1 A plant biodiversity effect resolved to a single genetic locus

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13 Summary

14 Despite extensive evidence that biodiversity promotes plant community productivity, progress
15 towards understanding the mechanistic basis of this effect remains slow, impeding the development
16 of predictive ecological theory and agricultural applications. Here, we analysed non-additive
17 interactions between genetically divergent Arabidopsis accessions in experimental plant
18 communities. By combining methods from ecology and genetics, we identified a major effect locus
19 at which allelic differences between individuals increases above-ground productivity of
20 communities. In experiments with near-isogenic lines, we show that this diversity effect acts
21 independently of other genomic regions and can be resolved to a single region representing less
22 than 0.3% of the genome. Using plant-soil-feedback experiments, we also demonstrate that allelic
23 diversity causes genotype-specific soil legacy responses in a consecutive growing period, even after
24 the original community has disappeared. Our work thus suggests that positive diversity effects can
25 be linked to single Mendelian factors, and that a range of complex community properties can have a

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simple cause. This may pave the way to a better understanding of diversity effects, and to novel breeding strategies, focussing on phenotypic properties that manifest themselves beyond isolated individuals, i.e. at a higher level of biological organisation.

Main Text

More than two decades of plant ecological research and the publication of hundreds of studies have firmly established that positive biodiversity effects, in particular on community yield, are the rule rather than exception and are often substantial^{1,2}. These positive effects of biological diversity on community functioning have been explained by larger community-level resource use promoted by niche complementarity, facilitation, or by reduced negative density-dependent effects of enemies³⁻⁵. Yet our understanding of the particular driving mechanisms remains poor, for several reasons. First, diversity effects are emergent properties that only manifest in comparisons of communities differing in diversity⁶. Second, diversity effects, and the mechanisms that drive these, may change with environmental conditions^{7,8}. Third, while there is no doubt that functional trait differences underly biodiversity effects⁹, trait-based analyses remain to some degree phenomenological because evolutionary forces have led to the formation of trait syndromes, i.e. to sets of highly correlated traits that reflect fundamental trade-offs between ecological strategies^{10,11}. The observed variation in traits thus is confounded with evolutionary history¹², and it remains almost impossible to distinguish the traits that are true drivers of biodiversity effects from traits that are merely correlated. It therefore remains difficult to develop predictive ecological theory and apply it, for example, in breeding and agriculture.

Most biodiversity research to date has focused on variation among species, but experimental¹³, theoretical¹⁴, and observational¹⁵ studies have shown that positive diversity effects on productivity also occur at levels of organization above (e.g. landscape level) and below species (e.g. genotype level). A substantial part of the trait variation apparent in plant communities occurs within species¹⁶,

and increased intra-specific variation can have similar effects as inter-specific trait variation in low-diversity systems^{13,17,18}. Despite qualitative differences, there may therefore be commonalities of trait variation within and between species with respect to effects and mechanisms, indicating that studies at the genotype level may provide some insights into effects of species-level variation and vice versa. A methodological advantage of intra-specific biodiversity studies is that genetic methods can circumvent some of the problems encountered in species-level diversity studies. Specifically, crosses between genotypes allow trait variation among individuals to be re-arranged¹⁹ without confounding with population structure or differentiation into ecological strategies. However, genetic approaches are normally used to study properties of individuals rather than emergent properties of communities. Here, we demonstrate in a case study how the genetic approach can be harnessed to identify the genetic underpinnings of biodiversity effects.

Results

Using model plant communities (Fig. 1a), we screened ten pair-wise mixtures of genetically divergent natural accessions of *Arabidopsis thaliana* for which mapping populations are publicly available (Methods). Mixture communities of the two genetically divergent accessions Bayreuth (Bay) and Shadhara (Sha) reproducibly exhibited positive net biodiversity effects, i.e. mixtures produced a higher community-level shoot biomass than the average of their monocultures. This depended on soil conditions, with effects that were essentially absent on peat-rich soil but grew to an overyielding of 16% with increasing amounts of sand in the substrate (sand content $\times$ diversity: $F_{1,160} = 4.57$, ANOVA $P < 0.05$; Fig. 1b and Supplementary Figure 1a). Analysis by additive partitioning⁶ revealed that these community-level biodiversity effects were due to complementarity rather than selection effects (sand content $\times$ complementarity effect, $F_{1,77} = 7.21$, ANOVA $P < 0.01$; Supplementary Figure 1b). Specifically, in our study both accessions benefited from growing in mixed communities.

