Plant phylogeny and life history predict AM fungal species and

genetic composition, but only life history and genetic composition

predict feedback

Short title: AM fungal feedback across phylogeny and life history

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Abstract

Symbioses exert strong influences on host phenotypes; however, benefits from symbioses can increase or degrade over time. Understanding the context-dependence of reinforcing or degrading dynamics is pivotal to predicting stability of symbiotic benefits. Host phylogenetic relationships and host life history traits are two candidate axes that have been proposed to structure symbioses. However, the relative influence of host evolutionary history and life history on symbiont composition, and whether changes in symbiont composition translate into stronger mutualistic benefits is unknown. We tested the influence of plant phylogenetic relationships and plant life history on the composition of Arbuscular Mycorrhizal (AM) fungi, perhaps the most ancestral and influential of plant symbionts, and then tested whether AM fungal differentiation resulted in improved mutualism. We constructed mycobiomes composed of seven AM fungal isolates derived from tallgrass prairie and grew them for two growing seasons with 38 grassland plant species. We found that host phylogenetic structure was a significant predictor of the composition of AM fungal communities and the genetic composition of AM fungal species, patterns consistent with phylosymbiosis. However, the phylogenetic structure of AM fungi failed to translate to improved benefit to their host. While AM fungi generally improved plant growth and mycorrhizal feedback was generally positive, the strength of feedback was not predicted by plant phylogenetic distance. The composition of the AM fungal community and genetic composition within AM fungal species were also significantly influenced by plant life history. In addition, feedbacks between early and late successional species were generally positive. Interestingly, changes in species composition did not predict feedback, while changes in genetic composition of the two most abundant AM fungal species predicted positive mycorrhizal feedback. These

43 reinforcing mycorrhizal feedbacks across life history can mediate plant species turnover during

44 succession and suggests that consideration of mycorrhizal dynamics could improve restoration.

45 **Introduction**

Symbioses exert strong influences on phenotypes. Symbionts are particularly important to plants,

with 80% of all terrestrial plant species, including most crop plants, associating with arbuscular

mycorrhizal (AM) fungi [1]. This symbiosis has been identified as ancestral to all root symbioses

[2] with arbuscules predating the origin of roots [3,4]. AM fungi mediate host acquisition of soil

resources, particularly phosphorus, and can have a large influence on plant community dynamics

[5–9]. Together, these aspects of AM fungi illustrate the critical importance of symbionts on host

evolution and ecology, the understanding of which is a central question in biology.

Host phylogeny has been posited as an important factor structuring symbiont composition

and function [10]. Phylogenetic structure of symbiont composition, either of symbiont species or

genetic variants within symbiont species, has been called phylosymbiosis and has been observed

in many systems including: the internal microbiomes of insects (*Drosophila* flies, mosquitoes, and

Nasonia wasps) [11–13], the gut microbiota of animals (*Peromyscus* deer mice, pack rats, house

mice, cranes, decapod shrimps) [11,14–16], and the bacterial communities of corals [17,18],

providing a basis for generalizing across host-symbiont interactions. To date, there has been no

comprehensive test of plant phylogenetic influence on AM fungal fitness and composition.

Inference on symbiont function from observations of phylogenetic structure in symbiont

composition are challenging as they depend upon differential influence of symbionts on host

fitness. While it is tempting to assume that differentiation in symbiont composition results in

improved symbiont functioning for their hosts, fitness effects from host-specific differentiation of

symbionts can result in positive or negative feedback [19] which correspond to strengthening or

deteriorating host fitness with phylosymbiosis. Several studies have found evidence of reinforcing

coadaptation of symbionts on their hosts, including within *Nasonia* wasp species [12,13] and

within some *Peromyscus* mouse species, but not others [11]. The benefit of AM fungi to their

hosts has been shown to decline [20,21] or increase [22,23] with host-specific differentiation of

symbionts. Whether host phylogenetics influence the likelihood of positive, reinforcing feedback

remains an open question.

It is also possible that host traits unrelated to phylogeny are primary factors structuring

symbiont differentiation on hosts. While the candidate host traits driving symbiont differentiation

are many, major axis of plant trait variation has been shown to align with the fast-slow/acquisitive-

conservative continuum of life history strategies [24,25]. Plant life history has also been shown to

be important for plant-AM fungal interactions. Specifically, slow growing late successional plant

species have been shown to be more responsive to AM fungi [26,27], to be more sensitive to AM

fungal identity [28], and to benefit particularly from AM fungi found in undisturbed sites dominated

by late successional plant species [29,30], potentially generating positive feedback [23]. Such trait

mediated AM fungal feedbacks could have important consequences for community coexistence

and turnover during succession.

Plants acquire their AM fungal symbionts from the environment each generation—there is

no horizontal inheritance of this symbiosis. While AM fungal species have been shown to be

functionally variable [8,31], variants within AM fungal species can also vary in their ecology

[32,33]. AM fungi are multinucleated, and different nuclei within AM fungal individuals can have

substantially different genetic content [34–36]. Parent AM fungal cells can segregate nuclei,

passing different nuclei to different offspring, and these segregants have been shown to differ in

their impacts on host plants [32,33,37–39]. To date, we do not know the relative importance of

changes in species composition vs genetic composition within species in driving functional

consequences of AM fungal dynamics.

