

# 1 **CRISPR/Cas-based precision gene replacement in plants via homologous** 2 **recombination-independent approaches**

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26 **Precision gene editing has been recently achieved by homology-directed gene targeting**  
27 **(HGT) and prime editing (PE), but implementation remains challenging in plants. Here, we**  
28 **report a novel tool for precision genome editing in plants employing microhomology-**  
29 **mediated end joining (MMEJ). The MMEJ-mediated precise gene replacement produced**  
30 **much higher targeted editing efficiencies than the cNHEJ, up to 8.89 %, 4.47 %, and**  
31 **8.98 % in tomato, lettuce, and cabbage, respectively.**

32 cNHEJ and MMEJ mechanisms were used for CRISPR/Cas9-based genome editing at high  
33 efficiency and specificity<sup>1-3</sup>. However, a system using cNHEJ and MMEJ for precise gene  
34 replacement has not been developed in plants. Here, we proposed and evaluated a novel MMEJ-  
35 based system for precise gene replacement (Supplementary Fig. 1 and 2a,b)<sup>4</sup>. A predefined  
36 genomic site with a protospacer adjacent motif (PAM) is determined first, thus enabling the  
37 prediction of the DSB formation site. The sequence between the two predicted cut sites is  
38 employed as a donor template so that its DNA sequence is essentially modified allowing it to  
39 carry targeted base changes to avoid recurrent cuts after gene replacement (Supplementary Fig.  
40 2a,b). In the case of MMEJ-mediated editing, the predicted flanking DSB ends would then be  
41 used to choose microhomologies (MH1, and MH2, Supplementary Fig. 1b).

42 We employed PEG-mediated tomato protoplast transfection to deliver the SpCas9 proteins,  
43 gRNAs, and donors for replacing six base pairs of the exon 5 of SIHPAT3 (Fig. 1a,b;  
44 Supplementary Table 1 and Supplementary file 1). Targeted deep-sequencing data revealed  
45 editing efficiency as high as 2.46 % and 0.09% (Supplementary Fig. 2c and Supplementary  
46 Table 3) with the MJ.HPAT3-1 and cNJ.HPAT3-1 donor. Significantly, the edited products of  
47 the cNHEJ donor did not include base changes located at its two ends (Supplementary Tables 2  
48 and 3). Further analysis of the edited products revealed multiple repaired products by the

49 MJ.HPAT3-1 donor with various frequencies (Fig. 1b). The precisely edited allele that contains  
50 all the intended base modification only accounted for 9.72 % of total edited reads  
51 (Supplementary Table 3). However, when we observed all the edited products containing the  
52 targeted B and C base changes, and excluded the others containing one-sided base changes (A1  
53 and A2 or D1 and D2) that were designed to prohibit the recurrent cleavages of the SpCas9, we  
54 obtained a total of 805 reads corresponding to 33.01% of the total edited sequences (Fig. 1b;  
55 Supplementary Table 3). Our data also confirmed the simultaneous cutting activities of the  
56 gR1.HPAT3 and gR2.HPAT3 since most of the indel alleles were revealed with the traces of  
57 both the gRNA cleavages at the 3<sup>rd</sup> base upstream of PAM sequences (Fig 1a and Supplementary  
58 Figs. 4,5).

59 We next sought to investigate the implications of different donor doses on the frequency of  
60 MMEJ-mediated DNA replacement. The MMEJ-mediated editing frequencies with all base  
61 changes were increased with higher amounts of donor DNA, from 10.42 % (50 pmol) to 19.84 %  
62 (300 pmol), and the one-sided repair frequencies were reduced accordingly (Supplementary Fig.  
63 6 and Supplementary Table 4). Moreover, when the MJ.HPAT3-1 donor dose was increased, the  
64 portions of targeted products (containing B and C base changes) were not different between 50  
65 and 100 pmol but increased at higher doses, from 31.38 % (50 pmol) to 47.81 % (300 pmol)  
66 (Supplementary Table 4-5). In the case of the cNJ.HPAT3-1 donor, the editing efficiency did not  
67 vary much among the donor doses and was much lower compared to that of the MJ.HPAT3-1  
68 (Fig. 1c). Again, most of its products contained only B and C changes (Supplementary Fig. 6).

69 Effective microhomology lengths (8-20 bases) increased MMEJ-mediated gene insertion in  
70 mammalian cells<sup>1, 5, 6</sup>. When the microhomology was shorter than 20 bp, the total editing  
71 efficiency was significantly reduced from  $4.22 \pm 0.47$  % (MJ.HPAT3-1) to  $2.33 \pm 0.31$  %

72 (MJ.HPAT3-2) and  $2.65 \pm 0.58$  % (MJ.HPAT3-3) (Fig. 1d and Supplementary Table 6). More  
73 importantly, the all-base-change precise editing efficiency was significantly higher for 20-bp  
74 microhomology ( $0.28 \pm 0.05$  %) compared to that of the 10-bp ( $0.12 \pm 0.03$  %) and 5-bp ( $0.04 \pm$   
75  $0.01$  %) microhomology lengths (Supplementary Table 6). Furthermore, when we consider all  
76 the reads containing the targeted base changes (B and C), the targeted editing efficiency was  $1.16$   
77  $\pm 0.09$ ;  $0.66 \pm 0.12$ ; and  $0.55 \pm 0.06$  % for the 20-bp; 10-bp; and 5-bp microhomologies,  
78 respectively. Interestingly, the activities of the gRNAs were not significantly different among all  
79 the treatments (Supplementary Table 6), indicating that the MMEJ-mediated editing efficiency  
80 obtained from the experiments depended on microhomology length<sup>5-7</sup>.

