeterminate climbing habit and, similar to many other species originating at low latitudes, a strong short-day requirement for flowering. The existence of numerous landraces with these traits indicates that they were not an impediment for domestication (White and Laing, 1989). However, it is clear that adjustment of photoperiod sensitivity through relaxation of the short-day requirement has been valuable in the selection of varieties for diverse environmental conditions, particularly at higher latitudes, while the determinate growth habit confers significant advantages for plant support, yield synchrony, and harvest efficiency that may have permitted the intensification of cultivation (Gepts and Debouck, 1991; Acosta-Gallegos et al., 1996; Gepts, 2004).

Despite the importance of these adaptive traits, understanding of their genetic basis and evolution has so far been limited. Genetic analyses have defined several loci controlling pod dehiscence and seed dormancy (Koinange et al., 1996; Gioia et al., 2013; Di Vittori et al., 2017) but the underlying genes have yet to be discovered, and only shoot determinacy has been characterized at the molecular level. The determinate growth habit is primarily conditioned by recessive alleles at a single major locus, Fin (Norton, 1915), which was recently shown to be an ortholog of the Arabidopsis gene TERMINAL FLOWER 1 (TFL1) referred to as TFL1y (Repinski et al., 2012). The presence of distinct TFL1y mutations in Mesoamerican and Andean germplasm groups and little evidence for introgression support the conclusion that shoot determinacy arose independently through TFL1y loss of function in these two gene pools (Kwak et al., 2012).

The genetic and environmental control of flowering in common bean has been of persistent interest. It has long been observed that certain varieties of common bean are insensitive to photoperiod, and a survey by White and Laing (1989) showed three broad categories of photoperiod response in a global bean germplasm collection—insensitive, sensitive, and highly sensitive—which were present in roughly equal proportions. Common bean varieties belonging to these categories are cultivated in different conditions around the world (Beebe, 2012), and photoperiod-insensitive varieties exist in both Andean and Mesoamerican gene pools (White et al., 1992). In addition, temperature has an important relationship with photoperiod sensitivity in common bean, with varieties from cooler locations (e.g. Colombia) being more photoperiod sensitive than those from warmer sites (e.g. Venezuela) at similar latitudes (White et al., 1996). The consensus view from several older classical genetic studies and more recent quantitative trait loci (QTL) analyses is that at least two loci are likely to contribute to this variation. Complete photoperiod insensitivity in certain material is conferred by recessive alleles at a major locus on chromosome 1, termed Photoperiod (Ppd; Wallace et al., 1993), and crosses between photoperiod insensitive Mesoamerican and Andean lines indicate that ppd alleles are likely to be present in both gene pools (Kornegay et al., 1993). As well as Ppd, at least one additional locus has been suggested to influence flowering time in a photoperiod- and temperature-dependent manner in several different contexts (Leyna et al., 1982; Kornegay et al., 1993; White et al., 1996; Gu et al., 1998), but these studies have not been reconciled using common material or environments.

In this study we carried out a detailed genetic analysis of flowering time in a wide cross between a Mesoamerican wild accession and an Andean domesticated accession of common bean with contrasting photoperiod sensitivity. Our results clarify the genetic control of this trait, identify a compelling candidate for the Ppd locus, and provide molecular evidence to support the independent evolution of photoperiod insensitivity in the two major germplasm groups.

Materials and methods

Plant material and growth conditions

To enable detailed genetic analysis of flowering time in common bean, we generated an F2 population from a cross between the Mesoamerican wild accession G12873 and cv. Midas, a determinate, photoperiod-insensitive Andean accession previously shown to carry recessive alleles at the Fin and Ppd loci (Koinange et al., 1996). This population (n=198) was grown under long-day (LD) conditions in a temperature-limited glasshouse in Hobart, Australia, under an 18 h photoperiod consisting of a natural day extended before dawn and after dusk with ~50 μmol m−2 s−1 light provided by sodium vapour lamps. Flowering time was recorded as the number of days from sowing to the appearance of the first open flower. Progeny were subsequently grown under either the same conditions or 12 h short-day (SD) conditions in an automated phytotron, where they were transferred from day conditions in the glasshouse to night compartments. Where necessary, plants grown in LD conditions were transferred to SD conditions after flowering or on termination of the experiment, to promote flowering and strong pod development.