To test how plant host identity, plant host phylogenetic relationships, and plant life history

characteristics shape symbiotic AM fungal communities, we grew a common community of AM

fungi, a constructed synthetic mycobiome, with 38 individual plant species (Fig. 1a) representing

a phylogenetically diverse group of early and late successional host prairie plants (S1 Fig and S2

Table). All plants were grown in a common greenhouse environment to remove potential

confounding environmental effects [10]. We monitored the changes in AM fungal composition

over two growing seasons using LSU rDNA amplicon sequencing [40–42]. As rDNA of AM fungi

are highly polymorphic [43,44], we grouped amplicon sequence variants (ASVs) into species to

permit assessment of changes in AM fungal species composition and changes in genetic

composition of individual AM fungal species (Fig. 1b). We tested for consistent effects across

plant phylogeny and across plant life history categories with two approaches. PerMANOVA

controls for non-independence of amplicons in individual samples. Phylogenetic mixed models

explicitly test for host phylogeny influence on AM fungal composition and simultaneously control

for phylogenetic non-independence. Both test for effects of host life history on AM fungal

composition (Fig. 1c).

We used multiple approaches to assess the ecological impact of changes in AM fungal

composition (Fig 1). As our constructed mycobiomes included isolates that have been

characterized in their impacts on host growth across plant family and across plant life history

[28,45], we test for correlations of AM fungal fitness responses to hosts with AM fungal impacts

on host growth (Fig. 1d,e,). A positive correlation of host and symbiont fitness impacts predicts

positive, reinforcing feedback that would generate co-adaptation [19,46]. Secondly, we directly

tested the functional consequences of host-specific differentiation in AM mycobiome composition

using a feedback assay (Fig. 1f) in which plant species were grown with the differentiated

mycobiomes in full factorial combinations [47,48]. We then tested whether the strength of

feedback is positively correlated with phylogenetic distance, as expected by co-adapted

phylosymbiosis, and whether AM fungal feedback varies consistently with plant life history, as

expected from mycorrhizal dynamics influencing species turnover during succession (Fig. 1g).

Finally, we tested whether changes in AM fungal species or genetic composition within AM fungal

species predicted resulting feedbacks (Fig. 1h).

Fig 1: Conceptual Figure of the Experimental Design

A common AM fungal community composed of mixtures of characterized isolates was grown with

38 plant species for two growing seasons (a). Changes in relative abundance of AM fungi were

monitored using amplicon sequencing (b) and used to test for plant phylogenetic and life history

impacts on AM fungal species and genetic composition (c). The effect of the AM fungal inoculum

strains used in this experiment on plant species was characterized using meta-analyses of prior

studies (d). Correlations of AM fungal relative fitness and fungal impacts (e) on host phylogenetic

and life history groupings were tested as one measure: mycorrhizal feedback [19]. Feedback was

also measured directly by testing growth responses of different plant species to trained AM fungal

communities (f). Pairwise feedbacks, as represented by interaction coefficients (Bever et al.

1997), were calculated and used to test patterns of strength of feedback across host phylogeny

and life history (g). We also tested whether the observed changes in AM fungal species

composition or changes in genetic composition within species predicted strength of mycorrhizal

feedback (h).

Results

We found significant influence of plant phylogeny and plant life history on the species and genetic

composition of the AM mycobiome. This holds true whether controlling for the multivariate nature

of the amplicon data using PerMANOVA or whether testing for and controlling for phylogenetic

relationships of host plants using phylogenetic generalized mixed models (PGLMMs). As these

results are complementary, but redundant, we present the PGLMM results which provide a direct

test of phylosymbiosis below and the PerMANOVA within the appendix (S3 and S4 Tables).

Host phylogeny impacts on AM Mycobiome

Grouping ASV counts by individual AM fungal species, we found significant changes in AM fungal

composition and density with plant phylogeny. Host phylogeny significantly affected AM fungal

diversity and density in year 1 ($p<0.01$, $p<0.001$) and the relative proportion of *Ce. pellucida* in

year 1 ($p<0.05$), *R. fulgida* in year 2 ($p<0.001$), and *E. infrequens* in both years ($p<0.001$, $p<0.05$,

S5 Table, Fig 2). This suggests that phylogenetically proximate plant species have more similar

AM fungal composition, reflecting more similar impacts of host on AM fungal relative fitness, than

more phylogenetically distant plant species. *Ce. pellucida* had high relative growth rates with

plants in Apocynaceae, *E. infrequens* had low relative fitness with grasses, and *R. fulgida* tended

to perform best with grass species (Fig 2).

Fig 2: AM Fungal Species Relative Abundances Across Plant Phylogeny

AM fungal relative abundances for *Cl. lamellosum*, *Cl. claroideum*, *E. infrequens*, *F. mosseae*, *R.*

fulgida, *Ce. pellucida*, and *A. spinosa* are presented alongside estimated abundance (proportion

of ASVs identified as inoculated over total AM fungal ASVs) and Shannon's Diversity. Results are

by host plant species arranged phylogenetically. Significance phylogenetic effects are calculated

with a Likelihood Ratio Test using the Chi square distribution. Year 1 and Year 2 data are

presented as grouped columns with year one being the lighter shaded top bar.

Host phylogeny impacts on genetic composition of AM fungal species

We also tested the influence of host phylogeny on the genetic composition of individual AM fungal species. ASV's identified for each species were tested in order of decreasing overall abundance. We found significant differences in ASV composition due to plant phylogenetic relatedness for the most abundant *E. infrequens* ASVs for both years ($p < 0.01$, Fig 3). The most abundant ASV of *Cl. lamellosum* was marginally affected by plant phylogeny in year 1 ($p > 0.1$). *F. mosseae's*, *Cl. claroideum's,* and *Ce. pellucida's* third most abundant ASV had a significant effect of host plant phylogenetic distance in year 1 ($p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, *R. fulgida* was marginally affected by phylogeny for its seventh most abundant ASV in year 1 ($p > 0.1$). There were also significant effects of phylogeny for its most abundant ASV in year 2 ($p > 0.001$).

