

Evolution of a plant gene cluster in Solanaceae and emergence of metabolic diversity

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Abstract (<150 words)

Plants produce phylogenetically and spatially restricted, as well as structurally diverse specialized metabolites via multistep metabolic pathways. Hallmarks of specialized metabolic evolution include enzymatic promiscuity and recruitment of primary metabolic enzymes and examples of genomic clustering of pathway genes. Solanaceae glandular trichomes produce defensive acylsugars, with sidechains that vary in length across the family. We describe a tomato gene cluster on chromosome 7 involved in medium chain acylsugar accumulation due to trichome specific acyl-CoA synthetase and enoyl-CoA hydratase genes. This cluster co-localizes with a tomato steroidal alkaloid gene cluster and is syntenic to a chromosome 12 region containing another acylsugar pathway gene. We reconstructed the evolutionary events leading to this gene cluster and found that its phylogenetic distribution correlates with medium chain acylsugar

28 accumulation across the Solanaceae. This work reveals insights into the dynamics behind gene
29 cluster evolution and cell-type specific metabolite diversity.

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33 **Introduction**

34 Despite the enormous structural diversity of plant specialized metabolites, they are derived from a
35 relatively small number of primary metabolites, such as sugars, amino acids, nucleotides, and
36 fatty acids (Maeda, 2019). These lineage-, tissue- or cell- type specific specialized metabolites
37 mediate environmental interactions, such as herbivore and pathogen deterrence or pollinator and
38 symbiont attraction (Mithöfer and Boland, 2012; Pichersky and Lewinsohn, 2011). Specialized
39 metabolism evolution is primarily driven by gene duplication (Moghe and Last, 2015; Panchy et
40 al., 2016), and relaxed selection of the resulting gene pairs allows modification of cell- and tissue-
41 specific gene expression and changes in enzymatic activity. This results in expanded substrate
42 recognition and/or diversified product formation (Khersonsky and Tawfik, 2010; Leong and Last,
43 2017). The neofunctionalized enzymes can prime the origin and diversification of specialized
44 metabolic pathways (Schenck and Last, 2019; Weng et al., 2012; Weng, 2014).

45 There are many examples of mechanisms that lead to novel enzymatic activities in
46 specialized cell- or tissue-types, however, the principles that govern assembly of multi-enzyme
47 specialized metabolic pathways are less well established. One appealing hypothesis involves the
48 stepwise recruitment of pathway enzymes (Noda-Garcia et al., 2018). In rare cases, non-
49 homologous specialized metabolic enzyme genes occur in proximity to each other in a genomic
50 region, forming a biosynthetic gene cluster (Nützmann et al., 2016; Nützmann and Osbourn, 2014;
51 Rokas et al., 2018). In recent years, an increasing number of specialized metabolic gene clusters
52 (SMGCs) were experimentally identified or bioinformatically predicted in plants (Boutanaev et
53 al., 2015; Castillo et al., 2013; Schläpfer et al., 2017). However, although most experimentally

characterized plant SMGCs are co-expressed, the majority of the bioinformatically predicted ones do not show coexpression under global network analysis (Wisecaver et al., 2017).

While examples of SMGCs are still relatively rare in plants, experimentally validated cases were reported for a surprisingly diverse group of pathways. These include terpenes (Chae et al., 2014; Prisic et al., 2004; Qi et al., 2004; Wilderman et al., 2004), cyclic hydroxamic acids (Frey et al., 1997), biosynthetically unrelated alkaloids (Itkin et al., 2013; Winzer et al., 2012), polyketides (Schneider et al., 2016), cyanogenic glucosides (Tako et al., 2011), and modified fatty acids (Jeon et al., 2020). However, whereas each cluster encodes multiple non-homologous enzymes of a biosynthetic pathway, evolution of their assembly is not well understood.

Acylsugars are a group of insecticidal (Leckie et al., 2016) and anti-inflammatory (Herrera-Salgado et al., 2005) chemicals mainly observed in glandular trichomes of Solanaceae species (Fan et al., 2019; Schuurink and Tissier, 2019). These specialized metabolites are sugar aliphatic esters with three levels of structural diversity across the Solanaceae family: acyl chain length, acylation position, and sugar core (Fan et al., 2019). The primary metabolites sucrose and aliphatic acyl-CoAs are the biosynthetic precursors of acylsucroses in plants as evolutionarily divergent as the cultivated tomato *Solanum lycopersicum* (Fan et al., 2016) (Figure 1), *Petunia axillaris* (Nadakuduti et al., 2017) and *Salpiglossis sinuata* (Moghe et al., 2017). The core tomato acylsucrose biosynthetic pathway involves four BAHD [BEAT, AHCT, HCBT, DAT (D'Auria, 2006)] family acylsucrose acyltransferases (*Sl-ASAT1* through *Sl-ASAT4*), which are specifically expressed in the type I/IV trichome tip cells (Fan et al., 2016; Schilmiller et al., 2015, 2012). These enzymes catalyze consecutive reactions utilizing sucrose and acyl-CoA substrates to produce the full set of cultivated tomato acylsucroses *in vitro* (Fan et al., 2016).

Co-option of primary metabolic enzymes contributed to the evolution of acylsugar biosynthesis and led to interspecific structural diversification across *Solanum* tomato clade. One example is an invertase-like enzyme originating from carbohydrate metabolism that generates

acylglucoses in the wild tomato *S. pennellii* through cleavage of the acylsucrose glycosidic bond (Leong et al., 2019). In another case, allelic variation of a truncated isopropylmalate synthase-like enzyme (IPMS3) – from branched chain amino acid metabolism – leads to acylsugar iC4/iC5 (2-methylpropanoic/3-methylbutanoic acid) acyl chain diversity in *S. pennellii* and *S. lycopersicum* (Ning et al., 2015). Acylsugar structural diversity is even more striking across the family. Previous studies revealed variation in acyl chain length (Ghosh et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2017; Moghe et al., 2017): *Nicotiana*, *Petunia* and *Salpiglossis* species were reported to accumulate acylsugars containing only short acyl chains (carbon number, $C \leq 8$). In contrast, some species in *Solanum* and other closely related genera produce acylsugars with medium acyl chains ($C \geq 10$). These results are consistent with the hypothesis that the capability to produce medium chain acylsugars varies across the Solanaceae family.

In this study, we identify a metabolic gene cluster on tomato chromosome 7 containing two non-homologous genes – acylsugar acyl-CoA synthetase (*AACS*) and acylsugar enoyl-CoA hydratase (*AECH*) – affecting medium chain acylsugar biosynthesis. Genetic and biochemical results show that the trichome enriched *AACS* and *AECH* are involved in generating medium chain acyl-CoAs, which are donor substrates for acylsugar biosynthesis. Genomic analysis revealed a syntenic region on chromosome 12, where the acylsucrose biosynthetic *Sl-ASATI* is located (Fan et al., 2016). Phylogenetic analysis of the syntenic regions in Solanaceae and beyond led to evolutionary reconstruction of the origin of the acylsugar gene cluster. We infer that sequential gene insertion facilitated emergence of this gene cluster in tomato. These results provide insights into specialized metabolic evolution through emergence of cell-type specific gene expression, the formation of metabolic gene clusters and illuminates additional examples of primary metabolic enzymes being co-opted into specialized metabolism.