81 We next tested if NU7441, a small chemical that was shown to significantly enhance the MMEJ-  
82 mediated DSB repair products in mammalian cells<sup>8</sup>, can facilitate MMEJ repair. When the  
83 NU7441 concentration was increased from 0 to 1  $\mu$ M, the editing efficiency was dramatically  
84 elevated in all the donors (Fig. 1e,f). The case of the MJ.HPAT3-2 donor was remarkable in that  
85 the precise editing efficiency was enhanced 23.9 folds, from 0.14 to 3.34 %, with 1 $\mu$ M of  
86 NU7441, similar to the highest MMEJ-mediated efficiency of MJ.HPAT3-1 (3.80%) under the  
87 same conditions (Fig. 1f and Supplementary Table 7). Moreover, the ratio of the repaired  
88 products containing only B and C base changes was dramatically increased with higher NU7441  
89 concentrations, reaching up to 5.24 % at 1  $\mu$ M of NU7441 in the case of the MJ.HPAT3-2 (Fig.  
90 1e, f). To further check whether NU7441 negatively impacts the suspected cNHEJ-mediated  
91 DSB repair in the case of cNJ.HPAT3-1 donor, we conducted editing experiments using a  
92 cNJ.HPAT3-1 donor with the addition of 0.5, 1.0, and 2.0  $\mu$ M of NU7441. Surprisingly, the  
93 editing efficiency gradually increased with the increment of NU7441 concentration, and most of  
94 the repaired products contained only B and C base changes. The editing efficiency reached

95 1.58 % when 2.0  $\mu$ M of NU7441 was added (Fig. 1f), which is 1.88-fold higher than the  
96 treatment without NU7441.

97 The plant regeneration system for tomato protoplast was shown to be of very low efficiency and  
98 time-consuming. To overcome this challenge, we attempted to deliver the cNHEJ and MMEJ-  
99 mediated gene editing into a tomato by the *Agrobacterium*-mediated method<sup>9</sup>. SIHPAT3 and  
100 SIHKT1;2 loci were selected for editing via the cNHEJ and MMEJ approaches (Supplementary  
101 Fig. 7a,b and Supplementary file 1). Unexpectedly, the cNHEJ and MMEJ-mediated editing  
102 were extremely low at both the loci (Supplementary Table 8), possibly due to the low donor  
103 availability, the requirement of four simultaneous cleavages, and the nucleolytic damages to the  
104 unprotected ends of donors. The editing reads were mostly with one-side editing (Supplementary  
105 Fig. 8a) or one-sided insertion of the MMEJ donor (Supplementary Fig. 8b). However,  
106 subsequent screening of regenerated plants carried precisely edited alleles, albeit their editing  
107 rate was relatively low (up to 4% for the cNHEJ event cNJ1 and 3% for the MMEJ event #MJ5)  
108 (Supplementary Fig. 9).

109 To extend MMEJ-mediated precision gene editing to other plant species, we conducted MMEJ-  
110 mediated precise gene replacement in lettuce and cabbage using the RNP transfection method.  
111 The *THERMO-TOLERANCE 1 (TT1)*<sup>10</sup>, *ORANGE (Or)*<sup>11, 12</sup>, and *ACETOLACTATE SYNTHASE*  
112 *I (ALS1)*<sup>13</sup> genes were selected as targets for both lettuce and cabbage were identified by NCBI  
113 Blastp (Supplementary Fig. 10 and Supplementary Tables 9,10). We designed and employed two  
114 gRNAs for cutting genomic loci and MMEJ donors containing 20-base microhomologies at two  
115 ends (Fig. 2a,b). In lettuce, the highest MMEJ-mediated precise editing efficiency for all the  
116 intended base changes was  $1.81 \pm 0.75$  % for the *LsALS1* locus, and the lowest efficiency was  
117 zero for the *LsTT1* locus. The *LsOr* locus showed only  $0.13 \pm 0.10$  % for the exchange of all the

118 intended bases (Fig. 2c and Supplementary Table 11). Considering all the repaired products that  
119 contain the targeted base changes for the desirable a.a., the efficiency reached 4.47 %, 0.78%,  
120 and 0.42% for LsALS1, LsTT1, and LsOr locus, respectively (Fig 2c and Supplementary Table  
121 11). In cabbage, the highest precise editing efficiency ( $7.27 \pm 4.46$  %) was obtained at the  
122 BoTT1 locus and lower at the BoOr gene ( $1.68 \pm 0.24$  %). The ALS1 locus for cabbage resulted  
123 in the least precise editing efficiency, at only  $0.73 \pm 0.43$  %, nearly half of the editing efficiency  
124 obtained with the LsALS1 (Fig. 2d and Supplementary Table 12). The data from lettuce and  
125 cabbage indicate that MMEJ-mediated precision editing could be successfully extended to other  
126 plant species.