Fig 3: AM Fungal Genetic Variation Across Plant Phylogeny

AM fungal genetic variation (ASV relative abundances) were tested for significant effects of phylogenetic distance within *Cl. lamellosum*, *Cl. claroideum*, *E. infrequens*, *F. mosseae*, *R. fulgida*, *Ce. pellucida*, and *A. spinosa*. The significance of each phylogenetic effect is calculated with a Likelihood Ratio Test using the Chi square distribution. Results are reported for the most common ASV with a significant result. The rank of the most common significant ASV is given as a superscript next to the significance symbols.

Plant life history impacts on AM mycobiome

PGLMMs of total ASV counts grouped by individual AM fungal species showed significant changes in AM fungal composition with plant life history. The relative abundance of *F. mosseae*

179 and *R. fulgida* were marginally significantly higher when associated with late successional plants

180 in year 2, with *Cl. claroideum* being significantly higher (p<0.1, p<0.1, p<0.05, S5 Table, Fig 2).

181 Late successional plant species had more diverse AM fungal communities than early

182 successional plant species (Shannon index, year 2 p≤0.05, S6 Fig). Estimated AM fungal density

183 was not significantly affected by host plant life history in either year (p>0.1).

Plant life history impacts on genetic composition of AM fungal species

Host plant life history significantly impacted the genetic composition of several AM fungal species.

PGLMM analysis found the relative abundance of the second most abundant ASV of *Cl.*

lamellosum, *F. mosseae*, and *Ce. pellucida* were each affected by host plant life history in year 1

(p<0.1, p>0.05, p>0.1, Fig 3). In year 2, the most abundant *F. mosseae* ASV and fourth most

abundant *Ce. pellucida* ASV were significantly affected by host plant life history (p<0.05, p>0.05).

Finally, the most abundant *Cl. claroideum* ASV had a marginal response to host plant life in year

2 only, and the fourth most abundant *F. mosseae* ASV had a significant response, (p<0.1,

p<0.05).

Correlation of host and symbiont relative fitness

Previous work with the AM fungal isolates used in this experiment [28,45] allowed us to test for

general patterns across four family groups: Asters (Asteraceae), Legumes (Fabaceae), Lillies

(Amaryllidaceae and Commelinaceae), and Grasses (Poaceae). We were particularly interested

in the differential impacts on plant families and their correlation with the differential fitness

responses to these families. We found that *E. infrequens*, *Cl. lamellosum*, and *Cl. claroideum*

confer greater benefits to plants in the Asters relative to plants in the Grasses group (S7B Fig).

We also saw that *E. infrequens*, *Cl. lamellosum*, *Cl. claroideum*, *F. mosseae, A. spinosa,* and *Ce.*

pellucida confer greater benefits to plants in the Lilly group compared to the Grasses. These

effects are weakly positively correlated with the relative fitness responses to these plant families

(Fig 4). This provided weak evidence of mycorrhizal positive feedback particularly between plants

in the comparison of the phylogenetic groups Asters and Grasses (R^2_{yr1}=0.32, p=0.187,

R^2_{yr2}=0.48, p=0.127) as compared to Legumes – Grasses (R^2_{yr1}=0.32, p=0.188, R^2_{yr2}=0.49,

p=0.183) and Lillies – Grasses (R^2_{yr1}=0.03, p=0.702, R^2_{yr2}=0.01, p=0.877). This may suggest a

strengthening of host fitness with phylosymbiosis, though none of these correlations were

significant.

Fig 4: Predicted Feedbacks Between Phylogenetic Groups

We analyzed the correlation of meta-analysis results of host plant response to AM fungal species

associated with host plants of different phylogenetic groups, with the measured differential AM

fungal response to host plant phylogenetic group. R^2 and p values corresponded to linear

correlations weighted by AM fungal relative abundance. There were no significant correlations at

the p≤0.1 level.

We also found the growth promotion by AM fungal isolates differed in early vs. late

successional plant species (S7A Fig). Moreover, there was a negative correlation between AM

fungal growth and benefits to plant hosts, with late successional plants growing less well with the

AM fungal isolates grown on other late successional hosts (R^2_{yr1} =0.23, p=0.274, R^2_{yr2}=0.94,

p=0.001, Fig 5). This pattern is consistent with changes in AM fungal composition generating

negative feedback between plants of different life history strategies. Given that AM fungal species

diversity increased with late successional plant species in the second year of AM mycobiome

training (Fig 2), it is possible that the change in AM fungal diversity feedback on fitness of late

successional plant species. However, when analyzing two studies comparing early and late

successional plant species in response to single and mixed inocula, we did not find a significant

difference in response to AM fungal diversity between plant life history stages (p= 0.748, S8 Fig),

casting doubt on feedback through changes in mycorrhizal diversity.

Fig 5: Predicted Feedbacks Between Life History Categories

We analyzed the correlation of meta-analysis results of host plant response to AM fungal species

associated with host plants of different life history categories to the measured differential AM

fungal response to host plant life history category. R^2 and p values correspond to linear

correlations weighted by AM fungal relative abundance. There is a significant positive correlation

in year 2 (p=0.001).