Results

Identification of a metabolic gene cluster that affects tomato trichome medium chain acylsugar biosynthesis

S. pennellii natural accessions (Mandal et al., 2020), as well as the *S. lycopersicum* M82 × *S. pennellii* LA0716 chromosomal substitution introgression lines (ILs) (Eshed and Zamir, 1995), offer convenient resources to investigate interspecific genetic variation that affects acylsugar metabolic diversity (Mandal et al., 2020; Schilmiller et al., 2010). In a rescreen of ILs for *S. pennellii* genetic regions that alter trichome acylsugar profiles (Schilmiller et al., 2010), IL7-4 was found to accumulate increased C10 medium chain containing acylsugars compared with M82 (Figure 2, A and B). The genetic locus that contributes to the acylsugar phenotype was narrowed down to a 685 kb region through screening selected backcross inbred lines (BILs) (Ofner et al., 2016) that have recombination breakpoints on chromosome 7 (Figure 2C). Because tomato acylsucrose biosynthesis occurs in trichomes, candidate genes in this region were filtered based on their trichome-specific expression patterns. This analysis identified a locus containing multiple tandemly duplicated genes of three families – an acyl-CoA synthetase (ACS), enoyl-CoA hydratase (ECH), and BAHD acyltransferase. Our analysis (Moore et al., 2020) revealed co-expression of four *Sl-ASATs* (Fan et al., 2019) and three genes at the locus – *Solyc07g043630*, *Solyc07g043660*, and *Solyc07g043680* (Supplementary file1 and Figure 2 — figure supplement 1). Expression of these three genes was trichome enriched (Figure 2D), and thus they were selected for further analysis.

The three candidate genes were tested for involvement in tomato acylsugar biosynthesis by making loss of function mutations using the CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing system. Two guide RNAs (gRNAs) were designed to target one or two exons of each gene to assist site-specific DNA cleavage by hCas (Brooks et al., 2014) (Figure 3 — figure supplement 1, A-C). In the self-crossed T1 progeny of stably transformed M82 plants, at least two homozygous mutants were obtained in *Solyc07g043630*, *Solyc07g043660*, and *Solyc07g043680* (Figure 3 — figure supplement 1, A-C),

and these were analyzed for leaf trichome acylsugar changes. Altered acylsugar profiles were observed in the ACS-annotated *Solyc07g043630* or ECH-annotated *Solyc07g043680* mutants (Figure 3, A and B), but not in the ACS-annotated *Solyc07g043660* mutant (Figure 3 — figure supplement 1D). Despite carrying mutations in distinctly annotated genes (ACS or ECH), the two mutants exhibited the same phenotype – no detectable medium acyl chain (C10 or C12) containing acylsugars (Figure 3, A and B). We renamed *Solyc07g043630* as *acylsugar acyl-CoA synthetase 1 (Sl-AACS1)* and *Solyc07g043680* as *acylsugar enoyl-CoA hydratase 1 (Sl-AECH1)* based on this analysis.

Further genomic analysis revealed that *Sl-AACS1* and *Sl-AECH1* belong to a syntenic region shared with a locus on chromosome 12, where *Sl-ASAT1* is located (Figure 3C and Figure 3 — figure supplement 2). *Sl-ASAT1* is specifically expressed in trichome tip cells and encodes the enzyme catalyzing the first step of tomato acylsucrose biosynthesis (Fan et al., 2016). This led us to test the cell-type expression pattern of *Sl-AACS1* and *Sl-AECH1*. Like *Sl-ASAT1*, the promoters of both genes drove GFP expression in the trichome tip cells of stably transformed M82 plants (Figure 3C). This supports our hypothesis that *Sl-AACS1* and *Sl-AECH1* are involved in tomato trichome acylsugar biosynthesis. Taken together, we identified a metabolic gene cluster involved in medium chain acylsugar biosynthesis, which is composed of two cell-type specific genes.

***In vitro* analysis of Sl-AACS1 and Sl-AECH1 implicates their roles in medium chain acyl-CoA metabolism**

ACS and ECH are established to function in multiple cell compartments for the metabolism of acyl-CoA (Buchanan, B. B. Gruissem, W. Jones, 2015), the acyl donor substrates for ASAT enzymes. We sought to understand the organelle targeting of Sl-AACS1 and Sl-AECH1, to advance our knowledge of acylsugar machinery at the subcellular level. We constructed expression cassettes of Sl-AACS1, Sl-AECH1 and Solyc07g043660 with C-terminal cyan fluorescent protein (CFP), hypothesizing that the targeting peptides reside at the N-terminus of

precursor proteins. When co-expressed in tobacco leaf epidermal cells, three CFP-tagged recombinant proteins co-localized with the mitochondrial marker MT-RFP (Nelson et al., 2007) (Figure 4A and Figure 4 — figure supplement 1A). To rule out the possibility of peroxisomal localization, we fused *Sl-AACS1*, *Sl-AECH1*, or *Solyc07g043660* with N-terminus fused yellow fluorescent protein (YFP), considering that potential peroxisomal targeting peptides are usually located on the C-terminus (Brocard and Hartig, 2006). The expressed YFP-recombinant proteins were not co-localized with the peroxisomal marker RFP-PTS (Nelson et al., 2007) (Figure 4 — figure supplement 1B). Instead, they appeared distributed in the cytosol (Figure 4 — figure supplement 1B), presumably because the N-terminal YFP blocked the mitochondria targeting signal. Taken together, protein expression and co-localization analyses suggest that *Sl-AACS1*, *Sl-AECH1*, and *Solyc07g043660* encode enzymes targeted to mitochondria.

Sl-AACS1 belongs to a group of enzymes that activate diverse carboxylic acid substrates to produce acyl-CoAs. We hypothesized that *Sl-AACS1* uses medium chain fatty acids as substrates, because ablation of *Sl-AACS1* eliminated acylsugars with medium acyl chains. To characterize the *in vitro* activity of *Sl-AACS1*, we purified recombinant His-tagged proteins from *Escherichia coli*. Enzyme assays were performed by supplying fatty acid substrates with even carbon numbers from C2 through C18 (Figure 4B). The results showed that *Sl-AACS1* utilized fatty acid substrates with lengths ranging from C6 to C12, including those with a terminal branched carbon (iC10:0) or an unsaturated bond (*trans*-2-decenoic acid, C10:1) (Figure 4, B and C). However, no activity was observed with the 3-hydroxylated C12 and C14 fatty acids as substrates (Figure 4B). These results support our hypothesis that *Sl-AACS1* produces medium chain acyl-CoAs, which are *in vivo* substrates for acylsugar biosynthesis.

To test whether *Sl-AACS1* and *Sl-AECH1* can produce medium chain acyl-CoAs *in planta*, we transiently expressed these genes in *Nicotiana benthamiana* leaves using *Agrobacterium*-mediated infiltration (Sainsbury et al., 2009). It is challenging to directly measure plant acyl-

CoAs, due to their low concentration and separate organellar pools. We used an alternative approach and characterized membrane lipids, which are produced from acyl-CoA intermediates. We took advantage of the observation that *N. benthamiana* membrane lipids do not accumulate detectable acyl chains of 12 carbons or shorter. *N. benthamiana* leaves were infiltrated with constructs containing *Sl-AACS1* or *Sl-AECH1* individually, or together (Figure 4D). In contrast to the empty vector control, infiltration of *Sl-AECH1* led to detectable levels of C12 acyl chains in the leaf membrane lipid phosphatidylcholine (PC) (Figure 4D). We also observed increased C14 acyl chains in PC, phosphatidylglycerol (PG), sulfoquinovosyl diacylglycerol (SQDG), and digalactosyldiacylglycerol (DGDG) in *Sl-AECH1* infiltrated plants (Figure 4D and Figure 4 — figure supplement 1C). These results suggest that *Sl-AECH1* participates in generation of medium chain acyl-CoAs *in planta*, which are channeled into lipid biosynthesis. No medium chain acylsugars were detected, presumably due to the lack of core acylsugar biosynthetic machinery in *N. benthamiana* mesophyll cells.