Near-isogenic lines (NILs) for Ppd were developed from progeny of a single recombinant Fin/Fin Ppd/PPd F2 individual that did not flower in LD conditions, by marker-assisted selection of Ppd heterozygotes in subsequent generations and visual selection for phenotypic uniformity. Lines segregating Fin in a Ppd or ppd background or Ppd in a fin background were similarly selected from appropriate recombinants in the F2 and subsequent generations.

The photoperiod responsiveness of a wider selection of wild and domesticated common bean accessions was assessed in greenhouse trials at Pontevedra, Spain (latitude 42° 24′ 17.99″ N, longitude 8° 38′ 38.2″ W, altitude 40 m above sea level), according to a complete randomized block design with three replications under natural LD (<12 h light, 20–25 °C night–day regime, relative humidity 70–90%) and LD (>12 h light, 20–35 °C night–day regime, relative humidity 50–70%) conditions over 2 years. Each accession was planted in one row, with plant and row spacing of 0.8 m. Crop management was in accordance with local practices.

Mapping, sequencing, and expression analysis

Genes of interest were identified by BLASTp searches on the P. vulgaris genome v2.1 in Phytozone (https://phytozone.jgi.doe.gov) using sequences from other legumes and from Arabidopsis as queries. Intron-spanning fragments of selected genes were generated by PCR and sequenced to identify suitable polymorphisms for genotyping. Details of these markers, including their methods of detection, are provided in Supplementary Table S1 at JXB online. Genetic maps were constructed using JoinMap4 (Van Ooijen, 2006; Kyazma BV, The Netherlands). PCR from genomic DNA was used to amplify the full-length PHYA3 gene in
eight overlapping fragments ranging in size from 795 to 1291 bp using primers indicated in Supplementary Table S1. PCR products from diverse accessions were sequenced by conventional Sanger technology using BigDye® Terminator v3.1 chemistry and the Applied Biosystems™ 3500 Series Genetic Analyzer. Sequence analysis and alignments were performed using Geneious software (https://www.geneious.com). The median-joining haplotype network shown in Fig. 3 was constructed using PopArt (http://popart.otago.ac.nz; Leigh and Bryant, 2015). For the expression experiments shown in Fig. 4, F2 Ppd NILs were grown under the LD or SD conditions described above for Hobart, and comparable leaf material was harvested for RNA isolation 2 and 4 weeks after sowing. RNA extraction, reverse transcription, and real-time PCR analysis were performed as previously described by Liew et al. (2009), using primers listed in Supplementary Table S1.

Physiological experiments

Grafting was performed using the apical shoot of 2-week-old seedlings excised at the first (epicotyl) or second internode, and wedge-grafted into the stem of 3-week-old stock plants excised at the third or fourth internode (i.e. above the second or third leaf). Any leaves on the scion that were larger than 10 mm in length were also excised at the time of grafting. Graft junctions were secured with a small ring of silicone tubing and plants were maintained in elevated humidity for the first few days until the grafts were established. Seedling photomorphogenesis was assessed by growing plants for 12 days from sowing under continuous far-red light provided by the 735 nM channel of Heliospectra RX30 lighting units (https://www.heliospectra.com) and filtered through 700 nm cut-off plexiglass. Leaf movements were quantified using ImageJ (https://imagej.nih.gov/ij/) from images obtained with a Brinno TLC200 time-lapse camera (https://brinno.com).

Results

Several interacting loci affect flowering and determinacy in progeny of a wide cross

Under extended natural LD conditions in the greenhouse, the wild parental accession G12873 did not flower for over 140 days, whereas the domesticated parental accession, cv. Midas, flowered at around 35 days after sowing. Fig. 1 shows that the F2 progeny grown under the same conditions segregated a number of different phenotypes with respect to flowering and determinacy. One group of F2 individuals (early; n=62) flowered as early as the Midas parent (32–38 days after sowing), whereas two other less well-defined groups flowered in the range 58–80 days (intermediate; n=45) and 87–134 days (late; n=54) after sowing (Fig. 1A). A fourth group (NF; n=37) did not flower before termination of the experiment at 140 days after sowing. This segregation pattern suggests the presence of at least two loci, at which recessive alleles conferring early flowering are contributed by the cv. Midas parent. The proportion of individuals in the early class (62/198; 31%) did not differ significantly from 25% (P=0.55), confirming that this early-flowering phenotype is conferred by a recessive allele at a single locus. This result also shows that this recessive variant is epistatic to other genetic variation for flowering time segregating in the cross.