127 Taken together, we successfully engineered the error-prone MMEJ-mediated DSB repair  
128 mechanism for precision gene replacement in plants. However, it requires further optimization of  
129 efficiency, especially that of plant regeneration from the edited cells. This report offers another  
130 precision gene-editing tool that may help to advance crop breeding in the future.

## 131 **Methods**

132 **Targeted genes and donor DNA preparation for RNP works.** A tomato homolog of *Arabidopsis*  
133 hydroxyproline O-arabinylosyltransferase 3 (SIHPAT3, accession no. Solyc07g021170.1) was chosen as  
134 the first target thanks to its highly active guide RNA (gRNA) pair<sup>14</sup>. We employed PEG-mediated tomato  
135 protoplast transfection experiments using RNPs with SpCas9 protein and two sgRNAs, gR1.HPAT3 and  
136 gR2.HPAT3 (Fig. 1a) for cutting the genomic sites, combining that with a chemically modified cNHEJ  
137 (cNJ.HPAT-1) donor or an MMEJ donor (MJ.HPAT3-1) (Supplementary Table 1 and Supplementary file  
138 1) for the replacement of six base pairs of the exon 5 of SIHPAT3 (Fig. 1a). The 5' end modified  
139 cNJ.HPAT3-1 was prepared by PCRs using 5' modified oligos (5' phosphorylated, phosphorothioate  
140 bond addition to the phosphodiester linkage between the first and the second nucleotides) (Supplementary

141 Table 1) synthesized by Bioneer (Korea) without a template. The MMEJ donors were prepared by PCRs  
142 using oligos (Supplementary Table 1) synthesized by Bioneer (Korea) without templates. A high-fidelity  
143 DNA Taq polymerase was used for the PCR amplifications. The PCR products were cleaned using a  
144 BIOFACT PCR cleanup kit (BIOFACT, Korea). The donor concentrations were assessed by  
145 Nanodrop2000 spectrophotometer (Thermofisher, USA) and directly used for transfection stored at -20°C  
146 for further uses.

147 **Construction of plasmid for *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation in tomato.** For stable  
148 transformation and assessment of the cNHEJ and MMEJ-mediated precision gene replacement in  
149 tomatoes, we designed and cloned the gRNA expression cassettes (Supplementary file 1) using the  
150 Golden-gate cloning system as described previously<sup>9, 15</sup>. Two gRNA expression cassettes (gR1.HPAT3  
151 and gR2.HPAT3 for SIHPAT3; gR1.HKT1;2 and gR2.HKT1;2 for SIHKT1;2) were used to generate two  
152 DSBs at each targeted site. The cNHEJ donors (cNJ.HPAT3-1 for SIHPAT3; cNJ.HKT1;2 for SIHKT1;2)  
153 and MMEJ donor (MJ.HPAT3-1 for SIHPAT3; MJ.HKT1;2 for SIHKT1;2) were designed to be flanked  
154 by two gRNAs (gDR1.HPAT3 and gDR2.HPAT3 for cNJ.HPAT3-1; gDR3.HPAT3-1 and gDR4.HPAT3  
155 for MJ.HPAT3; gDR1.HKT1;2 and gDR2.HKT1;2 for cNJ.HKT1;2; gDR3.HKT1;2 and gDR4.HKT1;2  
156 for MJ.HKT1;2) cutting sites (Supplementary file 1). The binary plasmids were constructed to test the  
157 cNHEJ and MMEJ approaches using a conventional T-DNA and a geminiviral replicon system<sup>9</sup>. The  
158 NptII selection marker expression cassette (pNOS-NptII-tOCS) is driven by the NOS promoter and  
159 terminated by the OCS terminator (Addgene # 51144). An intron-containing plant codon-optimized  
160 SpCas9 driven by a CaMV 35S promoter and CaMV 35S terminator (p35S-pcoCas9I-t35S) was used  
161 (Supplementary file 1).

162 **Isolation of protoplasts.** Tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum* cv. Micro-Tom), lettuce (*Lactuca sativa* L. cv.  
163 Cheongchima), and cabbage (*Brassica oleracea*) seeds were sterilized with 70% ethanol for 3 min, 1%  
164 hypochlorite solution for 15 min, and washed five times with distilled water. The sterilized seeds were  
165 inoculated in a medium containing 1/2 Murashige and Skoog salts, 0.4 mg/L thiamine HCl, 100 mg/L Myo-

166 inositol, 30 g/L sucrose, and 8 g/L gelrite, pH 5.7. The seedlings were grown in a growth chamber under a  
167 16 h light/8 h dark photoperiod (100–130  $\mu\text{mol}/\text{m}^2 \text{ s}$ ) at 25°C for tomato and 20°C for lettuce, and 23°C for  
168 cabbage.