We asked whether the closest known homologs of *Sl-AECH1* from *Solanum* species can generate medium chain lipids when transiently expressed in *N. benthamiana*. Two SQDGs with C12 chains were monitored by LC/MS as peaks diagnostic of lipids containing medium chain fatty acids (Figure 4 — figure supplement 2, A and B). The results showed that only the putative *Sl-AECH1* orthologs *Sopen07g023250* (*Sp-AECH1*) and *Sq_c37194* (*Sq-AECH1*) – from *S. pennellii* and *S. quitoense* respectively – generated medium chain lipids in the infiltrated leaves (Figure 4 — figure supplement 2C). This confirms that not all ECHs can produce medium chain lipids and suggests that the function of *Sl-AECH1* evolved recently, presumably as a result of neofunctionalization after gene duplication (Figure 4 — figure supplement 2C).

AACS1* and *AECH1* are evolutionarily conserved in the *Solanum

Medium chain acylsugars were documented in *Solanum* species besides cultivated tomato, including *S. pennellii* (Leong et al., 2019), *S. nigrum* (Moghe et al., 2017), as well as the more

distantly related *S. quitoense* (Hurney, 2018) and *S. lanceolatum* (Herrera-Salgado et al., 2005). We hypothesized that evolution of *AACSI* and *AECHI* contributed to medium chain acylsugar biosynthesis in *Solanum*. As a test, we analyzed the genomes of *Solanum* species other than cultivated tomato. Indeed, the acylsugar related synteny containing ACS and ECH was found in both *S. pennellii* and *S. melongena* (eggplant), suggesting that the cluster assembly evolved before divergence of the tomato and eggplant lineage (Figure 5A).

We applied gene expression and genetic approaches to test the *in vivo* functions of ACS and ECH in selected *Solanum* species. To explore the expression pattern of *S. pennellii* ACS and ECH cluster genes, we performed RNA-seq analysis on trichomes and shaved stems to identify acylsugar biosynthetic candidates (Supplementary file2). The expression pattern of *S. pennellii* cluster genes is strikingly similar to *S. lycopersicum*: one ECH and two ACS genes are highly enriched in trichomes, including the orthologs of *Sl-AACSI* and *Sl-AECHI*. *Sp-AACSI* function (*Sopen07g023200*) was first tested by asking whether it can reverse the cultivated tomato *sl-aacs1* mutant acylsugar phenotype. Indeed, *Sp-AACSI* restored C12 containing acylsugars in the stably transformed *sl-aacs1* plants (Figure 5 — figure supplement 1). To directly test *Sp-AACSI* and *Sp-AECHI* function, we used CRISPR-Cas9 to make single mutants in *S. pennellii* LA0716. No medium chain acylsugars were detected in T0 generation mutants with edits for each gene (Figure 5B and Figure 5 — figure supplement 2, A and C). Similar to the ACS-annotated *Solyc07g043660* cultivated tomato mutant (Figure 3 — figure supplement 1D), deletion of *S. pennellii* ortholog *Sopen07g023220* has no observed effects on *S. pennellii* trichome acylsugars (Figure 5 — figure supplement 2D).

The medium chain acylsugar producer *S. quitoense* (Hurney, 2018) was used for *AACSI* and *AECHI* functional analysis because of its phylogenetic distance from the tomato clade, it is in the *Solanum* Leptostemonum clade (including eggplant), and the fact that it produces medium chain acylsugars. We found trichome-enriched putative orthologs of *AACSI* and *AECHI* in the

transcriptome dataset of *S. quitoense* (Moghe et al., 2017), and tested their *in vivo* function through virus-induced gene silencing (VIGS) (Figure 5 — figure supplement 2E). Silencing either gene led to decreased total acylsugars (Figure 5C and Figure 5 — figure supplement 2F), which correlated with the degree of expression reduction in each sample (Figure 5D). These results are consistent with the hypothesis that *Sq-AACSI* and *Sq-AECH1* are involved in medium chain acylsugar biosynthesis, because all acylsugars in *S. quitoense* carry two medium chains (Hurney, 2018). The importance of *AACSI* and *AECH1* in medium chain acylsugar biosynthesis in distinct *Solanum* clades inspired us to explore the evolutionary origins of the gene cluster.

Evolution of the gene cluster correlates with the distribution of medium chain acylsugars across Solanaceae

We sought to understand how the acylsugar gene cluster evolved and whether it correlates with the distribution of medium chain acylsugars across the Solanaceae family. Taking advantage of the available genome sequences of 13 species from Solanaceae and sister families, we analyzed the regions that are syntenic with the tomato acylsugar gene cluster (Figure 6 — figure supplement 1). This synteny was found in all these plants, including the most distantly related species analyzed, *Coffea canephora* (coffee, Rubiaceae) (Figure 6 — figure supplement 1). BAHD acyltransferases were the only genes observed in the syntenic regions both inside and outside the Solanaceae, in contrast to ECH and ACS, which are restricted to the family (Figure 6A and Figure 6 — figure supplement 1). Within the syntenic regions of the species analyzed, ECH homologs, including pseudogenes, are present in all Solanaceae except for *Capsicum* species, while ACS is more phylogenetically restricted, being found only in *Nicotiana* and *Solanum* (Figure 6A and Figure 6 — figure supplement 1).

We then performed phylogenetic analysis to reconstruct the evolutionary history of the ACS, ECH, and BAHD acyltransferase genes in the syntenic region (Figure 6). This analysis

revealed a model for the temporal order of emergence for the three types of genes, leading to their presence in the syntenic regions in extant Solanaceae plants (Figure 6B). We propose that the BAHD acyltransferase was the first of three genes that emerged before the divergence between Solanaceae and Rubiaceae, and was likely lost in Convolvulaceae. This hypothesis is based on the discovery of a BAHD acyltransferase pseudogene in the syntenic region of *C. canephora* (Figure 6A and Figure 6 — figure supplement 1), which is one of the closest *Coffea* sequences sister to the ASAT clade (Figure 6 — figure supplement 2 and Figure 6 — figure supplement 5). In our model, ECH was likely inserted into the syntenic region before the Solanaceae-specific whole genome duplication (WGD) event (Figure 6B and Figure 6 — figure supplement 3).

We propose that ACS was inserted into the synteny through segmental duplication (Bailey et al., 2002) (Figure 6 — figure supplement 4). However, whether ACS insertion happened before or after the Solanaceae-specific WGD event cannot be resolved by the phylogenetic analysis (Figure 6 — figure supplement 4). If the insertion happened before WGD, one ACS gene loss on chromosome 12 in *Solanum* – as well as two independent gene losses on chromosomes 7 and 12 in both *Petunia* (Figure 6 — figure supplement 4) and in *Salpiglossis sinuata* (Figure 6 — figure supplement 6) – should have happened. However, if the insertion happened after WGD, then only one gene loss in *Petunia* and *Salpiglossis* needs to be invoked (Figure 6 — figure supplement 6). The latter scenario is more likely based on the principle of parsimony.

Our ancestral state reconstruction inference supports the notion that the medium chain acylsugars co-emerged with the ACS/ECH genes in the syntenic regions in the common ancestor of *Solanum* (Figure 6 — figure supplement 7). This leads us to propose that the emergence of both ACS and ECH genes in the synteny was a prerequisite for the rise of medium chain acylsugars in Solanaceae species (Figure 6B). Consistent with the hypothesis, only short chain acylsugars were observed in *Petunia* (Liu et al., 2017) (Figure 6 — figure supplement 8), which

correlates with the absence of ACS homolog (Figure 6B). In contrast, medium chain acylsugars were detected throughout *Solanum* (Figure 6 — figure supplement 8), supported by the observation that both ACS and ECH homologs are present in extant *Solanum* species (Figure 6B). Interestingly, although *Nicotiana* species collectively have both ACS and ECH genes (Figure 6B), they do not produce medium chain acylsugars (Figure 6 — figure supplement 8) presumably due to gene losses. For example, the ECH homologs are pseudogenes in *N. benthamiana* and *N. tomentosiformis* (Figure 6A). These results show that the presence of both functional ACS and ECH genes are associated with the accumulation of medium chain acylsugars, supporting our hypothesis above.