The majority of the early-flowering F2 segregants (46/62) were also clearly determinate in habit, consistent with the presence of recessive alleles at the Fin locus. However, this

Fig. 1. Genetic analysis of flowering time and determinacy in a wide cross of common bean (Phaseolus vulgaris L.). (A) Distribution of flowering time in an F2 progeny of a cross between the Mesoamerican wild accession G12873 (indeterminate, photoperiod sensitive) and the Andean cultivar Midas (determinate, photoperiod insensitive) grown under 18 h long-day (LD) conditions. The wild parent G12873 and a proportion of F2 individuals remained vegetative until termination of the experiment 140 days after sowing (non-flowering; NF), whereas cv. Midas flowered between 30 and 35 days after sowing. (B) Data replotted from (A) showing individual distributions of flowering time in the genotypic classes representing different allelic combinations at Fin and Ppd loci. (C) Images illustrating representative effects of Ppd on growth habit in a determinate (fin) background under LD conditions, at 5 weeks (left panel) and 8 weeks (right panel) after sowing. (D) Genetic interaction of Fin and ppd in the control of flowering time under LD (18 h) and SD (12 h) conditions.
early-flowering class also included a small number of individuals (n=13) with an indeterminate growth habit (Fig. 1B). This number is substantially fewer than would be expected in an independent digenic segregation, and points to relatively close linkage between a major locus controlling flowering time and Fin, consistent with this being the Ppd locus described and mapped by Koinange et al. (1996). A small difference in mean days to flowering between the indeterminate (35.9±0.3) and determinate (33.1±0.1) segregants in this class (P<0.001) is consistent with previous reports that, in addition to effects on flowering timing, Fin also inhibits the transition to flowering (e.g. González et al., 2016; Bhakta et al., 2017).

**Interaction of Fin and Ppd**

Among the intermediate-, later-, and non-flowering segregants (n=136) presumed to carry the dominant Ppd allele, the majority (n=117) showed a normal indeterminate phenotype (Fig. 1B), with vigorous growth from the main shoot apex, and flowers (if initiated) opening several nodes behind the apex. Across the population as a whole, we also observed a number of individuals with an unusual growth phenotype, which, although variable in expression, had several consistent features. In these individuals, the shoot apex gradually grew weaker and lost vigor, leaves failed to expand, and the twining of the main stem often intensified into a conspicuous tight coil. Some individuals failed to initiate flowers, while others produced flowers that did not develop; a small number (n=3) initiated flowering relatively early, developed inflorescences that were near normal in structure, and produced one or two open flowers, but showed several abnormalities including flower abortion, failure of pod set, and weak pod growth (Fig. 1C). However, after transfer to SD conditions, these plants showed a more normal growth pattern and in most cases produced mature pods and viable seeds, indicating a strong photoperiod dependence of the phenotype. The proportion of these individuals in the population (n=13/198) was identical to that of the ppd Fin class, suggesting that they might represent the Ppd fin class, with the severity of the abnormal phenotypes likely influenced by segregation at additional loci. Genotyping of these individuals with a marker for the Fin/TFL1y gene confirmed that they were all homozygous for the Mdas allele. As expected, all clearly determinate individuals were also homozygous for the Mdas fin/TFL1y allele.

This interaction was confirmed in F2 progeny segregating for Ppd in a fin background, and for Fin in a Ppd background, where it became clear that the unusual stem structures observed in the Ppd fin F2 segregants were essentially abnormal terminating secondary inflorescences. In ppd fin segregants, the main axes of lateral and terminal secondary inflorescences were typically distinct in structure from the normal vegetative stem, with thicker, shorter internodes and the absence of any twining tendency. In Ppd fin segregants, however, secondary inflorescences retained features of indeterminate stems, with elongated internodes and partial retention of the twining tendency (Fig. 1C). Analysis of F2 progeny also confirmed the effect of fin on flowering time, and revealed that this effect could be relatively large in certain photoperiod-sensitive Ppd genetic backgrounds (Fig. 1D).