169 For protoplast isolation of tomato and cabbage, the cotyledons of 4-day-old tomato seedlings and the  
170 cotyledons of 7-day-old cabbage seedlings were immersed in cell and protoplast washing solution (CPW)  
171 containing 0.5% cellulase (Novozymes, Bagsvaerd, Denmark), 0.5% pectinase (Novozymes), 1%  
172 viscozyme (Novozymes), 3 mM MES (pH 5.8) and 9% mannitol. After 15 min of vacuum infiltration, the  
173 suspension was incubated for 2-4 hr on a rotary shaker at 50 rpm at 25°C. The suspension was filtered  
174 through an eight-layer gauze and centrifuged for 5 min at 100 g. Protoplasts were separated on a 21%  
175 sucrose density gradient and then collected at the interface of W5 solution (2 mM MES pH 5.8, 154 mM  
176 NaCl, 125 mM  $\text{CaCl}_2$ , 5 mM KCl). The harvested protoplasts were washed three times with W5 solution  
177 and then resuspended in MMG solution (4 mM MES pH 5.7, 0.4 M mannitol, 15 mM  $\text{MgCl}_2$ ). The  
178 concentration of protoplasts was determined using a hemocytometer.

179 For the lettuce protoplast isolation, the cotyledons of 7 d-old seedlings were digested with 10 mL of  
180 enzyme solution (1% [w/v] Viscozyme (Novozyme), 0.5% Celluclast (Novozyme), and 0.5% Pectinex  
181 (Novozyme), 3 mM MES (2-[N-Morpholino] ethanesulfonic acid), pH 5.7 and 9% mannitol in CPW salts  
182 with shaking at 40 rpm for 4–6 h at 25 °C in the dark. The protoplast mixture was then filtered through a  
183 40  $\mu\text{m}$  nylon cell strainer (Falcon) and collected by centrifugation at 800 rpm for 5 min in a 14 mL round  
184 tube (SPL). The collected protoplasts were re-suspended in W5 solution (2 mM MES [pH 5.7], 154 mM  
185 NaCl, 125 mM  $\text{CaCl}_2$ , and 5 mM KCl) and further centrifuged at 800 rpm for 5 min. Finally, the  
186 protoplasts were re-suspended in W5 solution and counted under a microscope using a hemocytometer.  
187 Protoplasts were adjusted to a density of  $1 \times 10^6/\text{mL}$  in MMG solution before transfection. The  
188 transfected protoplasts were cultured in protoplast culture medium (MS medium containing 0.4 mg/L  
189 thiamine HCl, 100 mg/L myo-inositol, 30 g/L sucrose, 0.2 mg/L 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid [2,4-D],  
190 and 0.3 mg/L 6-benzylaminopurine [BAP], pH 5.7) in the dark f at 25°C for 4 weeks.



191 **PEG-mediated RNP and donor transfections.** SpCas9 protein was purchased from ToolGen, Inc.  
192 (South Korea), and guide RNAs were synthesized by GeneArt Precision gRNA Synthesis Kit (Invitrogen)  
193 according to the manufacturer's protocol. PEG-mediated RNP and donor transfections were performed in  
194 the previous study<sup>16</sup>.

195 For ribonucleoprotein (RNP) and donor DNA transfections with tomato and cabbage protoplasts,  $2 \times$   
196  $10^5$  protoplasts were transfected with the purified SpCas9 protein (20  $\mu$ g) premixed with *in vitro*-transcribed  
197 sgRNA 1 (10  $\mu$ g), sgRNA 2 (10  $\mu$ g), and donor templates (300 pmol) in PBS buffer followed by incubating  
198 for 10 min at 25°C. The RNP complexes were mixed with protoplasts and then supplemented with an equal  
199 volume of 40% PEG transfection solution (40% PEG 4000, 0.2 M mannitol, and 0.1 M CaCl<sub>2</sub>). This  
200 suspension was mixed gently and then incubated at room temperature for 10 min. An equal volume of W5  
201 solution was added for washing, followed by centrifugation at 100 g for 5 min. The supernatant was  
202 discarded, and the protoplasts were incubated with 1 ml of W5 solution in the dark at 25°C for 48 h.  
203 Afterwards, the cells were collected for gDNA isolation and subsequent targeted deep sequencing analysis.