AM fungal feedbacks: tests of patterns

AM fungal feedback between pairs of plant species varied from significantly positive to

significantly negative (Fig 6). Across all pairs of plants, median (p = 0.003) and mean (t = 3.9472,

p≤ 0.001) AM mycobiome feedback was generally positive (S9 Fig). However, there was no

relationship between strength of feedback and plant phylogenetic distance. The best fit was a

marginal quadratic fit (x: p=0.167, x^2: p=0.085, Fig 6A), as closely related species and most

distantly related species tended to have zero or negative feedbacks. Together this indicates that

the observed plant phylogenetic influence on AM mycobiome composition did not consistently

result in improved host fitness.

Fig 6: Measured Feedback Strength Between AM fungi and Plant Hosts

Mycorrhizal feedback, measured as pairwise interaction coefficients, are plotted on the Y-axis in

all plots. Phylogenetic distance (A) had only a marginally significant quadratic relationship with

fitness (p=0.085). (B) shows feedbacks broken out by both early, both late, and early and late

host plant parings. Both early (p=0.011) and early-late (0.003) parings had significantly positive

feedbacks. Both panels show individual pairwise interaction values plotted as shaded dots, with

grey for insignificant interaction coefficients and black for significant interactions (p>0.05).

When analyzing feedback effects between plant families (restricted to the three best

represented families: grasses, asters, and legumes). We tended to find mean positive feedback

between legume species (t_{13}=2.233, p=0.058), negative feedback between Aster–Grass pairings

(t_{18}=-2.236, p=0.029) and Grass–Grass pairings (t_6=-2.082, p=0.082). Other comparisons were

not consistently different from zero (S10 Fig). Median Legume-Legume pairings remained

marginally positive (p-value = 0.078), and Aster-Grass remained significantly negative (p=0.014).

Grass–Grass pairings did not have significant negative median feedbacks (p=0.109).

In comparing within and between plant life history categories, the median pairwise

feedbacks between pairs of early successional species tended to be positive (p=0.069), and the

mean feedback was significantly positive (t_{41}=2.654, p=0.01, Fig 6B). Comparing feedback

between early and late successional plant species, both the median (p=0.009) and mean values

(t_{68}=3.055, p=0.003) were significantly positive. When both plant species were late successional

neither the median (p=0.488) nor the mean (t_{14}=-0.009, p=0.993) feedback were significantly

different from zero.

264 AM fungal feedbacks: community and/or genetic drivers

Differences in AM fungal species composition and/or differences in genetic composition

within AM fungal species could drive mycorrhizal feedbacks. Changes in AM fungal species

composition, as represented by dissimilarity between plant species pairs, failed to predict

feedback strength (Fig 7a, R^2=0, F= 0.2922, p=0.59). However, changes in genetic composition

of individual AM fungal species did predict mycorrhizal feedback. Specifically, positive pairwise

feedback was significantly predicted by dissimilarity in genetic composition of the two most

common AM fungal species: *E. infrequens* (Fig 7b, R^2=0.13, F= 17.78, p<0.001) and *Cl.*

lamellosum (Fig 7c, R^2=0.1, F=13.27, p<0.001). Genetic dissimilarity of other AM fungal species

did not predict pairwise feedback (S11 Fig).

Fig 7: Mycorrhizal Feedback Strength Predicted by Genetic Dissimilarity of AM fungi

Regressions of strength of pairwise feedback against measures of AM fungal dissimilarity. AM

fungal species composition, as measured by pairwise dissimilarity of total species counts

(Aitchison distance) did not predict feedbacks (p=0.59). Pairwise feedback was significantly

predicted by genetic dissimilarity of two AM fungal species, *E. infrequens* (p<0.001) and *Cl.*

lamellosum (p<0.001).

Discussion

Using 38 plant species, we present a uniquely robust test of plant phylogeny and life history

impacts on the composition and symbiotic function of arbuscular mycorrhizal (AM) fungi. We

found strong phylosymbiosis, as phylogenetic distance was an important predictor of the

differences in AM fungal diversity, density, and community composition across plant host species.

In addition, we detected significant differences in genetic composition of individual AM fungal

species across plant host species. These differences are often predicted by plant phylogenetic

distance, indicating that AM fungal species can evolve rapidly in response to their host. However,

while AM fungi generally improved host growth, we found only weak evidence that the

phylogenetically structured divergence of symbiont community and genetic composition

consistently altered symbiont impacts on their hosts. After controlling for the effect of plant

phylogeny, we also found that AM fungal density, community diversity, community composition,

and genetic composition within species changed with plant life history, as represented by early vs

late successional stage categories. In this case, the shift in symbiont composition with plant life

history differentially benefited plants of the same life history generating positive mycorrhizal

feedback. Differential positive feedbacks that vary between plants of different with life history

characteristics could contribute to plant species turn over during succession. Interestingly, our

results suggest that the genetic change within AM fungal species, rather than changes in relative

abundance of AM fungal species, generated the observed positive mycorrhizal feedback.

Together, our results indicate that both plant phylogeny and plant life history traits govern the

associated AM fungal community and genetic composition, but only plant life history traits have

strong evidence for consistent reinforcing positive feedbacks on plant fitness.

We were able to confirm that plant host identity and phylogenetic relationships were

important in shaping the AM fungal community composition. Previous studies have demonstrated

that AM fungal growth rates varied between individual plant species [48,49]. We affirm that this

result is general across plant species, as AM fungal composition diverged significantly across the

38 plant species studied. Moreover, host-specific differentiation of AM fungal composition had a

strong phylogenetic signature. That is, the growth rates of individual AM fungal species tended to

be similar on phylogenetically similar host plants. This phylogenetic influence was evident in the

differential abundance of *E. infrequens, R. fulgida*, and *Ce. pellucida* (Fig 2). Phylogenetic

distance also predicted measures of AM fungal diversity. While previous work has shown

phylogenetic signature to plant species specific differentiation of soil bacterial and fungal

communities [50], this study provides clear evidence of phylogenetic structure to host-specific

differentiation of AM fungal communities.