The Fin locus was previously identified as the TFL1y gene (Kwak et al., 2012), which now specifies its precise location on chromosome 1 at 45.56 Mb in v2.1 of the P. vulgaris genome (Phvul001G189200). To locate Ppd on the physical map, we scanned this genomic region and identified several genes potentially related to control of flowering time and photoperiod responsiveness. We previously observed that this region is syntenic with the region of soybean chromosome 19 containing the Dr1 determinacy locus (Glyma19g194300) and E3 maturity locus (Glyma19g224200) (Weller and Ortega, 2015). E3 is a PHOTOTROPHY A (PHYA) homolog (PHYA3) and recessive alleles confer early flowering under LD conditions (Cober et al., 1996; Watanabe et al., 2009), implicating the bean E3/PHYA3 ortholog (Phvul.001G221100) as a strong candidate for Ppd. In the same general region of chromosome 1, we also identified orthologs of the circadian clock gene ELF4 (Phvul.001G242900), which is known to affect photoperiod responsiveness in the LD plants pea and Arabidopsis (Doyle et al., 2002; Liew et al., 2009), and EID1 (Phvul.001G207000), which has been reported to affect light signaling through PHYA in Arabidopsis (Dieterle et al., 2001) and to influence circadian rhythms in tomato (Müller et al., 2016). Markers for these three genes and for TFL1y/Fin were scored in the F2 population, yielding a genetic map consistent with their physical locations (Fig. 2A). Co-segregation of markers with flowering time revealed several clear recombinations with EID1 and ELF4 that excluded these genes as candidates for Ppd and identified PHYA3 as the candidate most closely linked to the early-flowering phenotype (Fig. 2A).

Three individuals scored as early flowering were heterozygous for the PHYA3 marker and initially appeared to be possible recombinants between PHYA3 and Ppd. However, these individuals showed defects in shoot growth, inflorescence structure, and flower/pod development typical of the fin Ppd/-recombinant class, despite initially producing one or two open flowers. We considered that the early flowering of these three plants most likely reflected an impenetrance of the Ppd/- late-flowering phenotype, potentially due to the influence of other loci. Excluding these three individuals, there was no evidence of recombination between Ppd and PHYA3. In total, codominant marker scores identified 40 recombinations between Fin/TFL1y and PHYA3, corresponding to a recombination frequency of 20.2% and a Kosambi map distance of 21.4 cM.

On the basis of these genotyping results, we selected non-flowering F3 individuals homozygous for the wild-type Fin allele and heterozygous for the PHYA3 marker. These plants were induced to flower and produce seed by transfer to SD conditions. Analysis of their F3 progeny under LD conditions showed that, as expected, some families segregated only non-flowering and early-flowering plants, whereas others segregated an additional intermediate-/late-flowering class (Fig. 2B). In contrast, F3 families derived from non-flowering F2 plants homozygous for the G12873 PHYA3 allele were either uniformly non-flowering or segregated individuals with an intermediate flowering phenotype (60–80 days). These results
support the conclusion that in addition to Ppd, cv. Midas differs from G12873 in at least one other major locus influencing photoperiod sensitivity, and the effects of this locus are hypostatic to the ppd allele.

**Photoperiod-insensitive early flowering is associated with mutations in PHYA3**

In view of the proximity of the Ppd locus and the PHYA3 gene, and the fact that the soybean PHYA3 ortholog functions in photoperiod sensitivity, we sequenced the PHYA3 gene from G12873 and Midas. We identified 12 single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) between these genotypes across the complete coding sequence, including 10 synonymous substitutions, one non-synonymous substitution (Q890H), and the insertion of a single cytosine in codon 534 of exon 1 (Supplementary Table S3, Fig. 2C). This insertion predicts truncation of the PHYA3 protein and loss of the C-terminal histidine kinase regulatory domain essential for phytochrome function (Rockwell et al., 2006), similar to phyA null mutants in Arabidopsis and pea (Dehesh et al., 1993; Weller et al., 2004). The amino acid at position 890 is located in a region of relatively low conservation between the PAS and histidine kinase domains and shows variability across angiosperm PHYA sequences that includes the presence of both Q and H residues (Rockwell et al., 2006). It therefore seems that the insertion/frameshift is more likely to impair PHYA3 function, and as such provides the more plausible basis for the ppd early-flowering phenotype.

To examine whether this mutation might be present in other early-flowering accessions, and to gain a broader view on PHYA3 sequence diversity, we sequenced the PHYA3 gene from a diverse selection of 52 other wild and domesticated accessions representing both Mesoamerican and Andean germplasm groups (Supplementary Table S2). As shown in Supplementary Table S3, these analyses identified 61 polymorphic sites across the PHYA3 coding sequence, and defined 23 haplotypes. Results of phylogenetic analysis (Fig. 3) showed that these haplotypes fell into three distinct groups corresponding to Mesoamerican wild (MW), Mesoamerican domesticated (MD), and Andean identity. Whereas individual Andean wild (AW) haplotypes were distinguished from Andean domesticated (AD) haplotypes by at most two SNPs across the entire coding sequence (including introns), MW and MD haplotypes overall differed at 22 SNPs and one 3 bp indel, of which 9 SNPs were uniquely present in MW accessions and the remaining 14 differences were common to the MW and Andean lines. Eleven SNPs were shared between MW and MD lines (Supplementary Table S3).