Although no medium chain acylsugars were detected in *Nicotiana* species examined, the ACS and ECH genes may have been present in the syntenic region prior to divergence of *Solanum* and *Nicotiana*. This suggests that one or more species that diverged from the common ancestor of *Solanum* and *Nicotiana* could have medium chain acylsugars. To test this hypothesis, we extended the phenotypic analysis to six such Solanaceae genera (Figure 6 — figure supplement 8). Indeed, we found that species in *Jaltomata*, *Physalis*, *Iochroma*, *Atropa*, and *Hyoscyamus*, which diverged from the common ancestor with *Nicotiana* but before *Solanum*, have medium chain acylsugars (Figure 6 — figure supplement 8).

Discussion

This study identified a *S. lycopersicum* chromosome 7 synteny of ACS, ECH, and BAHD acyltransferase genes including two involved in medium chain acylsugar biosynthesis. The discovery of this locus was prompted by our observation of increased C10 containing acylsugars in tomato recombinant lines carrying this region from the wild tomato *S. pennellii* chromosome 7. *In vitro* biochemistry revealed that Sl-AACS1 produces acyl-CoAs using C6-C12 fatty acids as substrates. The function of *AACS1* and *AECH1* in cultivated and wild tomato medium chain acylsugar biosynthesis was confirmed by genome editing, and extended to the phylogenetically

distant *S. quitoense* using VIGS. The trichome tip cell-specific expression of these genes is similar to that of previously characterized acylsugar pathway genes (Fan et al., 2019).

There are increasing examples of plant specialized metabolic innovation evolving from gene duplication and neofunctionalization of primary metabolic enzymes (Maeda, 2019; Milo and Last, 2012; Moghe and Last, 2015; Zi et al., 2014). Recruitment of *Sl-AACS1* and *Sl-AECH1* from fatty acid metabolism provides new examples of ‘hijacking’ primary metabolic genes into acylsugar biosynthesis, in addition to an isopropylmalate synthase (*Sl-IPMS3*) and an invertase (*Sp-ASFF1*) (Leong et al., 2019; Ning et al., 2015). We hypothesize that both AACS1 and AECH1 participate in generation of medium chain acyl-CoAs, the acyl donor substrates for ASAT-catalyzed acylsugar biosynthesis. Indeed, *Sl-AACS1* exhibits *in vitro* function consistent with this hypothesis, efficiently utilizing medium chain fatty acids as substrates to synthesize acyl-CoAs. Strikingly, *Sl-AECH1* perturbs membrane lipid composition when transiently expressed in *N. benthamiana* leaves, generating unusual C12-chain membrane lipids.

These results suggest that evolution of trichome tip cell-specific gene expression potentiated the co-option of *AACS1* and *AECH1* in medium chain acylsugar biosynthesis. Analogous to trichomes producing medium chain acylsugars, seeds of phylogenetically diverse plants accumulate medium chain fatty acid storage lipids (Ohlrogge et al., 2018). In contrast, fatty acids with unusual structures, including those of medium chain lengths, are rarely found in membrane lipids, presumably because these would perturb membrane bilayer structure and function (Millar et al., 2000). For example, seed embryo-specific expression of three neofunctionalized enzyme variant genes in *Cuphea* species – an acyl-ACP thioesterase (Dehesh et al., 1996), a 3-ketoacyl-ACP synthase (Dehesh et al., 1998), and a diacylglycerol acyltransferase (Iskandarov et al., 2017) – lead to production of medium chain seed storage lipids (Voelker and Kinney, 2001). Trichome tip cell restricted expression of *AACS1* and *AECH1* represents an analogous example of diverting neofunctionalized fatty acid enzymes from general metabolism into cell-specific specialized

metabolism. It is notable that we obtained evidence that *Sl-AACS1* and *Sl-AECH1* are targeted to mitochondria. Because the other characterized acylsugar biosynthetic enzymes – ASATs and *Sl-IPMS3* – appear to be cytoplasmic, these results suggest that medium chain acylsugar substrates are intracellularly transported within the trichome tip cell. It is worth noting that *Sl-AACS1* seems to show higher activity with C8 fatty acid than with C10 or C12 (Figure 4, B and C), while no C8 containing acylsugars were described in tomato trichomes (Ghosh et al., 2014). This suggests that C8 fatty acids are not synthesized in trichomes.

Beyond employing functional approaches, this study demonstrates the value of a combined comparative genomic and metabolomic analysis in reconstructing the evolutionary history of a gene cluster: in this case over tens of millions of years. We propose that the acylsugar gene cluster started with a ‘founder’ BAHD acyltransferase gene, followed by sequential insertion of ECH and ACS (Figure 6B). This *de novo* assembly process is analogous to evolution of the antimicrobial triterpenoid avenacin cluster in oat (Qi et al., 2006, 2004). There are two noteworthy features of our approach. First, reconstructing acylsugar gene cluster evolution in a phylogenetic context allows us to deduce cluster composition in extant species (Figure 6B). Second, it links cluster genotype with acylsugar phenotype and allows inference of acylsugar diversity across the Solanaceae (Figure 6 and Figure 6 — figure supplement 8).

The current architecture of the Solanaceae acylsugar synteny merely represents a snapshot of a genomic neighborhood that is dynamic, which echoes a recent study of triterpene biosynthetic gene clusters in the Brassicaceae (Liu et al., 2019; Peters, 2020). *De novo* assembly of the gene cluster was accompanied by gene duplication, transposition, pseudogenization, and deletion in different genera. In the case of non-acylsugar producer *Capsicum*, although phylogenetic analysis revealed putative *Sl-AACS1* and *Sl-AECH1* orthologous genes, they are not harbored in the syntenic region, probably due to translocation or assembly quality issues (Figure 6A and Figure 6 — figure supplement 1). In *Nicotiana*, the ECH genes became pseudogenized (Figure 6B), which

is associated with lack of detectable plant medium chain acylsugars (Figure 6 — figure supplement 8). In tomatoes, the trichome expressed *Solyc07g043660* derives from a recent tandem duplication (Figure 6 — figure supplement 4), yet its deletion has no effect on trichome acylsugars (Figure 3 — figure supplement 1D). A parsimonious explanation is that *Solyc07g043660* is experiencing functional divergence, which may eventually lead to pseudogenization as observed for other genes in the syntenic region.

In this study, we identified an acylsugar SMGC in the context of a multiple chromosome syntenic region. This synteny resulted from WGD, and the acylsugar-related genes are co-expressed, and involved in the same metabolic pathway. This resembles the tomato steroidal alkaloid gene cluster consisting of eight genes that are dispersed into two syntenic chromosome regions (Itkin et al., 2013). In fact, this tomato alkaloid SMGC is located next to the acylsugar cluster (Figure 3 — figure supplement 2), which is reminiscent of two physically adjacent SMGCs in the fungus *Aspergillus* (Wiemann et al., 2013). Tomato steroidal alkaloids and acylsugars both serve defensive roles in plants, but are biosynthetically and structurally distinct and are stored in different tissues. This raises intriguing questions. Did the separation of acylsugar and alkaloid SMGCs into two chromosomes occur contemporaneously and by the same mechanism? Did this colocalization confer selective advantage through additive or synergistic effects of multiple classes of defensive metabolites? Answering these questions requires continued mining and functional validation of metabolic gene clusters across broader plant species and analysis of impacts of clustering in evolutionary and ecological contexts.