We note that the influence of host identity on AM fungal composition does not appear to

result from differential exclusion of AM fungal species from roots, as would be expected from

incompatibilities of plant-AM fungal signaling. Rather, inoculated AM fungi were found with all

plant species. Given that inoculated AM fungi had equivalent densities across each plant species

at the beginning of the experiment, the change in AM fungal composition is due to host-specific

differences in AM fungal growth rates (i.e., fitness). The observation of substantial influence of

host phylogeny on AM fungal composition may reflect that plant influence on AM fungal relative

fitness can be moderated by phylogenetically conserved plant traits, such as root architecture [51]

or secondary chemical composition [52].

Our first measure of host phylogenetic influence on mycobiome composition solely

examined species level changes, and this may underestimate the impact of host phylogeny which

could operate on genetic changes within each species. AM fungal species and isolates have

highly variable rDNA genes [43,53], and we observed changes in rDNA composition with plant

host species across most AM fungal species included in this study. Using both PerMANOVA and

PGLMM methods, we detected unique host family/phylogenetic structure of the genetic

composition of all our AM fungal species with the exception of *A. spinosa*, a species that had very

low relative abundances. Our most abundant AM fungal species, *E. infequens,* exhibited host

phylogenetic influence on its genetic composition for both years, while *Cl. lammelosum*, *Cl.*

claroideum, Ce. pellucida, *R. fulgida*, and *F. mosseae* exhibited phylogenetic responses in

genetic composition in one year regardless of the analysis used. In addition, host plant life history

showed at least a marginal effect on AM fungal genetic composition for all species except *E.*

infrequens and *A. spinosa*. Previous work had shown that genetic composition of AM fungal

species can change rapidly with environment and host plant species [33,54,55]. These rapid

changes could be due to differential segregation of nuclei in multi-nucleate cells [32,33,38]. We

provide evidence that such genetic change can occur widely across AM fungal taxa and that the

host-specific effects on AM fungal genetic composition are structured by plant phylogeny.

We find host-specific changes in AM fungi composition generate feedback on plant

growth that is, on average, positive and ranges from significantly negative to strongly positive for

individual plant species pairs. This is consistent with previous studies [20,22,23]. Our study

provides the first attempt to generalize the patterns of AM fungal feedback, specifically testing

whether AM fungal feedback is structured by plant phylogeny or plant life history. We test these

patterns by testing correlations of AM fungal differentiation with growth impacts of these fungi

observed in previous growth assays with our AM fungal isolates [28,45]. In addition to this

correlational approach, we also measured AM fungal feedback effects by analyzing patterns

observed among feedbacks directly measured using an independent greenhouse assay [48].

While the correlation of plant and AM fungal fitness responses only considers the impacts of

changes in AM fungal species composition, the direct measurements of AM fungal feedbacks

integrates across changes in AM fungal species and genetic composition.

Both correlations of relative plant and fungal fitness (Fig 4) and patterns of AM fungal

feedbacks (Fig 6C) show weak responses to plant phylogenetic structure. That is, the AM fungi

with the highest growth rates on a particular group of phylogenetically-related plants do not

generally promote the growth of these phylogenetically-related plants better than other AM fungi.

Interestingly, the best fit of AM fungal feedbacks to plant phylogenetic relatedness was

curvilinear, with regions of phylogenetic distance over which plants tended to benefit more from

AM fungal communities cultivated by more distantly related host plants and regions where plants

tended to benefit more from AM fungal communities cultivated by more phylogenetically similar

host plants (Fig 6C). Given that this is the first test of such relationships, more work is necessary

in the plant-AM fungal systems as well as other host-symbiont interactions.

In contrast to plant phylogeny, AM fungal feedbacks are structured by plant life history.

AM fungal feedback, as measured by direct greenhouse assays, were consistently positive

between early and late successional plant species (Fig 6b). This result is consistent with

observations greater responsiveness of late successional species to mycorrhizal fungi [28,45],

and of positive mycorrhizal feedback observed in mesocosms [23] and field inoculations with

prairie AM fungi [31,56,57]. Positive mycorrhizal feedback could play an important role in plant

dynamics during succession and restoration, potentially accelerating turnover during succession,

or contribute to alternative stable states [19]. Mycorrhizal feedback between pairs of late

successional plant species were not generally different from zero, consistent with all late

successional species benefiting equivalently from changes in mycorrhizal composition, while

feedback between pairs of early successional species tended to be positive, suggesting that this

life-history category includes plants with substantial variation in relationships with AM fungi.

The change in AM fungal species composition was not sufficient to explain the positive

AM fungal feedback between early and late successional plant species (Fig. 5). In fact, across all

the data, the change in AM fungal species composition did not predict observed patterns of

mycorrhizal feedback (Fig. 7a). AM fungal species diversity also increased with late successional

plant species, and AM fungal diversity can influence host response [58] potentially generating

positive AM fungal feedbacks. However, this hypothesis was not supported by meta-analysis of

differential benefits to late successional plant species from AM fungal diversity (S8 Fig).

The observed patterns of mycorrhizal feedback appear to have resulted from changes in

genetic composition within individual AM fungal species. This hypothesis is directly supported as

the genetic change within the two most common and beneficial AM fungal species, *E. infrequens*

and *Cl. Lamellosum*, significantly predicted the strength of positive mycorrhizal feedback (Fig.