The Midas haplotype (haplotype 20) was shared with four other accessions that, like cv. Midas, were all early-flowering with a type I determinate growth habit. We also found that five early-flowering Mesoamerican accessions, including Jampa and ICA Pijao, carried a nonsense mutation in exon 2 of PHYA3 that, like the Midas insertion, would be expected to truncate and seriously impair the function of the PHYA3 protein (Fig. 2C). Across the other accessions, we identified nine non-synonymous substitutions. Three other photoperiod-insensitive determinate Andean accessions (haplotypes 17–19) shared a missense mutation in exon 1 (G273E) with potential functional significance. Residue G273 is located in the N-terminal chromophore-binding P3/GAF domain, and is perfectly conserved across 122 plant, fungal, and prokaryote phytochromes (Rockwell et al., 2006; Supplementary Fig. S1). These accessions also carried a substitution of another exon 1 residue conserved across all PHYA-type phytochromes (L130F; Supplementary Fig. S1), and this polymorphism was shared with another insensitive accession, PHA1666. Another group of photoperiod-insensitive Andean accessions (haplotypes 21–23) carried a conservative substitution of a residue (G1066), which, despite being highly conserved in general across phyA and phyB-type phytochromes (Supplementary Fig. S1), shows...
the same substitution in soybean GmPHYA3, arguing against
a major effect on PHYA3 function. In addition, we identified
two early-flowering Mesoamerican accessions (PHA0078 and
PHA0686) that carried only synonymous changes in PHYA3
relative to wild accessions and shared the same haplotype (5)
as other photoperiod-sensitive domesticated accessions. We
crossed these lines to cv. Midas or PHA1875 (both haplotype
20) to examine the potential allelism with the ppd mutation,
and found that the F1 progeny were very early-flowering under
LD conditions, similar to both parents. This result suggests that
PHA0078 and PHA0686 might carry loss-of-function PHYA3
alleles resulting from mutation outside the PHYA3 gene.

Early flowering of the ppd genotype is associated with
elevated expression of several FT genes

PHYA has a well-established role in control of flowering in sev-
eral species, including Arabidopsis, pea, and soybean (Valverde
et al., 2004; Weller et al., 2004; Liu et al., 2008; Watanabe et
al., 2009). Similar to many other genes influencing flowering
time, the effects of PHYA are mediated at least in part by changes
in the level of expression of genes in the FT family encoding
mobile florigen proteins (Kong et al., 2010). To confirm
the existence of a similar mechanism of action for Ppd, we
identified FT genes in the common bean genome and com-
pared their expression in the Ppd and ppd genotypes. As shown
in Supplementary Fig. S2, common bean has five FT genes
that belong to the three major clades of the FT family previ-
ously identified by Hecht et al. (2011) and Nelson et al. (2017),
with the single genes FTa1, FTa3, FTb1, FTb2, and FTc
responding to five of the six pairs of FT homeologs described
in soybean (Kong et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2017). As in soybean
and other legumes, the FTa1/FTc and FTb1/b3 genes are
arranged in tandem. However, there was no evidence in the
P. vulgaris v2.1 reference genome for the tandem duplication
of the FTa3 gene, unlike in soybean, where tandem duplications
are present in the corresponding regions of chromosome 16
(FTa2/FTb2) and chromosome 2 (FTc/FTb2) (Kong et al.,
2010; Wu et al., 2017). In soybean, the FTb clade gene FT4
has acquired a repressive role suggested to derive from amino
acid changes in an external loop that is critical for FT signaling
(Zhai et al., 2014), whereas its homeolog FTb1 has a conven-
tional sequence in this region, which is shared by the bean
ortholog FTb3. None of the bean FT genes show any con-
spicuous differences from their legume orthologs in conserved
regions, suggesting that all these genes are likely to promote
flowering (Supplementary Fig. S3).