76 To analyse the genetic basis of the positive diversity effect in mixed Bay-Sha communities, we
77 performed quantitative trait locus (QTL) mapping using publicly available recombinant inbred lines
78 (RILs). These RILs are largely homozygous (Fig. 1c) and have been derived from a cross between
79 the Bay and Sha accessions, followed by multiple subsequent rounds of selfing²⁰. For efficient
80 mapping, we capitalized on a so called competition diallel. Traditional diallel designs systematically
81 cross sets of parental lines realizing all possible combinations and are used in breeding to determine
82 the genetic basis of traits; specifically, diallel analysis partitions the trait variation of crosses into
83 additive contributions²¹ of parental lines (general combining abilities; GCA) and cross-specific
84 effects (specific combining abilities; SCA), with the latter interpreted as consequences of
85 dominance or epistasis. By substituting individuals and crosses with communities and mixtures, the
86 principle of diallels can be applied to the analyses of biodiversity effects in communities²², which
87 we did here (Fig. 1c, d). In this context, the distinction between maternal and paternal effects ceases
88 to apply, simplifying the design to a half-diallel. SCAs then quantify the deviations of mixture
89 yields from expectations based on additive average contributions of the two genotypes. We
90 combined 18 RILs and the two parental accessions Bay and Sha in a diallel, in four replicate blocks,
91 on sand-rich soil. We detected significant positive genotype diversity effects on above-ground
92 biomass production (Fig. 2a, $F_{1,189} = 10.47$, $P < 0.01$), indicating that the traits that promote
93 biodiversity effects are heritable. As expected, a large proportion of the variation in SCA remained
94 unexplained. We therefore tested for allelic diversity effects on SCAs at 69 marker positions. Both a
95 marker regression technique and a standard QTL procedure revealed a major effect locus on the
96 lower arm of chromosome four where allelic diversity at the community level resulted in higher
97 SCAs (Fig. 2b and Supplementary Figure 2).

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100 With 18 recombinant lines, mapping resolution was limited and other effect loci or genetic
101 interactions among loci may have gone unnoticed. We thus aimed at resolving the allelic diversity
102 effect further to a single Mendelian factor. For this, we isolated a family of 19 near isogenic lines
103 (NILs) that genetically varied only on the lower arm of chromosome 4, and in which we selected
104 and inferred further recombination events by molecular markers and whole-genome re-sequencing
105 (Fig. 3a,b, Supplementary Figure 3). With these NILs, we performed a second diallel experiment,
106 replicated once on peat-rich soil where we expected no diversity effects and once on sand-rich soil
107 where we expected positive diversity effects. Indeed, no locus was associated with positive allelic
108 diversity effects on above-ground biomass on peat-rich soil (Fig. 3c). In contrast, on sand-rich soil
109 we found a positive allelic diversity effects at a single locus (overyielding of 4.5%, Fig. 3d, $P <$
110 0.01), represented by a region of approx. 310 kb in size (termed locus Chr4@16.92: between 16.92
111 to 17.23 Mb). The overyielding of allelic mixtures of otherwise isogenic lines was transgressive:
112 communities that contained individuals carrying different alleles at locus Chr4@16.92 in the NIL
113 diallel produced more biomass than the most productive mono-allelic community ($t = 2.32$; $P =$
114 0.02), suggesting some form of functional complementarity between genotypes: relating to, without
115 reference to a specific mechanisms at play, a phenomenon of two alleles positively interacting with
116 each other when distributed *amongst* homozygous individuals of a community. Using structural
117 equation models, we tested whether these allelic diversity effects were related to observed
118 genotypic differences in shoot phenology or disease symptoms, but this was not the case
119 (Supplementary Figure 4). Interestingly, however, this analysis showed that allelic diversity already
120 manifested itself in increased community-level leaf cover early in the experient, when plants just
121 started to produce flowering bolts (Supplementary Figure 4), indicating that the effect persisted
122 through time. The allelic diversity effect we found, could, in principle, strictly depend on the
123 genetic background. To rule out this possibility, we compared monocultures and mixtures of a
124 second, independent pair of near-isogenic lines on both peat-rich or sand-rich soil (Supplementary

Figure 5). Again, we found a significant allelic diversity effect on above-ground biomass that depended on soil ($F_{1,164} = 4.17$, ANOVA $P=0.04$ for soil $\times$ allelic diversity; 5.4% net overyielding on sand), and a significant effect of soil on the complementarity effect ($F_{1,82}=4.8$, $P=0.03$).

In conclusion, two consecutive diallel experiments using only 37 recombinant lines were sufficient to resolve a plant biodiversity effect to a genomic region representing ~2.5% of the Arabidopsis genome (containing approx. 86 genes), which emphasizes the extreme efficiency of our approach. Our work suggests that biodiversity effects between genotypes can be dissected into discrete genetic elements that have major additive contributions.

There is growing evidence that productivity responses in plant biodiversity experiments^{4,5,23,24} and their increase through time²⁵ are related to diversity-dependent soil conditioning. To test whether allelic diversity causes effects through soil conditioning also in our study, we performed soil feedback experiments. Our objectives were twofold: first, we were interested whether there were general effects of allelic diversity on soil quality; second, we aimed to test whether allelic interactions occurred among plants that did not grow simultaneously, i.e. whether allelic effects were mediated through time by soil legacy. We assessed soil conditioning by growing indicator plants (“phytometers”²⁵) on soil collected from both diallel experiments²⁶ when these were harvested (Fig. 1d and Supplementary Discussion). The phytometers were the two parental accessions Bay or Sha for the RIL diallel, and two near-isogenic lines in the NIL diallel.