7b,c). Our results are consistent with previous observation of host-driven genetic changes within

AM fungal isolates altering AM fungal impacts on plant fitness [32,38], and of patterns consistent

with a role of genetic variation within AM fungal species generating mycorrhizal feedback [21].

Our work illustrates that rapid genetic change within AM fungal species can have functional

consequences, even exceeding those of changes in AM fungal species composition. Our result

highlights limitations to efforts to understand AM fungal ecology using patterns of species level

morphological traits [59,60] as we find that mycorrhizal feedback, the product of variation in

growth responses to hosts and impacts on hosts, meaningfully varied between genotypes within

AM fungal species rather than between AM fungal species.

We find both ecological (i.e. changes in relative abundance of AM fungal species) and

evolutionary (i.e changes in genetic composition within AM fungal species) dynamics operating

concurrently within the plant – AM fungal symbiosis. We find strong evidence that individual AM

fungal species, and genotypes within species, vary in their response to plant species, and that

patterns of AM fungal divergence were structured by both plant phylogeny and plant traits

governing life history variation. AM fungal composition generally improved host fitness, i.e.

mycorrhizal feedbacks were generally positive. However, there was substantial variation in

strength of mycorrhizal feedbacks, with variation in plant life history predicting stronger positive

feedbacks, while variation due to plant phylogeny did not. Moreover, evolutionary changes within

individual AM fungal species were the major driver of positive feedback rather than ecological

changes in AM fungal species composition. Given the evidence that AM fungal diversity and

composition can be critical to plant community and terrestrial ecosystem function [5–9], our work

suggests that improved understanding of both evolutionary and ecological dynamics of AM fungi

are necessary for optimal management of terrestrial ecosystems and projections of ecosystem

response to anthropogenic disturbance.

Materials and Methods

A common community of AM fungi made up of seven cultured isolates derived from tallgrass

prairie (*Claroideoglomus lamellosum, Claroideoglomus claroideum, Entrophospora infrequens,*

Funneliformis mosseae, Racocetra fulgida, Cetraspora pellucida, Acaulospora spinosa) was

distributed into replicate mesocosms. The mesocosms were planted in the greenhouse with one

of 38 grassland plant species from the prairie region chosen to provide a high degree of both

phylogenetic diversity as well as diversity in life history traits associated with plant successional

stage (S1 and S2 Figs). AM fungal composition in mesocosms was allowed to differentiate in

response to host species over two growing seasons (2017 and 2018) and the composition of the

AM fungal community was sampled after each growing season. In both years plants were grown

in the greenhouse for the entire growing season (March to September) and were harvested in the

fall. Plants were grown in two-gallon pots with four individuals of a species to a pot in the first

year. After the first year, half of the soil in each pot was retained as inocula for the same host

species and same replicate in year 2. Soil samples were taken after each growing season for

determination of AM fungal composition using next-gen Illumina™ sequencing. We assumed

over-representation of sequences as indicative of positive fitness impacts in plant treatments and

under-representation indicative of negative fitness impacts. In year 3 we conducted a greenhouse

feedback experiment where each soil community, trained by association with specific plant

species, was used as inocula for other plants in the experiment. These were grown with a single

host plant individual in 1-liter deep pots and inoculated with 100 ml of soil from the year 2

mesocosms. From the plant biomass data we were able to calculate feedback coefficients.

Meta-analysis Methods

The seven AM fungi isolates used in this experiment were used previously in three separate

studies testing their impact on early and late successional plant species: one reported in [45] and

two in [28]. We conducted a meta-analysis of these studies to obtain estimates of the growth

promotion for each isolate to plant species of different plant phylogenetic groups (grass, asters,

and legumes) and from different life histories/origin groups (early successional native, non-native,

and late successional native plants). We calculated the log mycorrhizal responsiveness (LRR)

using equation (1) where x_{inoc} and x_{ctrl} are mean plant biomass for the inoculated treatments

and sterile controls, respectively. The sampling variance ($\dot{\sigma}_2$) of LRR was estimated using

equation (2) where SD^2_{inoc} and SD^2_{ctrl} are the standard deviations and n_{inoc} and n_{ctrl} are the

sample sizes of the treatment and controls respectively (Hedges et al., 1999; Hoeksema et al.,

2018).

$$1) \quad LRR = ln\left[\frac{x_{inoc}}{x_{ctrl}}\right]$$

$$2) \quad \dot{\sigma}_2 = \frac{SD^2_{inoc}}{n_{inoc} \times \dot{x}^2_{inoc}} + \frac{SD^2_{ctrl}}{n_{ctrl} \times \dot{x}^2_{ctrl}}$$

The analysis was conducted using the metafor package in R [61]. Moderators were the

host plant life history, host plant phylogenetic group, the AM fungal isolate used, and the

interaction of the isolate used and plant life history and phylogenic group. Random effects

included individual experiments and plant host species. The model was estimated using the

restricted maximum-likelihood ("REML") method. Marginal means were estimated for the

interaction terms using the emmeans package [62]. The metafor model was converted to a

reference grid for compatibility with the emmeans package using the qdrg function.

We also tested whether plant life history predicted plant response to differences in AM

fungal diversity of inocula. Only the two studies in Cheeke et al. (2019) included multi-species

with single AM fungal species inoculations. Following the approach developed in Magnoli and

Bever (2023), we calculated LRR in this analysis as the ratio of multiple species inocula mean

plant biomass x_{multi} to the mean plant biomass averaged across all single inocula x_{mean}. We

also calculated the ratio of x_{multi} to the mean plant biomass of the single most beneficial AM

fungal inocula x_{most}. For each of these tests we constructed measures of variance by modifying

equation 2.