In order to examine the specific physiological effect of ppd
on FT gene expression, we selected a pair of NILs from F1
families (described above) that segregated only at Ppd but not
at Fin or the putative second flowering locus. The results in
Fig. 4A show that two of the five bean FT genes (FTa3 and
FTb) were expressed at a significantly higher level in leaf tissue
of 4-week-old ppd plants than in equivalent Ppd plants, under
both LD and SD conditions. This is similar to soybean, where
the respective homologs, FT2a and FT5a, are thought to be the
main photoperiod-regulated FT genes, are induced by SD, and
show derepressed expression in e3 and e4 mutants (Kong et al.,
2010) (Fig. 4A). There was some indication that the expression
of two other genes, FTb1 and FTa1, might also be elevated in
the ppd genotype, but no statistically significant differences
were observed. The fifth gene, FTb3, was expressed at a similar
level in both genotypes regardless of photoperiod.

We also compared the ability of Ppd and ppd leafy stocks to
stimulate flowering of wild G12873 under LD conditions (Fig.
4B–D), and found that ppd, but not Ppd, stocks were effective,
causing the initiation of flowers at approximately 11 nodes on
the main shoot (from 8.9±0.3 to 18.7±1.0 nodes above the
graft) before reversion of axillary structures to vegetative buds.
However, in most cases, the initiated flowers showed arrested
growth at a very early stage (Fig. 4E), suggesting that a stronger
florigen source would be required to sustain full flower
development or that additional factors local to the developing bud might also be needed.

**PPD has no apparent effect on photomorphogenesis or circadian rhythms**

In addition to effects on flowering, phyA photoreceptors have a well-established role in the control of seedling photomorphogenesis, where they exclusively control the inhibition of stem elongation and promotion of leaf expansion under continuous far-red light, and share control with other photoreceptors under red and blue light (Weller et al., 2001a, b; Franklin and Quail, 2010). However, a comparison of seedling de-etiolation in the Ppd/ppd NILs revealed no clear difference in hypocotyl elongation or leaf expansion (Fig. 4F). In soybean, loss of E4/PHYA2 gene function significantly impairs de-etiolation under far-red light, but a strong c3 mutant had no effect, even in an e4 background, suggesting the possible subfunctionalization of these proteins with respect to flowering control and photomorphogenesis (Liu et al., 2008). A second PHYA gene orthologous to the soybean PHYA1/PHYA2 (E4) homeolog pair is present in common bean (PvPHYA1) and other phaseoloid legumes, and it is possible that a similar subfunctionalization has occurred in these species. Comparison of PHYA sequences to identify possible signatures of this subfunctionalization revealed unique substitutions of two highly conserved residues adjacent to the chromophore attachment site (C330) common to phaseoloid PHYA3 orthologs (A327P and S341I in PvPHYA3), relative to paralogous PHYA1 sequences and a wide range of other PHY sequences (Supplementary Fig. S1).

The importance of the circadian clock for photoperiod responsiveness is also well established. In Arabidopsis and several other species, important components of the photoperiod response mechanism are directly or indirectly regulated by the clock, and many clock mutants have altered photoperiod sensitivity (Bendix et al., 2015). In Arabidopsis, the PHYA photoreceptor has two roles—one downstream of the clock controlling the stability of the key FT activator CO (Valverde et al., 2004), and another in which it participates in entrainment of the clock by light (Millar, 2003). We therefore examined whether the effects of Ppd on photoperiod response might be associated in some way with effects on clock function. To test this, we compared the rhythmic leaf movement of Ppd and ppd NILs following transfer to continuous light after a 12 h entraining photoperiod. However, as shown in Fig. 4G, we found no evidence of any difference between Ppd and ppd NILs, with both genotypes anticipating dawn in a similar manner, suggesting that the effect of Ppd on flowering is unlikely to derive from a primary effect on the circadian clock.

**Discussion**

In common bean, as in many crops, understanding the effects of photoperiod on flowering and reproductive growth is critical to efficient breeding and targeting of germplasm to different environments. Here, we present evidence that the Ppd gene, a major determinant of photoperiod sensitivity and broad adaptation in common bean, encodes a phytochrome A photoreceptor, PHYA3. The PHYA3 gene is tightly linked to Ppd (Fig. 2A), and
a clearly deleterious PHYA3 sequence variant is associated with early flowering and photoperiod insensitivity in several accessions of Andean origin, while a second distinct deleterious allele is present in certain early-flowering Mesoamerican accessions (Figs 2C and 3; Supplementary Table S2). These results support the earlier case made for the potential importance of PHYA3 as a Ppd candidate based on synteny with soybean (Weller and Ortega, 2015), and its association with flowering time in a diversity panel of Andean material (Kamfwa et al., 2015).