Materials and methods

Key Resources Table				
Reagent type (species) or resource	Designation	Source or reference	Identifiers	Additional information

gene (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i> M82)	Sl-AACS1	This paper	GeneBank: MT078737	Characterized and named in the results
gene (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i> M82)	Sl-AECH1	This paper	GeneBank: MT078736	Characterized and named in the results
gene (<i>Solanum pennellii</i> LA0716)	Sp-AACS1	This paper	GeneBank: MT078735	Characterized and named in the results
gene (<i>Solanum pennellii</i> LA0716)	Sp-AECH1	This paper	GeneBank: MT078734	Characterized and named in the results
gene (<i>Solanum quitoense</i>)	Sq-AACS1	This paper	GeneBank: MT078732	Characterized and named in the results
gene (<i>Solanum quitoense</i>)	Sq-AECH1	This paper	GeneBank: MT078731	Characterized and named in the results
gene (<i>Solanum quitoense</i>)	Sq_c35719	This paper	GeneBank: MT078733	Characterized and named in the results
Software, algorithm	Trimmomatic	http://www.usadellab.org/cms/index.php?page=trimmomatic	RRID:SCR_011848	
Software, algorithm	TopHat	http://ccb.jhu.edu/software/tophat/index.shtml	RRID:SCR_013035	
Software, algorithm	Cufflinks	http://cole-trapnell-lab.github.io/cufflinks/cuffmerge/	RRID:SCR_014597	
Software, algorithm	MCSanX-transposed	http://chibba.pgml.uga.edu/mcscan2/transposed/		
Software, algorithm	RAxML	https://github.com/stamatak/standard-RAxML	RRID:SCR_006086	
Software, algorithm	Mesquite	https://www.mesquiteproject.org/	RRID:SCR_017994	

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Plant materials and trichome metabolite extraction

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The seeds of cultivated tomato *Solanum lycopersicum* M82 were obtained from the C.M. Rick Tomato Genetic Resource Center (<http://tgrc/ucdvis.edu>), RRID:SCR_014954. Tomato introgression lines (ILs) and tomato backcross inbred lines (BILs) were from Dr. Dani Zamir (Hebrew University of Jerusalem). The tomato seeds were treated with ½ strength bleach for 30 minutes and washed with de-ionized water three or more times before placing on wet filter paper in a Petri dish. After germination, the seedlings were transferred to peat-based propagation mix (Sun Gro Horticulture) and transferred to a growth chamber for two or three weeks under 16 h photoperiod, 28 °C day and 22 °C night temperatures, 50% relative humidity, and 300 $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$ photosynthetic photon flux density. The youngest fully developed leaf was submerged in 1 mL extraction solution in a 1.5 mL screw cap tube and agitated gently for 2 min. The extraction solution contains acetonitrile/isopropanol/water (3:3:2) with 0.1% formic acid and 10 μM propyl-4-hydroxybenzoate as internal standard. The interactive protocol of acylsugar extraction is available in Protocols.io at <http://dx.doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.xj2fkqe>.

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DNA construct assembly and tomato transformation

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Assembly of the CRISPR-Cas9 constructs was as described (Brooks et al., 2014; Leong et al., 2019). Two guide RNAs (gRNAs) were designed targeting one or two exons of each gene to be knocked out by the CRISPR-Cas9 system. The gRNAs were synthesized gene (gBlocks) by IDT (Integrated DNA Technologies, location) (Supplementary file3). For each CRISPR construct, two gBlocks and four plasmids from Addgene, pICH47742::2x35S-5'UTR-hCas9 (STOP)-NOST (Addgene no. 49771), pICH41780 (Addgene no. 48019), pAGM4723 (Addgene no. 48015),

pICSL11024 (Addgene no. 51144), were mixed for DNA assembly using the Golden Gate assembly kit (NEB).

For *in planta* tissue specific reporter gene analysis, 1.8 kb upstream of the annotated translational start site of *Sl-AACSI* and *Sl-AECH* were amplified using the primer pairs SIAACS1-pro_F/R and SIECH1-pro_F/R (Supplementary file3). The amplicon was inserted into the entry vector pENTR/D-TOPO, followed by cloning into the GATEWAY vector pKGWFS7. For ectopically expressing *Sp-AACSI* in the cultivated tomato CRISPR mutant *sl-aacs1*, *Sp-AACSI* gene including 1.8 kb upstream of the translational start site of *Sp-AACSI* was amplified using the primer pair SpAACS1-pro-gene_F/R (Supplementary file3). The amplicon was inserted into the entry vector pENTR/D-TOPO, followed by cloning into the GATEWAY vector pK7WG.

The plant transformation of *S. lycopersicum* M82 and *S. pennellii* LA0716 was performed using the *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* strain AGL0 following published protocols (Leong et al., 2019; McCormick, 1997). The primers used for genotyping the *S. lycopersicum* M82 transgenic plants harboring pK7WG or pKGWFS7 construct are listed in Supplementary file3. For genotyping the *S. lycopersicum* M82 CRISPR mutants in the T1 generation, the sequencing primers listed in Supplementary file3 were used to amplify the genomic regions harboring the gRNAs and the resultant PCR products were sent for Sanger sequencing. For genotyping the *S. pennellii* LA0716 CRISPR mutants in the T0 generation, the sequencing primers listed in Supplementary file3 were used to amplify the genomic regions harboring the gRNAs. The resulting PCR products were cloned into the pGEM-T easy vector (Promega) and transformed into *E. coli*. Plasmids from at least six individual *E. coli* colonies containing the amplified products were extracted and verified by Sanger sequencing.

Protein subcellular targeting in tobacco mesophyll cells

For protein subcellular targeting analysis, the open reading frame (ORF) of *Sl-AACSI*, *Sl-AECH1*, and *Solyc07g043660* were amplified using the primers listed in Supplementary file3. These

amplicons were inserted into pENTR/D-TOPO respectively, followed by subcloning into the GATEWAY vectors pEarleyGate102 (no. CD3-684) and pEarleyGate104 (no. CD3-686), which were obtained from Arabidopsis Biological Resource Center (ABRC). For the pEarleyGate102 constructs, the CFP was fused to the C-terminal of the tested proteins. For the pEarleyGate104 constructs, the YFP was fused to the protein N-terminus. Transient expressing the tested proteins was performed following an established protocol (Batoko et al., 2000) with minor modifications. In brief, cultures of *A. tumefaciens* (strain GV3101) harboring the expression vectors were washed and resuspended with the infiltration buffer (20 mM acetosyringone, 50 mM MES pH 5.7, 0.5% glucose [w/v] and 2 mM Na₃PO₄) to reach OD_{600nm} = 0.05. Four-week-old tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum* cv. Petit Havana) plants grew in 21°C and 8 h short-day conditions were infiltrated, and then maintained in the same growth condition for three days before being sampled for imaging. The GV3101 cultures containing the mitochondria marker MT-RFP (Nelson et al., 2007) were co-infiltrated to provide the control signals for mitochondrial targeting. In separate experiments, the GV3101 cultures containing the peroxisome marker RFP-PTS (Nelson et al., 2007) were co-infiltrated to provide the control signals for peroxisomal targeting.

Confocal Microscopy

A Nikon A1Rsi laser scanning confocal microscope and Nikon NIS-Elements Advanced Research software were used for image acquisition and handling. For visualizing GFP fluorescence in trichomes of the tomato transformants, the excitation wavelength at 488 nm and a 505- to 525-nm emission filter were used for the acquisition. For visualizing signals of fluorescence proteins in the tobacco mesophyll cells, CFP, YFP and RFP, respectively, were detected by excitation lasers of 443 nm, 513 nm, 561 nm and emission filters of 467-502 nm, 521-554 nm, 580-630 nm.

***N. benthamiana* transient gene expression and membrane lipid analysis**

For *N. benthamiana* transient expression of *Sl-AACSI*, *Sl-AECH1*, and homologs of *AECH1*, the ORFs of these genes were amplified using primers listed in Supplementary file3, followed by

subcloning into pEAQ-HT vector using the Gibson assembly kit (NEB). Linearization of pEAQ-HT vector was performed by XhoI and AgeI restriction enzyme double digestion. *A. tumefaciens* (strain GV3101) harboring the pEAQ-HT constructs were grown in LB medium containing 50 µg/mL kanamycin, 30 µg/mL gentamicin, and 50 µg/ml rifampicin at 30 °C. The cells were collected by centrifugation at 5000 g for 5 min and washed once with the resuspension buffer (10 mM MES buffer pH 5.6, 10 mM MgCl₂, 150 µM acetosyringone). The cell pellet was resuspended in the resuspension buffer to reach OD_{600nm} = 0.5 for each strain and was incubated at room temperature for 1 h prior to infiltration. Leaves of 4 to 5-week-old *N. benthamiana* grown under 16 h photoperiod were used for infiltration. Five days post infiltration, the infiltrated leaves were harvested, ground in liquid nitrogen, and stored at -80 °C for later analysis.