204 For lettuce protoplast transfection, SpCas9 protein and sgRNAs were premixed in  $1 \times$  NEB buffer 3 for at  
205 least 10 minutes at room temperature and  $2 \times 10^5$  protoplast cells were transfected with SpCas9 protein (20  
206  $\mu$ g) premixed with sgRNAs (10  $\mu$ g each) and donor DNA (300 pmol). A mixture of  $2 \times 10^5$  protoplast  
207 cells was re-suspended in 200  $\mu$ l MMG solution and then was slowly mixed with RNP complex, donor,  
208 and 350  $\mu$ l of PEG solution (40% [w/v] PEG 4000, 0.2 M mannitol, and 0.1 M CaCl<sub>2</sub>). After incubation  
209 for 10 min, the transfected protoplast cells were gently re-suspended in 650  $\mu$ L W5 solution. After  
210 additional incubation for 10 min, 650  $\mu$ L W5 solution was added slowly again and was mixed well by  
211 inverting the tube. Protoplasts were pelleted by centrifugation at 556 rpm for 5 min and washed gently in  
212 1 ml W5 solution. Protoplasts were pelleted by centrifugation at 556 rpm for 5 min and re-suspended  
213 gently in 1 ml WI solution (4 mM MES [pH 5.7], 0.5 M mannitol, and 20 mM KCl). Finally, the  
214 protoplasts were transferred into a 60  $\times$  15 mm petri dish (Falcon), cultured under dark conditions at 25°C  
215 for 48 h and then analyzed for genome editing efficiency.

216 **Agrobacterium-mediated tomato transformation.** The Agrobacterium-mediated tomato transformation  
217 was conducted using a protocol published by Vu and coworkers<sup>9</sup> with or without 1  $\mu$ M NU7441  
218 treatment for 5 days post-washing. Ten-day post-transformation, thirty cotyledon fragments were  
219 collected per transformation plate to isolate genomic DNAs and subsequent miniseq analysis.

220 Regenerated plants were selected in media containing 100 mg/L kanamycin and transferred to soil pots  
221 before analyzing for the editing performance. Genomic DNAs were extracted from the plants and  
222 analyzed by PCR amplification of the targeted sequences and by Sanger sequencing.

223 **Targeted deep sequencing.** Genomic DNAs were isolated from the protoplasts using the CTAB method.

224 We used the miniseq sequencing service (MiniSeq<sup>TM</sup> System, Illumina, USA) to obtain targeted deep  
225 sequencing of the edited genomic sites. Miniseq samples were prepared in three PCR reactions according to the  
226 manufacturer's guidelines, with genomic DNAs as the first PCR template. The first and second PCR  
227 used primer listed in Supplementary Table 1, whereas the third PCR was conducted with the  
228 manufacturer's primers to assign a sample ID. A high-fidelity DNA Taq polymerase (Phusion, NEB,  
229 USA) was used for the PCRs. The miniseq raw data FASTQ files were analyzed using the Cas-Analyzer  
230 tool<sup>17</sup>. The indel analyzing window was set at 5 bases with a comparison range that covered both the read  
231 ends. A similar analysis was conducted for the targeted base changes of lettuce and cabbage genes.

232 **Statistical analysis.** The editing data, statistical analysis, and plots were further processed by the MS  
233 Excel and Graphpad Prism 9.0 programs and are explained in detail in the legends of figures and tables  
234 wherever applicable.

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## 278 **Author contributions**

279 Conceptualization, T.V. V and J.Y.K.; Methodology, T.V. V and J.Y.K.; Conducted experiments, T.V.  
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## 283 **Competing interests**

284 The authors have applied for Korean patents (10-2021-0089814) and PCT patents (PCT-KR2021-008727)  
285 based on the results reported in this paper.

## 286 **Figure Legend**

287 **Fig. 1. HR-independent precision editing approaches using CRISPR/SpCas9.** **a**, Schematic diagrams  
288 of cNHEJ- and MMEJ-mediated gene editing of tomato targeted loci SIHPAT3 using donor sense  
289 sequences (cNJ.HPAT3-1, MJ.HPAT3-1, MJ.HPAT3-2, and MJ.HPAT3-3). Exons are drawn as blue  
290 boxes, and the discontinuous lines in each gene represent intron parts of the gene; The expected cutting  
291 sites (3-nt upstream of a PAM) of gRNAs are indicated by black scissors; the intended base changes (A1,  
292 A2, B, C, D1, and D2) are painted in the red font that is denoted by the discontinuous red boxes. The  
293 diagrams are not drawn to scale. **b**, Editing frequency of respective repaired products/alleles revealed  
294 from miniseq data. **c**, Editing efficiency revealed by targeted deep sequencing data of the various donor  
295 doses. **d**, editing efficiencies revealed by the treatment of donors with different microhomology lengths. **e**,  
296 Editing efficiency revealed from targeted deep sequencing data of the treatments at different NU7441  
297 concentrations. **f**, The detailed targeted deep sequencing data analyzed with the various NU7441  
298 concentrations and microhomology lengths. Targeted editing efficiency is the sum of the precise editing  
299 efficiency and the only B and C editing efficiency. Precise editing efficiency was calculated by dividing  
300 total reads containing all the base changes by the total reads. The only B and C editing efficiency were  
301 calculated by dividing total reads containing only B and C base changes by the total reads. One-sided  
302 editing efficiency was calculated by dividing total reads containing only either the left-sided bases (A1  
303 and A2) or the right-sided base pairs (D1 and D2) by the total reads.