Structure–function relationships are particularly well understood for the phytochromes owing to their prominence in early molecular genetic analyses. Evidence from mutant and transgenic studies in several species indicates that a C-terminally truncated molecule lacking the histidine kinase related domain has no biological activity (Rockwell et al., 2006), establishing a strong case that the frameshift and nonsense mutations identified here are likely to seriously impair PoPHYA3 function. This case is further strengthened by comparison with soybean, where mutations in the single functional ortholog E3 (GmPHYA3) also confer adaptively significant early flowering and reduced photoperiod sensitivity (Watanabe et al., 2009). In addition, the naturally occurring e3 allele carries a large deletion spanning exon 4, while an induced mutant e3 allele has sustained a deletion and frameshift in the second half of exon 1 very similar in effect to the Mids allele of PoPHYA3 (Watanabe et al., 2009).

Our preliminary survey of diversity in the PoPHYA3 gene revealed three distinct groups of haplotypes corresponding to MW, MD, and Andean material (Fig. 3), broadly consistent with groupings evident in multiple-marker analyses (e.g. Kwak and Gepts, 2009; Rossi et al., 2009). The similarity of AW and AD accessions (Fig. 3) was consistent with previous observations of a strong predomestication bottleneck in the Andean lineage and three-fold weaker reduction in diversity associated with domestication in the Andean germplasm relative to the Mesoamerican germplasm (Bitocchi et al., 2013). However, the apparent strong divergence of the MD material from the four MW accessions included in our study may be a consequence of the fact that we did not systematically sample the diversity present in the Mesoamerican wild gene pool, and may not have included material from the subgroup of Mexican wild germplasm most closely related to the MD group.

The majority of genetic studies featuring the Ppd locus have focused on photoperiod insensitivity in lines of Andean origin, notably Redkloud (Wallace et al., 1993) and Mids (Koinange et al., 1996). However, photoperiod insensitivity is common in both Andean and Mesoamerican gene pools (White and Laing, 1989), and Kornegay et al. (1993) described a clear case of non-complementation in crosses between Redkloud and an insensitive Mesoamerican accession, pointing to the relevance of Ppd in Mesoamerican material. Our results clearly demonstrate the origins of the Mids and Jamapa variants within distinct Andean and Mesoamerican PHYA3 haplotype groups (Fig. 3), and hence support the conclusion that the Ppd-dependent photoperiod-insensitive habit has arisen independently in the two major bean gene pools.

Given the relatively small number of accessions included in our survey, it is unlikely that we have captured all of the functionally significant variation in the Ppd gene. While the occurrence of these two haplotypes in multiple accessions suggests that they could be responsible for a significant proportion of the photoperiod insensitivity within the common bean germplasm, we did identify three other cases that might represent additional functional variants. The most convincing of these is the substitution of a highly conserved glycine by glutamate in the P3/GAF chromophore–binding domain, but a role for two other substitutions (L130F in the P2/PAS domain and G1066S towards the C-terminus of the P4/PHY domain) cannot be discounted (Fig. 2; Supplementary Table S2, Supplementary Fig. S1). More detailed genetic analyses will clearly be needed to clarify the relationship between PHYA3 sequence variation and flowering time in these accessions, and more widely in global bean germplasm.

Extensive characterization of photoperiod responsiveness in a large collection of domesticated bean germplasm by White and Laing (1989) identified three major phenotypic groups—day-neutral, intermediate, and strongly responsive—a distribution interpreted to indicate genetic control by a simple two-gene model. This interpretation was supported by the genetic analysis of Kornegay et al. (1993) and by our data, which indicate recessive epistasis of Ppd over a second locus conferring an intermediate response (Figs 1 and 2). Intermediate response types occur in both Mesoamerican and Andean material, but it is currently unclear whether they share the same genetic basis. QTL and association analyses have suggested the existence of multiple loci influencing flowering time and reproductive duration in addition to Ppd; these loci are distributed across 8 of the 11 common bean chromosomes (Koinange et al., 1996; Gü et al., 1998; Tar’an et al., 2002; Beattie et al., 2003; Blair et al., 2006; Pérez–Vega et al., 2010; Moghaddam et al., 2016; Bhakta et al., 2017), but there is currently no clear consensus on their relative importance or relevance in the two domesticated gene pools.