We indeed found phytometer-specific soil legacy responses that depended on the allelic diversity of the communities that had conditioned the soils in the preceeding growing period (Fig. 4; RIL diallel: diversity at marker MSAT4.9 $\times$ phytometer; $F_{1,166} = 6.48$; ANOVA $P = 0.012$; NIL diallel: diversity at locus Chr4@16.92 $\times$ phytometer; $F_{1,168} = 5.61$; $P = 0.02$; Supplementary Table 1; Supplementary Figure 6). These phytometer-specific responses to soil legacy were independent of differences in previous community productivity and associated resource depletion (the effects

remained statistically significant and comparable in size when first adjusting for community biomass in linear models). However, the effects differed between phytometers and experiments, i.e. they depended on environmental or genetic context (Supplementary Discussion). This is not surprising in light of the complex mechanisms involved. Developing a full understanding of the biological mechanisms at play will thus require further experiments, including soil analyses. Nonetheless, these experiments demonstrate that allelic differences at a single QTL cause interactions between individuals within a community and also, mediated by a soil-borne factor, through time. The latter can be perceived as an “extended phenotype” sensu Dawkins²⁷, the expression of which depends on interactions between group members. We were intrigued to find that we could, in principle, have genetically mapped the allelic diversity effect solely through its soil legacy; in other words, by QTL mapping this extended phenotypic property of allelic mixtures (Supplementary Figure 6e,f; Supplementary Discussion).

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163 Discussion

Our study systematically resolves a biodiversity effect, once identified in a specific set of interacting plants and environmental context, to between-individual allelic differences in a single chromosomal region. So far, complex emergent properties of plant communities did not necessarily seem genetically tractable, especially since quantitative traits of individuals often are polygenic²⁸ if not omnigenic in nature²⁹. A single case study obviously is limited with respect to generalizations, but we consider it possible that in many cases between-individual allelic complementarity and resulting biodiversity effects might instead have a relatively simple genetic architecture – a feature not uncommon for other types of biotic interactions³⁰. Our genetic approach is extensible to the study of interactions among other genotype combinations, and, with modifications, among species, and could thus lead to fundamental new insights into the traits and genetic underpinnings of biodiversity effects in more natural systems. Equally importantly, the genetic tractability of such

175 effects may allow efficient breeding of genotype mixtures that support increased yields through
 176 some form of functional complementarity while maintaining low variation in economically relevant
 177 traits. Biodiversity effects have received relatively little attention in breeding and conventional
 178 agriculture, with the notable exception of crop rotation³¹ and intercropping of cultivars and
 179 species^{32–34}. Instead, sustaining a growing global human population heavily depends on increasing
 180 nutrient inputs to crop production systems³⁵, on breeding of single genotypes for monoculture
 181 performance³⁶, and on the use of within-individual diversity effects termed heterosis³⁷. Our
 182 approach might help bypass constraints imposed on the performance of single genotypes, by
 183 shifting breeding efforts from the individual to the system level³⁸.

184

185 **Methods**

186 Germplasm

187 The Shadhara and Bayreuth accessions were kindly provided by Nuno Pires (University of Zurich)
 188 and had originally been obtained from the Nottingham Arabidopsis stock center (NASC). We
 189 selected these two genotypes following an initial screen of ten pairs of accessions, because they
 190 exhibited an above-average but not extreme biodiversity effect when grown together on sand-rich
 191 soil, and because a high-quality and frequently used RIL population is publicly available²⁰. It also
 192 was interesting that the biodiversity effect vanished on peat-rich soil. The 18 RILs (representing the
 193 “RIL-minimal set” and line 33RV191 used to generate NILs (all contained in the core-pop set of
 194 165 lines) were ordered from the Versailles Arabidopsis stock center
 195 (<http://publiclines.versailles.inra.fr>) and propagated in a growth chamber. A Bay×Sha RIL
 196 (33RV191) was confirmed to be heterozygous at two PCR marker positions on chromosome 4
 197 (Table S2). Upon selfing of this line, the two NILs 33RV191-Sha and 33RV191-Bay were isolated
 198 (referred to as NIL-Bay or NIL-Sha hereafter), and their genomes were re-sequenced as described
 199 below. Using the same procedure, an independent pair of near-isogenic lines was derived upon

200 selfing the Bay×Sha RIL 33RV77, giving rise to NILs 33RV77-Sha and 33RV77-Bay. Furthermore,
 201 after selfing of another single heterozygous F_{10} individual of line 33RV191, we screened 160
 202 offspring for recombination between the ShaBa5, ShaBa6 and ShaBa8 markers on chromosome
 203 four. Upon selfing of 23 putative recombinant offspring, we isolated 19 homozygous recombinant
 204 lines for which we confirmed a recombination event in the region by PCR. We then performed
 205 whole-genome re-sequencing to confirm the isogenic background and to infer recombination
 206 breakpoints for this heterogeneous inbred family (referred to as NILs throughout the text) as
 207 described below.

208

209 Soils and growth conditions

210 Soils consisted of different mixtures of a peat and nutrient rich soil (Einheitserde ED73; pH ~5.8, N
 211 250 mg L⁻¹; P₂O₅ 300 mg L⁻¹; 75% organic matter content; Gebrüder Patzer GmbH, Sinntal-Jossa,
 212 Germany) and finely grained quartz sand. Pot for all mixture experiments were 7×7×8 cm in size.
 213 The experiment using the parental lines Bay and Sha was replicated on a soil quality gradient with
 214 sand contents of 0%, 40%, 75% and 80%, which resulted in a near-linear decrease of pot-
 215 productivity from the highest to lowest ED73 content, likely through a dilution of soil nutrients
 216 (Fig. S1). For the rough-mapping of the diversity effect using RILs, we used a mixture of 80% sand
 217 and 20% ED73. For the fine-mapping diallel using NILs, we used either a 80%:20% or a 20%:80%
 218 sand:ED73 mixture.