304 **Fig. 2. MMEJ-mediated precision gene editing in lettuce and cabbage.** **a-b**, Schematic diagrams of  
305 targeted loci (TT1, Or, and ALS1 with their GenBank accession number), targeted sequences, gRNA  
306 binding sites, and MMEJ donors in lettuce (**a**) and cabbage (**b**). The Exons are drawn as colored boxes  
307 (purple boxes with lettuce's loci and pink boxes for cabbage), and the discontinuous line in each gene

308 represents intron parts of the gene. The expected cutting sites (3-nt upstream of a PAM) of the gRNAs are  
309 indicated with the black scissors; the intended base changes are painted in the red font; the targeted amino  
310 acid changes and corresponding triplexes are denoted by the discontinuous red boxes, and the texts placed  
311 on their top. The diagrams are not drawn to their scales. **c**, MMEJ-mediated editing efficiency in lettuce at  
312 the TT1, Or, and ALS1 loci. **d**, MMEJ-mediated editing efficiency in cabbage at the TT1, Or, and ALS1  
313 loci.

#### 314 **Supplementary item**

#### 315 **Supplementary figure legends**

316 Supplementary Fig. 1. HR-independent strategies for precision gene/allele replacement using  
317 CRISPR/SpCas9

318 Supplementary Fig. 2. HR-independent precision editing approaches using CRISPR/SpCas9

319 Supplementary Fig. 3. Sanger sequencing data revealed precise replacement of DNA by MMEJ donor

320 Supplementary Fig. 4. Indel alleles revealed from transfection of SpCas9, gR1.HPAT1 and gR2.HPAT3  
321 with cNJ.HPAT3-1 donor

322 Supplementary Fig. 5. Indel alleles revealed from transfection of SpCas9, gR1.HPAT1 and gR2.HPAT3  
323 with MJ.HPAT3-1 donor

324 Supplementary Fig. 6. The frequency of the MMEJ-mediated repaired products at different donor doses

325 Supplementary Fig. 7. Agrobacterium-mediated system for cNHEJ and MMEJ-mediated gene editing in  
326 tomato

327 Supplementary Fig. 8. Representative repaired products obtained by the pMJ1 and pMJ2 vector.

- 328 Supplementary Fig. 9. cNHEJ and MMEJ-mediated precision editing events revealed from  
329 Agrobacterium-mediated transformation
- 330 Supplementary Fig. 10. Identification of TT1, Or, and ALS1 genes in lettuce and cabbage for MMEJ-  
331 mediated gene targeting
- 332 **Supplementary Tables**
- 333 Supplementary Table 1. gRNA, donor, and primer sequences employed in the study
- 334 Supplementary Table 2. cNHEJ- and MMEJ-mediated editing rates at SIHPAT3 locus revealed by Sanger  
335 sequencing
- 336 Supplementary Table 3. cNHEJ- and MMEJ-mediated editing rates of various repaired products at  
337 SIHPAT3 locus
- 338 Supplementary Table 4. Editing frequency of various repaired products revealed from treatments of  
339 different donor types and doses
- 340 Supplementary Table 5. MMEJ-mediated gene editing using various MJ.HPAT3-1 donor amounts  
341 (replicate)
- 342 Supplementary Table 6. MMEJ-mediated editing efficiency revealed from DSBs repair using donors with  
343 different microhomology lengths.
- 344 Supplementary Table 7. The frequency of repaired products revealed from the treatment of NU7441
- 345 Supplementary Table 8. cNHEJ and MMEJ mediated gene editing in tomato using the Agrobacterium-  
346 mediated delivery of the editing tools
- 347 Supplementary Table 9. Sequence alignment for selection of targeted genes in lettuce
- 348 Supplementary Table 10. Sequence alignment for selection of targeted genes in cabbage