The membrane lipid analysis was performed as previously described (Wang and Benning, 2011). In brief, the *N. benthamiana* leaf polar lipids were extracted in the organic solvent containing methanol, chloroform, and formic acid (20:10:1, v/v/v), separated by thin layer chromatography (TLC), converted to fatty acyl methylesters (FAMES), and analyzed by gas-liquid chromatography (GLC) coupled with flame ionization. The TLC plates (TLC Silica gel 60, EMD Chemical) were activated by ammonium sulfate before being used for lipid separation. Iodine vapor was applied to TLC plates after lipid separation for brief reversible staining. Different lipid groups on the TLC plates were marked with a pencil and were scraped for analysis. For LC/MS analysis, lipids were extracted using the buffer containing acetonitrile/isopropanol/water (3:3:2) with 0.1% formic acid and 10 µM propyl-4-hydroxybenzoate as the internal standard.

Protein expression and ACS enzyme assay

To express His-tagged recombinant protein Sl-AACS1, the full-length *Sl-AACS* ORF sequence was amplified using the primer pair SlAACS1-pET28_F/R (Supplementary file3) and was cloned into pET28b (EMD Millipore) using the Gibson assembly kit (NEB). The pET28b vector was

469 linearized by digesting with BamHI and XhoI to create overhangs compatible for Gibson
470 assembly. The pET28b constructs were transformed into BL21 Rosetta cells (EMD Millipore).
471 The protein expression was induced by adding 0.05 mM isopropyl β -D-1-thiogalactopyranoside
472 to the cultures when the OD_{600nm} = 0.5. The *E. coli* cultures were further grown overnight at 16 °C,
473 120 rpm. The His-tagged proteins were purified by Ni-affinity gravity-flow chromatography
474 using the Ni-NTA agarose (Qiagen) following the product manual.

475 Measurement of acyl-CoA synthetase activity was performed using minor modifications
476 of the coupled enzyme assay described by Schneider et al. (Schneider et al., 2005). A multimode
477 plate reader (PerkinElmer, mode EnVision 2104) compatible with the 96-well UV microplate was
478 used for the assays. The fatty acid substrates were dissolved in 5% Triton X-100 (v/v) to make 5
479 mM stock solutions. The enzyme assay premix was prepared containing 0.1 M Tris-HCl (pH 7.5),
480 2 mM dithiothreitol, 5 mM ATP, 10 mM MgCl₂, 0.5 mM CoA, 0.8 mM NADH, 250 μ M fatty
481 acid substrate, 1 mM phosphoenolpyruvate, 20 units myokinase (Sigma-Aldrich, catalog no.
482 M3003), 10 units pyruvate kinase (Roche, 10128155001), 10 units lactate dehydrogenase (Roche,
483 10127230001), and was aliquoted 95 μ L each to the 96-well microplate. The reaction was started
484 by adding 5 μ L (1-2 μ g) proteins. The chamber of the plate reader was set to 30 °C and the OD at
485 340 nm was recorded every 5 min for 40 min. Oxidation of NADH, which is monitored by the
486 decrease of OD_{340nm}, was calculated using the NADH extinction coefficient 6.22 cm² μ mol⁻¹.
487 Every two moles of oxidized NADH is equivalent to one mole of acyl-CoA product generated in
488 the reaction. To measure the parameters of enzyme kinetics, the fatty acid substrate concentration
489 was varied from 0 to 500 μ M, with NADH set at 1 mM. The fatty acid substrates, sodium acetate
490 (C2:0), sodium butyrate (C4:0), sodium hexanoate (C6:0), sodium octanoate (C8:0), sodium
491 decanoate (C10:0), sodium laurate (C12:0), sodium myristate (C14:0), sodium palmitate (C16:0),
492 and sodium stearate (C18:0), were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich. *Trans*-2-decenoic acid (C10:1),

8-methylnonanoic acid (iC10:0), 3-hydroxy lauric acid (C12:OH), and 3-hydroxy myristic acid (C14:OH) were purchased from Cayman Chemical.

RNA extraction, sequencing, and differential gene expression analysis

Total RNA was extracted from trichomes isolated from stems and shaved stems of 7-week-old *S. pennellii* LA0716 plants using the RNAeasy Plant Mini kit (Qiagen) and digested with DNase I. A total of four RNA samples extracted from two tissues with two replicates were used for RNA sequencing. The sequencing libraries were prepared using the KAPA Stranded RNA-Seq Library Preparation Kit. Libraries went through quality control and quantification using a combination of Qubit dsDNA high sensitivity (HS), Applied Analytical Fragment Analyzer HS DNA and Kapa Illumina Library Quantification qPCR assays. The libraries were pooled and loaded onto one lane of an Illumina HiSeq 4000 flow cell. Sequencing was done in a 2x150bp paired end format using HiSeq 4000 SBS reagents. Base calling was done by Illumina Real Time Analysis (RTA) v2.7.6 and output of RTA was demultiplexed and converted to FastQ format with Illumina Bcl2fastq v2.19.1.

The paired end reads were filtered and trimmed using Trimmomatic v0.32 (A. M. Bolger et al., 2014) with the setting (LLUMINACLIP: TruSeq3-PE.fa:2:30:10 LEADING:3 TRAILING:3 SLIDINGWINDOW:4:30), and then mapped to the *S. pennellii* LA0716 genome v2.0 (A. Bolger et al., 2014) using TopHat v1.4 (Trapnell et al., 2009) with the following parameters: -p (threads) 8, -i (minimum intron length) 50, -I (maximum intron length) 5000, and -g (maximum hits) 20. The FPKM (Fragments Per Kilobase of transcript per Million mapped reads) values for the genes were analyzed via Cufflinks v2.2 (Trapnell et al., 2010). For differential expression analysis, the HTseq package (Anders et al., 2015) in Python was used to get raw read counts, then Edge R version 3.22.5 (McCarthy et al., 2012) was used to compare read counts between trichome-only RNA and shaved stem RNA using a generalized linear model (glmQLFit).

VIGS and qRT-PCR

For VIGS analysis of *Sq-AACSI* and *Sq-AECH1* in *S. quitoense*, the fragments of these two genes, as well as the phytoene desaturase (PDS) gene fragment, were amplified using the primers listed in Supplementary file3, cloned into pTRV2-LIC (ABRC no. CD3-1044) using the ligation-independent cloning method (Dong et al., 2007), and transformed into *A. tumefaciens* (strain GV3101). The VIGS experiments were performed as described (Leong et al., 2020). In brief, the *Agrobacterium* strains harboring pTRV2 constructs, the empty pTRV2, or pTRV1 were grown overnight in separate LB cultures containing 50 µg/mL kanamycin, 10 µg/mL gentamicin, and 50 µg/ml rifampicin at 30 °C. The cultures were re-inoculated in the induction media (50 mM MES pH5.6, 0.5% glucose [w/v], 2 mM NaH₂PO₄, 200 µM acetosyringone) for overnight growth. The cells were harvested, washed, and resuspended in the buffer containing 10 mM MES, pH 5.6, 10 mM MgCl₂, and 200 µM acetosyringone with the OD_{600nm} = 1. Different cultures containing pTRV2 constructs were mixed with equal volume of pTRV1 cultures prior to infiltration. The 2- to 3-week-old young *S. quitoense* seedlings grown under 16 h photoperiod at 24 °C were used for infiltration: the two fully expanded cotyledons were infiltrated. Approximately three weeks post inoculation, the fourth true leaf of each infiltrated plant was cut in half for acylsugar quantification and gene expression analysis, respectively. The onset of the albino phenotype of the control group infiltrated with the PDS construct was used as a visual marker to determine the harvest time and leaf selection for the experimental groups. At least fourteen plants were analyzed for each construct. The trichome acylsugars were extracted using the solution containing acetonitrile/isopropanol/water (3:3:2) with 0.1% formic acid and 1 µM telmisartan as internal standard, following the protocol at <http://dx.doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.xj2fkqe>.