Interpretation of QTL effects in the region of Ppd itself is complicated by the relatively close location of the Fin locus. While the proximity of these loci has often been noted, their relationship and potential interaction has not been directly addressed, although several authors (e.g. Koinange et al., 1996; Bhakta et al., 2017) have alluded to distinct QTLs for flowering time over the Fin and Ppd loci. Fin is one of three common bean orthologs of Arabidopsis TFL1 (Repinski et al., 2012), a gene that, in addition to controlling meristem determinacy, also controls flowering time, and tfl1 mutants are both determinate and early-flowering (Shannon and Meeks-Wagner, 1991).

We were able to examine fin effects independently of ppd and show that fin is indeed able to promote flowering in its own right. This effect is relatively small under conditions where flowering is early, such as under SD conditions or in the presence of ppd, but can be substantial under longer photoperiods in a photoperiod-sensitive background (Fig. 1D). This observation may provide an explanation for reports of flowering time QTLs in the Fin/Ppd region of chromosome 1 even in populations not segregating for Ppd (e.g. González et al., 2016; Bhakta et al., 2017). TFL1 genes in some plant systems are targets of flowering time pathways (Strasser et al., 2009; Iwata et al., 2012; Rantanen et al., 2015; Serrano–Mislata et al., 2016).
and it is possible that in bean Ppd (and other flowering time genes) could in part influence growth habit through regulation of Fin. However, the fact that photoperiod and Ppd action can modify shoot and inflorescence growth, flower opening, and pod set in fin genotypes also suggests the importance of other genes that may act in parallel with Fin to regulate determinacy and reproductive development.

The dual domestication events in common bean present a relatively rare opportunity to examine parallel evolution of key adaptive traits. Our results extend those of Kwak et al. (2012) on determinacy to show that a second major adaptation, photoperiod insensitivity, has also been achieved in the two bean gene pools through different modifications of the same gene. This may indicate an underlying genetic architecture in which loss of TFL1 and PHYA3 function provide optimal solutions. In the case of determinacy, this is not particularly surprising, since the role of TFL1 genes is central and widely conserved (Wickland and Hanzawa, 2015). However, although the involvement of phytochromes in responses to photoperiod is also well established, phyA generally has a relatively minor role that is largely restricted to far-red-rich light, shared with cryptochromes and subsidiary to phyB-type phytochromes (Takano et al., 2005). In legumes, however, phyA appears to be more centrally important for responses to photoperiod, because in both pea and soybean, phyA mutants have major effects on flowering. In soybean, photoperiod sensitivity is progressively reduced by mutations in GmE3/PHYA3 and its paralog E4 (Cober et al., 1996; Jiang et al., 2014). This prominence of E3 and E4 is reflected in their strong repressive effect on the expression of FT genes (Xia et al., 2012; Lu et al., 2017), a feature also shared by Ppd (Fig. 4).

In its Mesoamerican center of domestication, bean was likely to have been grown together with maize (Zizumbo-Villarreal and Colunga-Garcia Marin, 2010), and it has been suggested that in such a scenario the early selective pressure on determinacy may have been lower than in the Andean center, where domestication probably occurred without maize (Kwak et al., 2012). This suggests that the timing of these innovations may have been different in the two gene pools, an idea that should now be possible to test by examining the relationship between sequence diversity at TFL1y and at PHYA3.

Conservation in the genetic basis for flowering time adaptation is increasingly well documented, with examples including the role of PRR37 in cereals (Murphy et al., 2011; Fjellheim et al., 2014) and the FLC gene in brassicas (Ridge et al., 2015; Irwin et al., 2016; Bouché et al., 2017). We previously described the recruitment of orthologous genes for photoperiod adaptation in long-day legumes, where mutations in orthologs of the circadian-clock-related ELF3 gene confer early flowering and reduced photoperiod sensitivity in pea, lentil, and chickpea (Weller et al., 2012; Ridge et al., 2017). Our characterization of the bean Ppd locus provides the first evidence for a similar conservation of adaptive mechanisms in the short-day legumes, and suggests that PHYA genes might also be important in other species in this group. Knowledge on conserved gene functions in other legumes should also help in future studies of adaptation in common bean, whose diploid nature, small genome, and well-characterized genetic diversity make it an attractive system for functional studies in domestication and crop evolution.

**Supplementary data**

Supplementary data are available at JXB online.

Table S1. Primer details.

Table S2. Details of Phaseolus vulgaris accessions used for analysis of PHYA3 diversity.

Table S3. Details of PvPHYA3 haplotypes.

Fig. S1. Phytochrome protein alignments.

Fig. S2. Maximum-likelihood tree illustrating relatedness of legume PEBP-family proteins.

Fig. S3. Alignment of legume PEBP amino acid sequences.

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