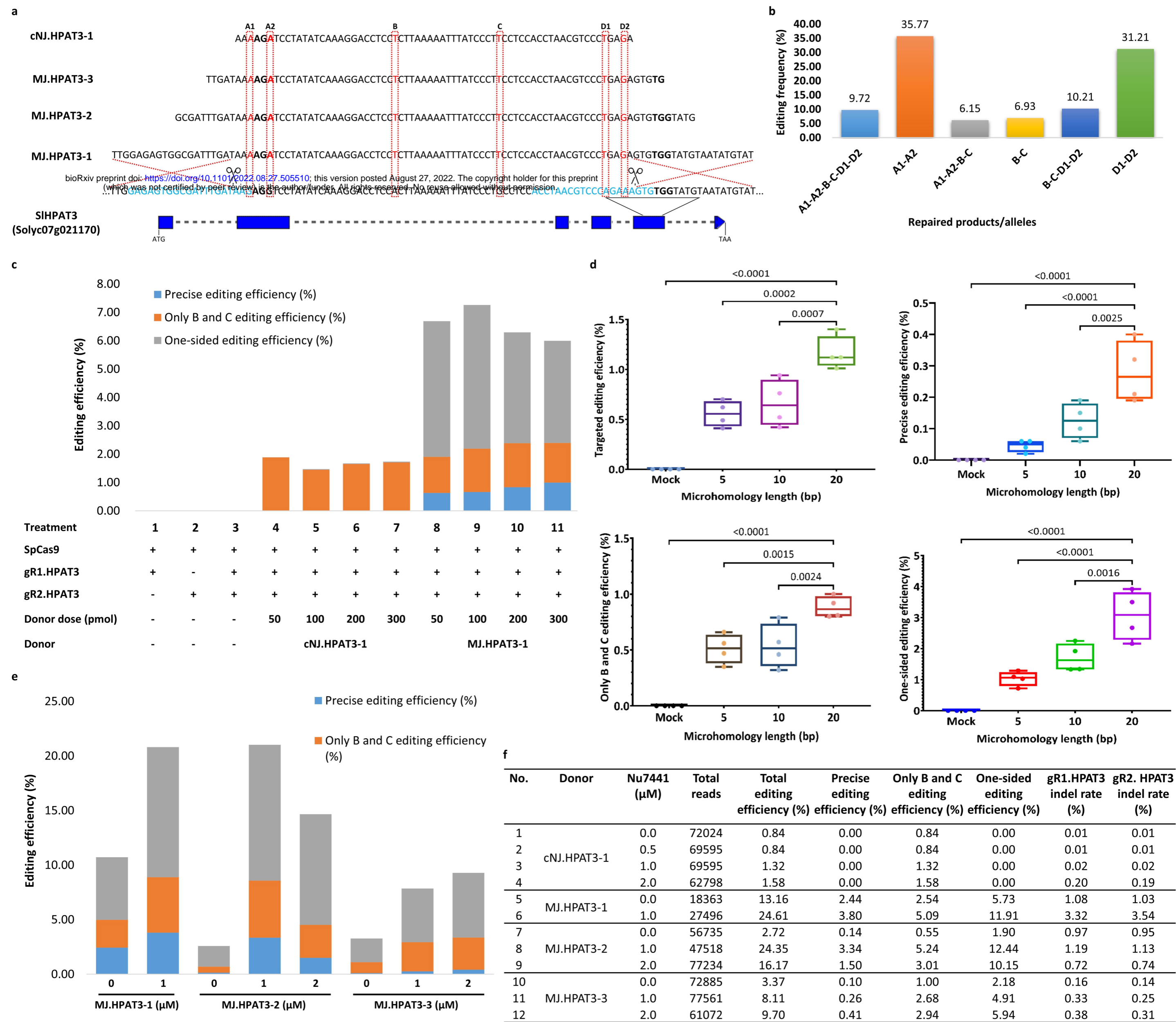
349 Supplementary Table 11. Data revealed from the targeted deep-sequencing analysis of MMEJ-mediated  
350 editing in lettuce

351 Supplementary Table 12. Data revealed from the targeted deep-sequencing analysis of MMEJ-mediated  
352 editing in cabbage