219 Seeds were sown directly onto soils (approx. 10 seeds per position, 4 positions per pot, Fig. 1a).
 220 The pots were placed in growth chambers or greenhouse compartments and covered with plastic
 221 lids to maintain a high humidity for germination and initial seedling establishment. Additional light
 222 was provided if necessary, achieving a photoperiod of 14–16 hours. Day-time and night-time
 223 temperatures were maintained around 20–25 °C and 16–20 °C, respectively. Seedlings were thinned
 224 continuously until a single healthy seedling remained per position.

225 Once seedlings were established, the pots were placed in a greenhouse compartment with automated
 226 watering (every 2 days). In summer 2015, daytime temperatures were extremely high, and the first
 227 block of the RIL diallel was therefore grown in a growth chamber with full climate control (8 h
 228 night/16 h day; 60% humidity; 18/23°C night/day temperature). The second block was grown in the
 229 growth chamber for a month before it was re-located to the regular greenhouse compartment.

230 Pots that did not contain all four originally planted individuals were discarded. Plants were
 231 harvested 43–51 days after sowing, with the specific harvest date determined by the occurrence of
 232 approx. 5–10 dehiscent siliques on the earliest flowering genotypes within a block.

233 After the diallels were harvested, soil feedback trials were established by dividing the soil of a pot
 234 into two smaller pots 5.5×5.5×6.0 cm in size. The respective phytometers (Bay or Sha for the RIL
 235 diallel, 33RV191-Sha or 33RV191-Bay for the NIL diallel) were sown directly onto the soil. Again,
 236 seeds were oversown and seedlings thinned continuously until a single healthy individual remained.

237 Phytometer experiments were harvested either 36 days after sowing (peat-rich soil remaining after
 238 the NIL diallel, harvested early because plant roots started to grow out of the pots) or 49–58 days
 239 after sowing (sand-rich soil, each block was harvested on a single day). For all experiments, the
 240 position of the individual pots was randomized across trays during seedling establishment, and
 241 across watering tables after seedling establishment. Throughout the experiment, pots were re-
 242 positioned randomly within trays and tables every 7–10 days. Pots were watered *ad libitum*, and in
 243 case of high population densities of dark-winged fungus gnats, the systemic insecticide ActaraG
 244 (Syngenta Agro AG) was applied according to the manufacturers recommendation. After
 245 harvesting, plant biomass was dried at 65°C for at least three days before weighing. We determined
 246 early rosette cover in the NIL diallel by photographing pots 27 days after sowing and estimating the
 247 horizontally projected community-level rosette area using the Easy Leaf Area software³⁹. We
 248 further recorded the occurrence of leaf disease symptoms (wilting, blotching, or early senescence)
 249 30 days after sowing. As a proxy for flowering time in the NIL diallel, we measured flowering bolt

height of all plants 35 days after sowing; by then, >98% of the individuals had a flowering bolt longer than 0.5 cm). The NIL diallel was harvested 50 days after sowing.

Experimental designs

To test the soil-dependency of biodiversity effects in mixed Shadhara-Bayreuth communities, four soil substrates varying in sand content were prepared as described above. We then grew 12 replicate monocultures of each accession plus 24 replicate mixtures per soil type (total of $48 \times 4 = 192$ pots).

The RIL diallel consisted of a half diallel replicated in four blocks. All pair-wise RIL combinations were realized once per block except for RIL monocultures which were replicated twice. For the follow-up soil feedback experiment, we re-used soil from only the first two blocks of the diallel. We re-mixed the soil of each single pot after harvesting the plants, and re-distributed it into two smaller plots that were sown with either a Shadhara or Bayreuth parental genotype that served as phytometers.

The NIL diallel used for fine-mapping was realized in a single block that contained all pair-wise combinations of the 19 NILs including monocultures. The subsequent soil feedback part of the experiment was realized as described for the RIL diallel, using either 33RV191-Bay or 33RV191-Sha genotypes as phytometers. To test if the allelic diversity effect was strictly dependent on genetic background, we grew 21 replicate monocultures of each NIL 33RV77-Bay or 33RV77-Sha, plus 42 replicate mixtures, on either peat-rich (80% ED73, 20% sand) or sand-rich (20% ED73, 80% sand) soil (total of $42 \times 2 \times 2 = 168$ pots).

Genotyping and line re-sequencing

PCR-based genotyping assays (Table S2) were developed based on deletions in the Sha genome as predicted by the Polymorph tool (<http://polymorph.weigelworld.org>)⁴⁰.