The leaf RNA was extracted using RNeasy Plant Mini kits (Qiagen) and digested with DNase I. The first-strand cDNA was synthesized by Superscript II (Thermofisher Scientific) using total RNA as templates. Quantitative real-time PCR was performed to analyze the *Sq*-

AACSI or *Sq-AECH1* mRNA in *S. quitoense* leaves using the primers listed in Supplementary file3. EF1 α was used as a control gene. A QuantStudio 7 Flex Real-Time PCR System with Fast SYBR Green Master Mix (Applied Biosystems) was used for the analysis. The relative quantification method ($2^{-\Delta\Delta C_t}$) was used to evaluate the relative transcripts levels.

LC/MS analysis

Trichome acylsugars extracted from tomato IL and BILs were analyzed using a Shimadzu LC-20AD HPLC system connected to a Waters LCT Premier ToF mass spectrometer. Ten microliter samples were injected into a fused core Ascentis Express C18 column (2.1 mm $\times$ 10 cm, 2.7 μ m particle size; Sigma-Aldrich) for reverse-phase separation with column temperature set at 40 $^{\circ}$ C. The starting condition was 90% solvent A (0.15% formic acid in water) and 10% solvent B (acetonitrile) with flow rate set to 0.4 mL/min. A 7 min linear elution gradient was used: ramp to 40% B at 1 min, then to 100% B at 5 min, hold at 100% B to 6 min, return to 90% A at 6.01 min and hold until 7 min.

For analyzing trichome acylsugars extracted from *S. pennellii* transgenic plants and membrane lipids from *N. benthamiana*, a Shimadzu LC-20AD HPLC system connected to a Waters Xevo G2-XS QToF mass spectrometer was used. The starting condition were 95% solvent A (10 mM ammonium formate, pH 2.8) and 5% solvent B (acetonitrile) with flow rate set to 0.3 mL/min. A 7 min linear elution gradient used for acylsugar analysis was: ramp to 40% B at 1 min, then to 100% B at 5 min, hold at 100% B to 6 min, return to 95% A at 6.01 min and hold until 7 min. A 12 min linear elution gradient used for the lipid analysis was: ramp to 40% B at 1 min, then to 100% B at 5 min, hold at 100% B to 11 min, return to 95% A at 11.01 min and hold until 12 min.

For analyzing trichome acylsugars extracted from other plants, a Waters Acquity UPLC was coupled to a Waters Xevo G2-XS QToF mass spectrometer. The starting condition was 95% solvent A (10 mM ammonium formate, pH 2.8) and 5% solvent B (acetonitrile) with flow rate set

to 0.3 mL/min. A 7 min linear elution gradient was: ramp to 40% B at 1 min, then to 100% B at 5 min, hold at 100% B to 6 min, return to 95% A at 6.01 min and held until 7 min. A 14 min linear elution gradient was: ramp to 35% B at 1 min, then to 85% B at 12 min, then to 100% B at 12.01 min, hold at 100% B to 13 min, return to 95% A at 13.01 min and held until 14 min.

For Waters LCT Premier ToF mass spectrometer, the MS settings of electrospray ionization in negative mode were: 2.5 kV capillary voltage, 100°C source temperature, 350°C desolvation temperature, 350 liters/h desolvation nitrogen gas flow rate, 10 V cone voltage, and mass range m/z 50 to 1500 with spectra accumulated at 0.1 seconds/function. Three collision energies (10, 40, and 80 eV) were used in separate acquisition functions to generate both molecular ion adducts and fragments. For Waters Xevo G2-XS QToF mass spectrometer, the MS settings of the negative ion-mode electrospray ionization were as follows: 2.00 kV capillary voltage, 100 °C source temperature, 350 °C desolvation temperature, 600 liters/h desolvation nitrogen gas flow rate, 35V cone voltage, mass range of m/z 50 to 1000 with spectra accumulated at 0.1 seconds/function. Three collision energies (0, 15, and 35 eV) were used in separate acquisition functions. The MS settings for positive ion-mode electrospray ionization were: 3.00 kV capillary voltage, 100 °C source temperature, 350 °C desolvation temperature, 600 liters/h desolvation nitrogen gas flow rate, 35V cone voltage, mass range of m/z 50 to 1000 with spectra accumulated at 0.1 seconds/function. Three collision energies (0, 15, and 45 eV) were used in separate acquisition functions. The Waters QuanLynx software was used to integrate peak areas of the selected ion relative to the internal standard. For quantification purpose, data collected with the lowest collision energy was used in the analysis.

Gene coexpression analysis

The publicly available tomato RNA-seq datasets and the methods used for normalizing FPKM, gene expression correlation analysis were described in a recent study (Moore et al., 2020). RNA-seq Sequence Read Archive (SRA) files for tomato from 47 studies were downloaded from

592 National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>) (Table S6
 593 in (Moore et al., 2020). Reads were filtered using Trimmomatic (A. M. Bolger et al., 2014) based
 594 on the sequence quality with default settings, and mapped to the tomato NCBI *S. lycopersicum*
 595 genome 2.5 using TopHat (Trapnell et al., 2009). Read files with <70% mapped reads were
 596 discarded. Fragments per kilobase of transcript per million mapped reads (FPKM) were calculated
 597 using Cufflinks (Trapnell et al., 2010). The pipeline for FPKM calling was put in
 598 https://github.com/ShiuLab/RNAseq_pipeline. The median FPKM of multiple replicates was used
 599 for each sample, resulting in FPKM values in 372 samples. To draw the heatmap of gene
 600 expression profiles, FPKM values of a gene across all the samples were scaled, where the
 601 maximum FPKM was scaled to 1, while the minimum value was 0.

602 **Synteny scan**

603 Protein sequences of annotated genes and the corresponding annotation files in General Feature
 604 Format (GFF) of 11 Solanaceae species, *Ipomoea trifida*, and *Coffea canephora* were downloaded
 605 from National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI,
 606 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genome/>) or Solanaceae Genomics Network (SGN,
 607 <https://solgenomics.net/>). The GFF files contain the coordinates of annotated genes on assembled
 608 chromosomes or scaffolds. The sources and version numbers of sequences and GFF files used are:
 609 *S. lycopersicum* ITAG3.2 (SGN) and V2.5 (NCBI), *S. pennellii* SPENNV200 (NCBI) and v2.0
 610 (SGN), *S. tuberosum* V3.4 (SGN), *S. melongena* r2.5.1 (SGN), *Capsicum annuum* L. *zunla-1*
 611 V2.0 (SGN), *C. annuum* *var. glabriusculum* V2.0 (SGN), *Nicotiana attenuata* NIATTr2 (SGN),
 612 *N. tomentosiformis* V01 (NCBI), *N. benthamiana* V1.0.1 (SGN), *Petunia axillaris* V1.6.2 (SGN),
 613 *P. inflata* V1.0.1 (SGN), *I. trifida* V1.0 (NCBI), and *C. canephora* Vx (SGN).