353 **Supplementary files**

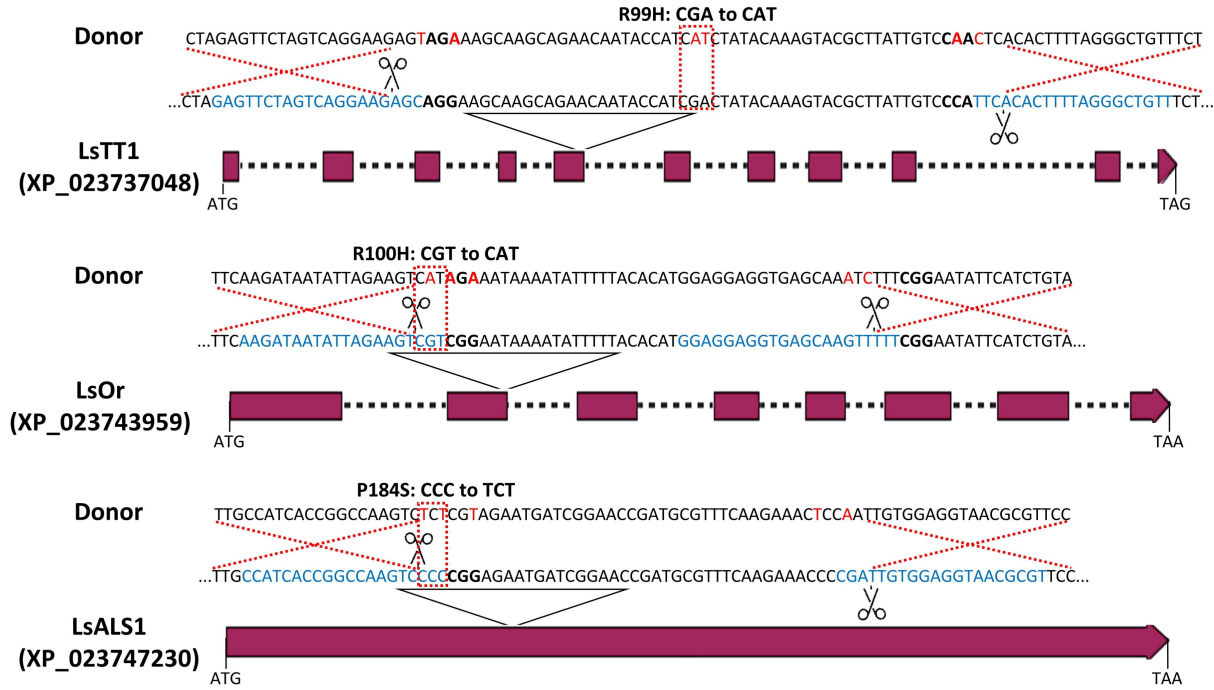
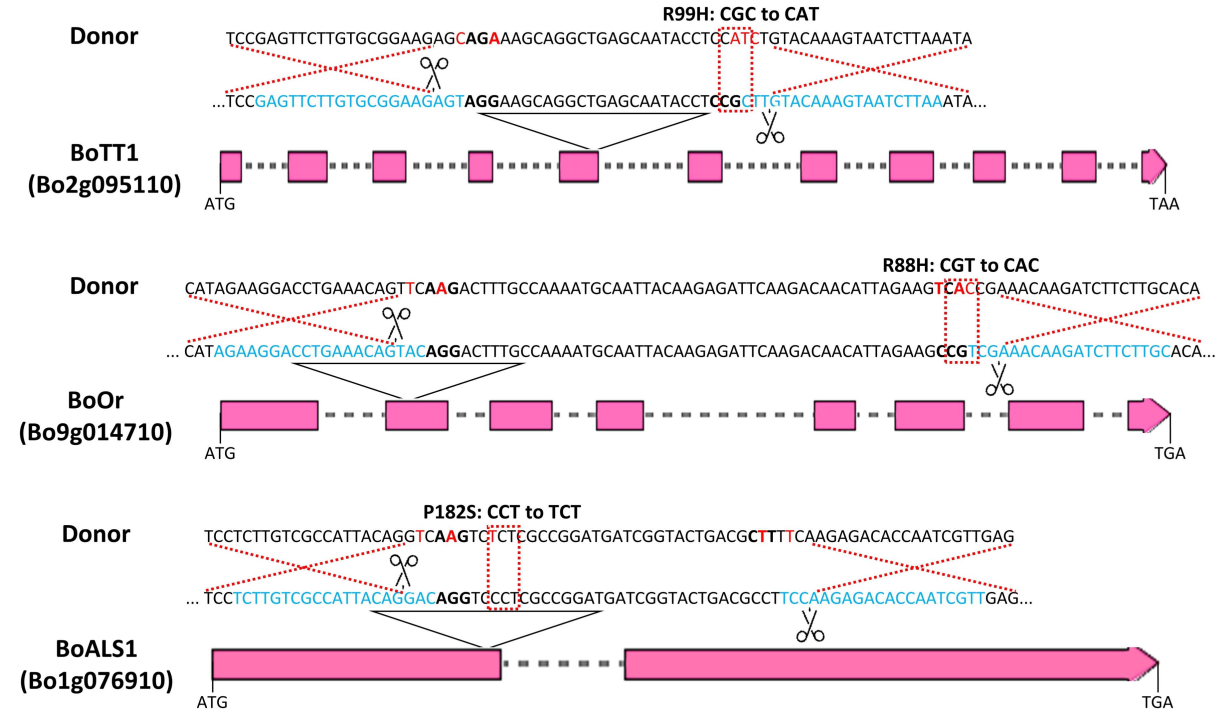
354 Supplementary file 1: Sequences used in the study

**Fig. 1**





# Fig. 2

**a**

**b**

**c**

No.	Locus	Accession	Total reads	Targeted editing efficiency (%)	Precise editing efficiency (%)	gRNA1 indel rate (%)	gRNA2 indel rate (%)
1	LsTT1	XP_023737048	96871	0.78 ± 0.30	0.000	0.87 ± 0.71	0.35 ± 0.27
2	LsOr	XP_023743959	90601	0.42 ± 0.27	0.13 ± 0.10	1.07 ± 0.71	0.94 ± 0.39
3	LsALS1	XP_023747230	89394	4.47 ± 1.98	1.81 ± 0.75	2.69 ± 1.19	2.15 ± 0.99

**d**

No.	Locus	Accession	Total reads	Targeted editing efficiency (%)	Precise editing efficiency (%)	gRNA1 indel rate (%)	gRNA2 indel rate (%)
1	BoTT1	Bo2g095110	16905	7.27 ± 4.46	1.71 ± 0.48	4.83 ± 1.27	2.39 ± 1.20
2	BoOr	Bo9g014710	68028	3.94 ± 0.14	1.56 ± 0.65	24.37 ± 1.99	16.76 ± 6.12
3	BoALS1	Bo1g076910	90366	2.51 ± 1.19	0.73 ± 0.35	1.13 ± 0.40	10.61 ± 5.11