274 Barcoded libraries for genome re-sequencing were prepared using the Illumina Nextera DNA
 275 Library Prep Kit (FC-121-1031, Illumina Inc. San Diego, CA) in combination with the Nextera
 276 Index Kit (96 indices, FC-121-1012) and pair-end sequenced on an Illumina HiSeq 2500 (2x150 bp,
 277 rapid run). The clustering and sequencing were performed at the Functional Genomics Center
 278 Zurich. Sequences were aligned to the Arabidopsis genome (Col-0 genome, TAIR version 10) using
 279 BWA⁴¹, aligned read sorting and variant calling were performed using samtools⁴². Aligned genomic
 280 sequences of the parental accessions Bay-0 and Sha were downloaded from the 1001 genomes
 281 project data center (<http://1001genomes.org>). The VCF-file produced by the samtools software was
 282 loaded into the R Statistical Software⁴³, where the subsequent analyses were performed: variant
 283 calls were filtered (for differences in genotype calls between the Sha and Bay genomes, quality of
 284 variant calls, population-level minimal minor allele frequency 0.2; maximum heterozygosity 0.2).
 285 Inference of genotype calls at polymorphic sites was performed as described previously⁴⁴ and
 286 inference of parental alleles was improved using functionality implemented in the MPR package⁴⁴.
 287 Genotype reconstruction was then performed in R using a simple hidden Markov model as
 288 implemented in the R package HMM, with hidden state starting probabilities (Bay, Het or Sha) all
 289 set to 1/3, and transition probabilities from one state to itself set to 0.99998 and to the other two
 290 states set to 0.00001 each. Emission probabilities of genotype calls given a state, e.g. Bay, were set
 291 to 0.35, 0.25, 0.25, 0.15 for genotypes calls Bay, Het, Sha or missing, etc.

292

293 Statistical analyses

294 We analyzed data from the diallel experiments using linear mixed models summarized by analysis
 295 of variance (ANOVA). The model terms included, in this order, the general combining abilities
 296 (GCA) of genotypes (a factor with 20 levels in the RIL diallel and 19 levels in the NIL diallel), the
 297 genotype diversity in the pot (GD, 1 or 2 genotypes), the allele identity in the genotype
 298 monocultures (A, Sha or Bay), the allelic diversity in the genotype mixtures (AD, 1 [Sha/Sha or

299 Bay/Bay] or 2 [Sha/Bay]), and the genotype composition planted in the pot (comp). The factor GCA
 300 was created by superimposing the model matrices for factors coding for the first and second
 301 genotype (factors with 20 and 19 levels for RIL and NIL diallels, respectively). The significance of
 302 GD, A, and AD were determined using F-tests with comp as error term (denominator). A and AD
 303 were encoded in such a way that these contrasts applied only to genotype monocultures and
 304 mixtures, respectively. Technically, this was achieved by including a third level in the factor that did
 305 not vary in the other group. Fitting A and AD after GD therefore only explained variance in these
 306 subsets. The diallel model was extended by additional terms and the corresponding interactions
 307 when these applied; specifically, the RIL diallel included a block effect. The NIL diallel included
 308 terms for soil type, and interactions of all the terms above with soil type (for example, soil×AD was
 309 tested using soil×comp as error term). The soil feedback experiments included further interactions
 310 with phytometer (RIL and NIL diallel), and phytometer×soil (NIL diallel). Effects of pot biomass in
 311 the diallel (diallel biomass and diallel biomass × soil) were accounted for in these linear models, and
 312 data were square-root transformed to obtain normally distributed residuals.
 313 Specific combining abilities for mapping were calculated directly, within blocks, by solving the
 314 linear model $m = X \text{ GCA} + \text{SCA}$ where X is the design matrix describing the genotype composition
 315 of a pot. Monoculture SCAs were also determined but not used for QTL mapping of allelic diversity
 316 within RIL mixtures. In the RIL diallel, the SCAs of each genotype composition was first calculated
 317 per block and then aggregated over all blocks using least-square estimates. Marker regression was
 318 performed contrasting SCAs of mono-allelic RIL mixtures (“BB” and “SS” compositions) with
 319 mixed-allelic mixtures (“BS” compositions) using the glht-function provided by the multcomp
 320 package⁴³. QTL mapping was also performed using the R/qlt package and interval mapping
 321 (scanone-function), with both mono-allelic compositions at a given locus re-coded as to the same
 322 level (“mono-allelic”) and compared against mixed-allelic compositions. Genome-wide significance
 323 was assessed by resampling (n=5000).

324 To test the relationships of allelic diversity effects on SCAs with measured traits, we developed
 325 multip-group (sand-rich and peat-rich soil) structural equation models using lavaan
 326 (<http://lavaan.ugent.be>). Allelic diversity at Chr4@16.92 was included as exogenous variable;
 327 endogeneous variables were two metrics of trait variation among genotypes (which are possible
 328 indicators of complementarity), and early community-level projected leaf area (see above). Trait
 329 variation was quantified as difference among bolt length of the genotypes (square-root-
 330 transformed), and as difference in the occurrence of leaf disease symptoms (a binary variable).
 331 Starting with a near-saturated model, the modelled paths were simplified in an educated way until a
 332 minimal model was found for which the model-implied and observed covariance structure among
 333 variables did not differ significantly (X^2 -test).

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423

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435 **Author contributions**

436 S.E.W. conceptualized and designed the research (with input from P.A.N.) and performed the
437 experiments. Both authors performed the analyses and wrote the manuscript. Both authors revised
438 and approved the final version of the manuscript.