Bioinformatics Methods

To measure the changes in relative abundances of AM fungal species 0.2 g of soil was retained from each pot for Illumina™ sequencing. Extraction was performed on 311 samples using the Qiagen DNeasy Powersoil Kit. One sample of the 311 was lost during storage in both years. DNA was amplified using the LROR and FLR2 primers [63,64]. Volumes of 12.5μL of Phusion® Hot Start Flex DNA Polymerase master mix, 0.5μL of each primer, and 10.5μL of MilliporeSigma™ Direct-Q™ 3 type I water per sample were combined with 1μL of extracted DNA. PCR was conducted using one 5 minute cycle at 94.0 C, thirty-five cycles alternating between 94.0 C for 30 seconds, 48.0 C for 30 secs, 72.0C for 30 seconds and 72.0 C for 10 minutes.

Bioinformatics was conducted using the Dada2 and Qiime 2 pipelines as described in [40–42]. Primers were removed using Cutadapt. Using Dada2 forward reads were truncated to a length where 95% of base pair Phred quality scores (Q scores) had a greater than 99% base call accuracy, with forward reads truncated to a length of 190bp and reverse reads to a length of 140bp. Forward and reverse reads were merged using the "justconcatonate" flag in Dada2 and chimeras were removed. Taxonomy was assigned by building a phylogenetic tree of the amplicon sequence variants (ASVs) using RAxML together with an included library of known AM fungi species [40,41,43,65,66]. All AM fungi identified sequences were blasted against the reference library. Several ASVs that were placed inside AM fungi had unacceptably long branch lengths and were suspected of being non homologous gene regions that were erroneously being placed in the phylogeny [40]. Those ASVs were excluded from the analysis. All background soil was sterilized. Therefore, the ASVs that were not identified as one of the seven inoculated species were assumed likely to be legacy DNA from dead organisms in the background soil and were also not included in the statistical analysis. ASVs were assigned a species taxonomy if they clustered within known species sequences from the reference library.

Plant Phylogenetic Methods

484   A phylogeny was constructed for all plants in the study to determine phylogenetic distance.

485   Sequences were obtained for the rbcL gene for all 38 species of plants from the NCBI GenBank

486   database. A constraint tree was obtained using the Phylomatic "Tree of Trees" software using the

487   slik megatree [67,68]. Tree construction was conducted using RaXML [66].

Statistical Methods

ASV abundances for inoculated AM fungal species were centered log transformed and a

PerMANOVA analysis was conducted using the adonis function in the R package vegan [69]. The

predictors used were host plant life history, host plant phylogenetic group, and the interaction of

host plant life history with host plant phylogenetic group. Phylogenetic groups are characterized

as lilies (Amaryllidaceae and Commelinaceae), grasses (Poaceae), legumes (Fabacea),

milkweeds (Apocynaceae), mints (Lamiaceae and Plantaginaceae), and asters (Apiaceae and

Asteraceae).

496   Using a categorical factor, such as phylogenetic group, to analyze the effect of

phylogenetic relationships is a limited approach. We used a method to include phylogenetic

distances as a random effect to preserve the information included in the full phylogenetic tree.

When visualizing the phylogenetic relationships and AM fungal composition, there are hints at

relationships that would be difficult to test using more traditional statistical methods (Fig 2). A

phylogenetic generalized mixed model (PGLM) was fitted using the phyr R package [70,71]. Host

plant successional status, and the interaction between them were modeled as fixed effects. Block

and the log transformed sequences were included alongside phylogenetic distance and species

as random effects. As a univariate analysis each AM fungal species' ASVs were grouped, and

their abundances logit transformed. We also assessed Shannon's Diversity and the logit-

transformed proportion of the inoculated AM fungi over the total number of ASVs. The reason for

analyzing this proportion is that as the legacy background DNA would not be growing in response

to the treatments, the proportion of inoculated AM fungi could be used as a proxy for changes in

fungal density.

We purposely included full factorial tests of plant species and training plant species for

subsets of the 38 plant species. Each subset was treated as a block, and we attempted to

maximize comparisons across the phylogeny, while maintaining a relatively even number of both

early and late successional plants (S12 Fig). Within these sub-set pairs of plant species, we

estimated pairwise feedbacks that govern the influence of mycorrhizal fungal dynamics on plant-

plant interactions. Pairwise feedbacks are measured by the interaction coefficient (I), as derived

from the models of interguild frequency dependence and host-microbiome feedback. It is

calculated according to equation (3) [19,47]. Where $F_{A\alpha}$ is the fitness of plant A in soil α, $F_{A\beta}$ the

fitness of Plant A in soil β, $F_{B\alpha}$ the fitness of plant B in soil α, and $F_{B\beta}$ the fitness of plant B in soil

β . In this experiment we used plant biomass as our measure of plant fitness. If this coefficient is

positive then the plants are experiencing positive feedback, and if the coefficient is negative the

plants are experiencing negative feedback. We used a type III ANOVA analysis to test the effect

on the interaction coefficient from host plant and training plant life history and the interaction

between them.

$$3)\quad I = F_{A\alpha} - F_{A\beta} - F_{B\alpha} + F_{B\beta}$$

Dissimilarity between species compositions and genetic compositions within each AM

fungal species was calculated using Aitchison distances (Euclidean distances based on center

log transformed counts). For species composition all ASVs assigned to a single AM fungal

species were first summed. For genetic change dissimilarity, separate dissimilarity matrices were

calculated for all ASVs characterized as belonging to each AM fungal species. These

dissimilarities were used in the PerMANOVA analyses. The list of pairwise dissimilarities derived

from these matrices were used in regression analysis against feedback strength (interaction

coefficients)

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Supporting information

S1 Fig. Host Plant Characteristics. Plant species were selected to represent a phylogenetically diverse group of early and late successional plants. Plants were selected from 5 large phylogenetic groups; grasses (Poaceae), legumes (Fabaceae), asters (Asteraceae and Apiaceae), mints (Lamiaceae and Plantaginaceae), milkweeds (Apocynaceae and Asclepiadaceae), and lilies (Liliaceae and Commelinaceae).