440 **Data availability**

441 The datasets described in the paper and a functional annotation of the 86 genes within the fine-
442 mapped diversity QTL are available through the Zenodo data repository
443 (DOI:10.5281/zenodo.1254563). Sequencing data are deposited in the NCBI Short-Read Archive
444 (accession SRP149077).

445 Analysis scripts are available from the authors upon request.

447 **Competing interests**

448 The authors declare no competing financial interests.

450 **Figures**

451 **Figure 1 | Combining ecological concepts and genetic methods.** **a**, Pot systems used to study diversity
452 effects in pair-wise genotype mixtures. The inset shows a Recombinant Inbred Line (RIL) monoculture
453 (left) and mixture (right). **b**, Net diversity effects in Bay-Sha mixtures along a peat-sand substrate
454 gradient. Error bars denote standard errors of means (s.e.m.). n = 164 pots **c**, Outline of the diallel
455 design and the genotypes used throughout this paper. 18 RILs and the two parental accession, or 19

456 near-isogenic lines (NILs) were each placed in competition with each other, allowing to assess i) effects
 457 of genotypic mixture (i.e. diagonal vs off-diagonal), or ii) effects of allelic mixture at a given locus
 458 across all genotype mixtures (i.e. comparing SS and BB vs. SB) on pot productivity. **d**, Outline of the
 459 experimental procedure used in this work. Colored labels indicate measured variables. GCA = general
 460 combining ability; SCA = specific combining ability.

463 **Figure 2 | Allelic diversity at a major effect locus increases community productivity. a**, Pot-level
 464 productivity in dependence of community type (mix = RIL mixtures vs mono = RIL monocultures),
 465 showing positive genotype mixture effects in the diallel and on sand-rich soil (values aggregated across
 466 four blocks, n = 871 pots / 210 compositions) **b**, Quantitative trait locus interval mapping of allelic
 467 diversity effects on specific combining ability (SCA). Vertical lines denote 10% and 5% genome-wide
 468 significance levels. The inset shows estimated SCA ($\pm$ s.e.m.) across genotype mixtures that exhibit
 469 different allelic compositions at marker MSAT4.9 on chromosome four. LOD: logarithm of the odd.

471 **Figure 3 | Resolving soil $\times$ allelic diversity interactions to a single Mendelian factor.** **a**, Re-
472 sequencing of near-isogenic lines (NILs) differing only on lower arm of chromosome four for fine-
473 mapping. Shown are genotype calls at all polymorphic sites across the genome (B = homozygous for the
474 Bay allele, het = heterozygous, S = Sha allele) in either NIL r10 (blue, top left) or NIL r96 (red, top
475 right), as well as an overlay of the two line's genotype calls (bottom). **b**, Reconstructed genotypes
476 across chromosome four of the 19 NILs used for fine-mapping. Each bar represents a single NIL. **c**, **d**,
477 Map of allelic diversity effects across chromosome four, on either peat-rich soil (c), or sand-rich soil
478 (d). The widths of the bars indicate the size of the regions in which no recombination events were

479 inferred across the whole population. Inset in (d) shows the mean $\pm$ s.e.m. of SCAs across allelic
 480 compositions at the diversity effect QTL.
 481

483 **Figure 4 | Allelic diversity effects persist across a generation through their soil legacy.** **a**, Scheme of
 484 the genotype-combinations used for either the recombinant inbred lines (RILs) vs. near-isogenic lines
 485 (NILs) diallels (top), and the phytometer genotypes used in the soil-feedback phase (bottom). **b**,
 486 phytometer performance (Bay or Sha, mean $\pm$ s.e.m.) on legacy soil derived from RIL mixtures with
 487 different allelic compositions at marker MSAT4.9. **c**, phytometer performance (NIL-Bay or NIL-Sha,
 488 mean $\pm$ s.e.m.) on legacy soil derived from NIL mixtures with different allelic compositions at locus
 489 Chr4@16.92 on either sand-rich (left) or peat-rich (right) soil. Values were square-root transformed for
 490 analyses, n = 851 and 720 pots for RIL and NIL diallels, respectively.

492 Supplementary Tables

493 Supplementary Table 1 | Legacy effects of soils conditioned in RIL and NIL diallel

494 **experiments.** Effects were quantified using two phytometers (factor ‘phy’; Sha and Bay accessions
495 in RIL diallel, and near-isogenic lines bearing Sha and Bay allele at putative effect locus in NIL
496 diallel). The NIL diallel additionally was replicated on substrates differing in sand content (factor
497 ‘soil’). The term ‘GCA’ (general combining abilities) indicates average genotype-specific soil
498 conditioning effects on phytometer yields. ‘SCA’ (specific combining abilities) captures deviations
499 in yield from additive predictions made using GCAs. Within SCA, the following contrasts were
500 tested: GD: Genotype diversity, i.e. whether genotype monocultures differed in feedback effects
501 from two-genotype mixtures; A: allele-specific differences at marker MSAT4.9 (RIL diallel) and
502 Chr4@16.92 (NIL diallel) within genotype monocultures; AD: allele-diversity effects within
503 genotype mixtures. df and ddf indicate nominator and denominator degrees of freedom of
504 corresponding F-tests. *** P<0.001; ** P<0.01; * P<0.05; (*) P<0.1; n.s. not significant.

Terms and contrasts	RIL diallel			NIL diallel		
	df	Denominator: ddf	Signif.	df	Denominator: ddf	Signif.
GCA	18	comp: 167	(*)	18	comp: 168	n.s.
SCA						
GD	1	comp: 167	(*)	1	comp: 168	n.s.
A	1	comp: 167	n.s.	1	comp: 168	n.s.
AD	1	comp: 167	n.s.	1	comp: 168	n.s.
Phy × GCA	18	phy × comp: 166	n.s.	18	phy × comp: 168	*
Phy × SCA						
Phy × GD	1	phy × comp: 166	n.s.	1	phy × comp: 168	n.s.
Phy × A	1	phy × comp: 166	n.s.	1	phy × comp: 168	n.s.
Phy × AD	1	phy × comp: 166	**	1	phy × comp: 168	*
Soil × GCA				18	soil × comp: 150	n.s.
Soil × SCA						
Soil × GD				1	soil × comp: 150	n.s.
Soil × A				1	soil × comp: 150	n.s.
Soil × AD				1	soil × comp: 150	n.s.
		does not apply				
Phy × Soil × GCA				18	phy × soil × comp: 146	n.s.
Phy × Soil × SCA						
Phy × Soil × GD				1	phy × soil × comp: 146	***
Phy × Soil × A				1	phy × soil × comp: 146	n.s.
Phy × Soil × AD				1	phy × soil × comp: 146	n.s.

507 **Supplementary Table 2: PCR markers used in this study.**

Primer	Assay	Sequence	Predicted location	Pred. fragment sizes (Sha/Bay)
SW-182	ShaBa5	ACGTATTTCGATGTATGGTCCTTG	Chr4: 16044156	550/664
SW-183		TCACGTGAATCGTATTCGTTGAAG		
SW-184	ShaBa6	CTTCTCCGCTTCAACCTCTGC	Chr4: 17709750	600/632
SW-185		AATCCAGGATTCAGAGTTGCTTTC		
SW-188	ShaBa8	TTGATTAGGGCTACGAGGATAAGG	Chr4: 16707214	408/609
SW-189		GAGTCTATTAATTATGCTTGGTGC		

508

509

Supplementary Figures

Supplementary Figure 1 | Productivity and complementarity in Bay-Sha mixtures across a peat-sand gradient. a, Pot-level biomass measurements of Sha and Bay monocultures or pair-wise mixtures along a sand/peat substrate gradient. n = 164 pots **b**, Complementarity and selection effects calculated according to the additive partitioning ¹ method along the substrate gradient. Error bars denote s.e.m.

519 **Supplementary Figure 2 | A major effect locus driving complementarity between genotypes. a,**
 520 **QTL mapping of SCA variation across allelic diversity levels using a marker regression technique**
 521 **by contrasting SCAs of mono-allelic RIL mixtures (BB and SS) with bi-allelic mixtures (BS). b,**
 522 **Pot-level productivity of each genotype composition (average of four blocks) in dependence of**
 523 **allelic composition at marker MSAT4.9. $n_{\text{composition}} = 210$**

524 **Supplementary Figure 3 | Fine-mapping and persistence of allelic diversity effects in near-**

525 **isogenic line. a**, The comparison of the reconstructed genotype of NIL r10 (HMM Viterbi-path

526 across all chromosomes, homozygous on lower arm of chromosome 4) in comparison to publicly

527 available molecular marker-based genotyping data of the ancestral line from which it was derived

528 (heterozygous on lower arm of chromosome 4) – showing a high degree of congruence between the

529 re-constructed genotype based on whole-genome resequencing and the marker data. **b**, Schematic

530 outline of a possible cause of the high mapping resolution achieved through the diallel design. A

531 major advantage of the design is the joint dependency of community-level allelic diversity on

532 recombinations *within* and *between* recombinant inbred lines, such that mapping resolution

533 increases very quickly. **c**, Extreme example of SCA variation across genotype mixtures all

534 containing one specific genotype (NIL r146, homozygous for the Bay-allele at locus Chr4@16.92),

either in combinations with NILs carrying the Sha-allele (dark blue bars) or the Bay-allele (dark red bars). Shown are the data from sand-rich soil only.

Supplementary Figure 4 | Observed above-ground trait variation does not explain overyielding of diallelic mixtures. **a**, Traits measured in the NIL diallel as proxy for productivity (early growth projected leaf cover), disease susceptibility (leaf disease at 30 days after sowing) or phenology (bolt length at 35 days after sowing) **b**, Path diagram of multi-group structural equation

model showing direct effects of allelic diversity at locus Chr4@16.92 on SCA on sandy but not on peat soil. Red and blue arrows show positive and negative standardized path coefficients, respectively. n.s. = not significant. (*) = $p < 0.1$; * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$.