S2 Table. Plant Species Used.

S3 Table. PerMANOVA Results for AM Fungi Species. To test for overall differences in AM fungal composition with plant life history and plant family, we conducted a PerMANOVA on centered log ratio (CLR) transformed counts of ASVs grouped by AM fungal species. This analysis reveals statistically significant effects on AM fungal species composition of plant phylogenetic group in both years ($p \leq 0.001$, $p \leq 0.001$). We also tested for overall differences in AM fungal composition with plant life history and plant family using the PerMANOVA approach. This analysis reveals statistically significant effects on AM fungal species composition of plant life history on AM fungal species composition in year two ($p < 0.001$)

S4 Table. PerMANOVA Results for AMF ASVs Variation within Species. As AM fungi are known to have substantial variability in rDNA composition within individual multinucleate cells, we also test for changes in ASV composition within individual AM fungal species using a PerMANOVA approach. For E. infrequens and Cl. claroideum we find evidence of change in genetic composition with plant phylogenetic group in both year one ($p \leq 0.001$, $p \leq 0.01$) and year two ($p \leq 0.1$, 0.01). Genetic composition of Cl. lamellosum and Ce. pellucida showed significant responses of plant phylogenetic group in year 1 ($p \leq 0.001$, $p \leq 0.001$), while genetic composition of F. mosseae and R. Fulgida had significant effects in year 2 ($p \leq 0.01$, $p \leq 0.001$). The genetic

composition of F. mosseae, Cl. claroidium, and R. fulgida showed an effect of host plant life

history on intraspecies ASV variation in year 2 (p<0.001, p<0.01, p<0.05).

S5 Table. PGLMM Results for AM Fungi Species. Phylogenetic generalized linear mixed model

(PGLMM) results for relative proportions of each AM fungal species (combined ASV counts), as

well as Shannon Diversity and Logit transformed density estimates.

S6 Fig. Marginal Means of Relative Abundance by Plant Life History. These are the

estimated marginal means of AM fungal relative abundances when host plants were early or late

successional. AM fungal species are arranged top to bottom in order of most to least beneficial.

S7 Fig. Meta-Analysis Results. The marginal means for the log response ratio's (LRT) of each of

the seven AM fungal species used in this study. The LRT is the natural log of the ratio between

how large plant species grew with AM fungal inoculation versus how they grew in a sterile control.

These are derived from a meta-analysis of three previous experiments using these same

cultures. (A) shows late successional plant benefits when grown in association with E. infrequens,

Cl. lamellosum, F. mosseae, and Cl. claroideum. (B) shows the marginal means for the log

response ratio's (LRT) of each of the seven AM fungal species used in this study by host plant

phylogenetic group. Asteraceae experienced significantly greater growth than Poaceae in

association with all Claroideoglomus species (including E. infrequens). We also saw significant

differential greater growth in Liliaceae over Poaceae as well as Liliaceae over Asteraceae in

several AM fungal species.

S8 Fig. LRR by Life History of AM Fungal Mixtures to Single Simbiont. These are the log

response ratios of the mean plant biomass for plants inoculated with a mixture of AM fungi to the

mean plant biomass representative of the average single symbiont and to the most effective

single symbiont respectively. Each panel breaks our results depending on if the host plant was an

early or late successional.

S9 Fig. Histogram of mycorrhizal feedback measured as pairwise interaction coefficients. This

shows counts of all paired comparisons with both the median and mean being significantly

positive (p = 0.003, p≤ 0.001).

S10 Fig: Feedbacks by Plant Phylogenetic Group. Mycorrhizal feedback, as measured by the

pairwise interaction coefficient, compared across phylogenetic group pairings. Feedback between

individual pairs of plant species are indicated with dots, with pairwise feedback that was

significantly different from zero indicated in black. We note that pairwise mycorrhizal feedbacks

ranged from significantly negative to significantly positive. On average, we observed significantly

positive mycorrhizal feedback between two legume species (p≤0.01) and significant negative

mycorrhizal feedback between aster and grass species (p≤0.05).

S11 Fig: Mycorrhizal Feedback Strength Predicted by Genetic Dissimilarity of AM fungi for

All AM fungal Species

Regressions of strength of pairwise feedback against measures of AM fungal genetic

dissimilarity. Pairwise feedback was significantly predicted by genetic dissimilarity of two AM

fungal species, *E. infrequens* (p<0.001) and *Cl. lamellosum* (p<0.001).

S12 Fig. Feedback Experimental Design. The experimental design for the feedback experiment

included 5 subset groups of plants where all plant pairings were made in a fully factorial design.

Each group also included early and late successional plants. When these pairings are arranged

phylogenetically it becomes clearer that we also have a good representation of species pairs

across the plant phylogeny. This allows us to test pairwise feedbacks, host plant characteristics,

and plant phylogeny effects in a single experiment.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7