547

549 **Supplementary Figure 5 | Soil-dependent effect of allelic diversity on overyielding and**
550 **statistical complementarity and selection effects^{S1} in an independent near-isogenic**
551 **background. a**, Overlay of genotype calls at all polymorphic sites across the genome (Sha and Bay =
552 homozygous for respective allele, het = heterozygous) of lines used for a mendelization. Top: a
553 comparison of the genetically independent backgrounds 33RV191-Sha (in red, this background was
554 used for the fine-mapping shown in Fig. 3) and line 33RV77-Sha (in blue) is shown. At the bottom, a
555 comparison of the near-isogenic lines 33RV77-Sha (red) vs 33RV77-Bay (blue), the two lines that were
556 used in the experiment shown in b and c. Purple regions depict overlap of genotype calls, vertical lines
557 separate the different chromosomes. **b**, Mean $\pm$ s.e. of final aboveground biomass of communities
558 consisting either of 33RV77-Sha plants only (BB), of mixed communities (BS), or of communities
559 consisting of 33RV77-Bay plants only (SS) on either peat-rich (left) or sand-rich (right) soil. **c**,
560 Complementarity and selection effects sensu Loreau and Hector calculated from the experiment
561 shown in b.

Supplementary Figure 6 | Soil feedback experiments. **a**, Genotype calls at all polymorphic sites across the genome (B = homozygous for the Bay allele, H = heterozygous, S = homozygous for the Sha allele) obtained by genome re-sequencing phytometer genotypes NIL-Bay (33RV191-Bay, top left, red) and NIL-Sha (33RV191-Sha, top right, blue). The overlay of the genotype calls of both

lines (bottom) confirms that these lines are isogenic but for variation on lower arm of chromosome four. The two phytometers were employed on soil derived from the NIL diallel. **b, c**, QTL mapping by marker regression of phytometer-specific responses to soil legacy of previous generation allelic diversity (i.e. allele-diversity $\times$ phytometer [Phy $\times$ AD] interaction in Supplementary Table 1, but in a model without adjusting for diallel pot biomass). The mapping of diversity effects through such influences on soil legacy could have been applied to the identification and fine-mapping of the same major effect locus, without ever measuring biomass productivity (albeit with slightly relaxed statistical criteria). Shown are negative $\log_{10}$ -transformed P-values for each marker position in the RIL (b) or genotype block in the NIL (c) diallels.

Supplementary Discussion

As outlined in Figures 1 and 4, and as described in the Methods, we performed two soil-feedback experiments to test whether allelic diversity effects extend across generations. We accounted for potential effects explainable by variation in plant productivity during the soil training phase (e.g. nutrient draw-down or environmental correlations) in linear models (terms *diallel biomass* and *diallel biomass $\times$ soil* as described in the Methods section). Significantly different soil conditioning through allelic diversity, as assessed by phytometer performance in a next growing period, was interpreted as an “extended phenotype”⁸² (i.e. a legacy of allelic mixture that persists through time in the soil, even after removal of the original plant communities). These soil factor-mediated allelic legacy effects interact with phytometer genotype, giving rise to phytometer-specific responses (term “Phy $\times$ AD” in Supplementary Table 1).

As we emphasize, the specific mechanisms underlying both soil training and phytometer responses await further experiments, since the response patterns (Fig. 4) do not allow for a simple mechanistic model. One reason why it is difficult to infer specific mechanisms (e.g. specific soil factors, and their interactions with genetic variants) is the number of variables that differed between the two

592 experiments because of constraints on experimental design: 1) environmental conditions (different
593 calendar dates, different batches of soil); 2) genetic variation in the two diallel population (RILs vs
594 NILs), potentially resulting in different effects of epistasis; and 3) phytometer genotypes (parental
595 lines vs NILs).

596 In the RIL diallel, we used the two parental accession Bay and Sha as phytometers and a split-plot
597 design to test for differential responses of these phytometer to soil conditioning. After the NIL
598 diallel, we used two near-isogenic phytometer (33RV191-Bay and 33RV191-Sha) as phytometers in
599 a similar test for differential responses to soil conditioning. Naively, one might expect
600 approximately congruent responses of the phytometers carrying the same alleles at the diversity
601 locus under question, i.e. the parental genotype Bay in the RIL diallel (Figure 4 b, yellow lines) and
602 the NIL-Bay genotype in the NIL diallel (Figure 4 c, yellow lines) might respond similarly to the
603 legacy of allelic diversity. However, this was not the case. For example, the Bay genotype grown on
604 RIL diallel soil responded positively to conditioning by allelic diversity, whereas the NIL-Bay
605 genotype in the NIL diallel responded somewhat negatively to conditioning by allelic diversity. It is
606 noteworthy that the pattern found for Bay on RIL diallel soil is opposite to what would be expected
607 if soil legacy was driven by a simple productivity-related depletion of resources in the conditioning
608 phase; this suggests that allelic diversity alleviates a negative soil factor (e.g. inhibits enemies), or
609 promotes a positive factor (e.g. mutualistic organisms).

610 Despite differences, the RIL and NIL soil-feedback experiments nevertheless convincingly
611 demonstrate i) that allelic diversity effects extend across time through soil conditioning, and ii) that
612 phytometer genotype determines the response to such conditioning (phytometer×allelic diversity
613 interaction, both experiments, see Table S1). The fact that allelic diversity effects within a
614 community and allele-specific legacy effects on individuals separated in time map to the same locus
615 suggests to us that both are related to similar mechanisms.

616

617 **Supplementary References**

618

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