614 To hypothesize the evolutionary history of genes in the acylsugar gene cluster, putative
 615 pseudogenes, which are homologs to protein-coding genes but with predicted premature
 616 stops/frameshifts and/or protein sequence truncation, were also identified for each species as

described (Wang et al., 2018). Protein sequences from *Arabidopsis thaliana*, *Oryza sativa*, and *S. lycopersicum* were used as queries in the searches against the genomic regions of target species using TBLASTN (Altschul et al., 1990). The intergenic genomic sequences were identified as potential pseudogenes using the pipeline from as previously described (Campbell et al., 2014; Zou et al., 2009). If one of the six-frame translated sequences of the intergenic genomic sequences had significant similarity to annotated protein sequences, and had premature stops/frameshifts and/or were truncated (<30% of functional paralogs), the gene was defined as a pseudogene.

Genome-wide syntenic analysis was conducted using annotated protein-coding genes and putative pseudogenes from all the species with MCScanX-transposed (Wang et al., 2013) as described (Wang et al., 2018). The MCScanX-based analysis did not lead to a syntenic block of acylsugar gene cluster on chromosome 7 of *S. melongena* r2.5.1, which can be due to true absence, issues with genome assembly, or lack of coverage. To verify this, protein sequences of *S. lycopersicum* genes in genomic blocks on chromosome 7 were searched against an updated *S. melongena* genome from The Eggplant Genome Project (<http://ddlab.dbt.univr.it/eggplant/>) that led to the identification of the synteny.

Phylogenetic tree building

Homologous genes of *Sl-AACSI* (ACS), *Sl-AECH1* (ECH), and *Solyc07g043670* (BAHD acyltransferase) were obtained through BLAST (Altschul et al., 1990) search from the genomes of 11 Solanaceae species, *Ipomoea trifida*, and *Coffea canephora* with an Expect value threshold of 1e-5. To simplify the phylogenetic tree, sequences which are distantly related to the target genes were removed, and the remained sequences were used to rebuild the phylogenetic trees. The amino acid sequences were aligned using MUSCLE (Edgar, 2004) with the default parameters. The phylogenetic trees were built using the maximum likelihood method with 1000 bootstrap replicates. The trees were generated using RAXML/8.0.6 (Stamatakis, 2014) with the following parameters: -f a -x 12345 -p 12345 -# 1000 -m PROTGAMMAAUTO --auto-prot=bic, and were

642 shown with midpoint rooting. The final sequence alignments used to generate the phylogenetic
643 trees were provided in Supplementary file 5.

644 **Ancestral trait reconstruction**

645 Ancestral trait state reconstruction was conducted using the maximum likelihood model Mk1 in
646 Mesquite 3.6 (Massidon and Maddison, 2018). Four traits were inferred for their ancestral states.
647 They are the presence of medium chain acylsugars, presence of ACS genes in the synteny,
648 presence of ECH genes in the synteny, and presence of both ACS and ECH genes in the synteny.
649 The phylogeny of Solanaceae species was based on a previous study (Sarkinen et al., 2013).

650 **Acylsugar acyl chain composition analysis by GC-MS**

651 Acyl chains were characterized from the corresponding fatty acid ethyl esters following
652 transesterification of acylsugar extractions as previously reported (Ning et al., 2015). Plants were
653 grown for 4-8 weeks and approximately ten leaves were extracted for 3 minutes in 10 mL of 1:1
654 isopropanol:acetonitrile with 0.01% formic acid. Extractions were dried to completeness using a
655 rotary evaporator and then 300 μ L of 21% (v/v) sodium ethoxide in ethanol (Sigma) was added
656 and incubated for 30 minutes with gentle rocking and vortexing every five minutes and 400 μ L
657 hexane was added and vortexed for 30 seconds. To the hexane layer, 500 μ L of saturated sodium
658 chloride in water was added and vortexed to facilitate a phase separation. After phase separation,
659 the top hexane layer was transferred to a new tube. The phase separation by addition of 500 μ L
660 hexane was repeated twice, with the final hexane layer transferred to a 2 mL glass vial with a
661 glass insert.

662 The fatty acid ethyl esters were analyzed using an Agilent 5975 single quadrupole GC-MS
663 equipped with a 30-m, 0.25-mm internal diameter fused silica column with a 0.25- μ m film
664 thickness VF5 stationary phase (Agilent). Injection of 1 μ L of each hexane extract was performed
665 using splitless mode. The gas chromatography program was as follows: inlet temperature, 250°C;

666 initial column temperature, 70°C held for 2 min; ramped at 20°C/min until 270°C, then held at
667 270°C 3 min. The helium carrier gas was used with 70 eV electron ionization. Acyl chain type
668 was determined through NIST Version 2.3 library matches of the mass spectra of the
669 corresponding ethyl ester and relative abundances were determined through integrating the
670 corresponding peak area over the total acyl chain peak area.

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689 **Data and materials availability:** All data needed to evaluate the conclusions in the paper are
 690 present in the paper and/or the Supplementary Materials. The RNA-seq reads were deposited in
 691 the National Center for Biotechnology Information Sequence Read Archive under the accession
 692 number PRJNA605501. The following materials require a material transfer agreement: pEAQ-HT,
 693 pK7WG, pKGWFS7, pEarleyGate102, pEarleyGate104, pTRV2-LIC, pICH47742::2x35S-
 694 5'UTR-hCas9(STOP)-NOST, pICH41780, pAGM4723, and pICSL11024. Requests for
 695 biological materials or data should be submitted to R.L.L. at lastr@msu.edu.

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Main Figure Legends

Figure 1. Primary metabolites are biosynthetic precursors of tomato trichome acylsugars. In cultivated tomatoes, the trichome acylsucroses are synthesized by four SI-ASATs using the primary metabolites – sucrose and different types of acyl-CoAs – as substrates. In this study we provide evidence that medium chain fatty acids are converted to acyl-CoAs by an acyl-CoA synthetase for medium chain acylsugar biosynthesis.

Figure 2. Mapping of a genetic locus related to acylsugar variations in tomato interspecific introgression lines. (A) Electrospray ionization negative (ESI⁻) mode, base-peak intensity (BPI) LC/MS chromatogram of trichome metabolites from cultivated tomato *S. lycopersicum* M82 and introgression line IL7-4. The orange bars highlight two acylsugars that have higher abundance in IL7-4 than in M82. For the acylsucrose nomenclature, “S” refers to a sucrose backbone, “3:22” means three acyl chains with twenty-two carbons in total. The length of each acyl chain is shown in the parentheses. (B) Peak area percentage of seven major trichome acylsugars in M82 and IL7-4. The sum of the peak area percentage of each acylsugar is equal to 100% in each sample. The data is shown for three plants ± SEM. **p < 0.01, Welch two-sample *t* test. **Figure 2 — source data 1** includes values for the analysis. (C) Mapping the genetic

locus contributing to the IL7-4 acylsugar phenotype using selected backcross inbred lines (BILs) that have recombination break points within the introgression region of IL7-4. **(D)** Narrowing down candidate genes in the locus using trichome/stem RNA-seq datasets generated from previous study (Ning et al., 2015). A region with duplicated genes of three types – acyl-CoA synthetase (ACS), BAHD acyltransferase, and enoyl-CoA hydratase (ECH) – is shown. The red-blue color gradient provides a visual marker to rank the expression levels represented by Fragments Per Kilobase of transcript per Million mapped reads (FPKM). Coexpression analysis of tomato ACS, ECH, and BAHD acyltransferase family genes is shown in **Figure 2 — figure supplement 1**.

Figure 3. CRISPR/Cas9-mediated gene knockout of tomato *Sl-AACS1* or *Sl-AECH1* eliminates detectable medium chain containing acylsugars. **(A)** Combined LC/MS extracted ion chromatograms of trichome metabolites from CRISPR mutants *sl-aacs1* and *sl-aech1*. The medium chain acylsugars that are not detected in the two mutants are denoted by pairs of vertical dotted lines. **Figure 3 — figure supplement 1** describes the design of the gRNAs and details of the gene edits. **(B)** Quantification of seven major trichome acylsugars in *sl-aacs1* and *sl-aech1* mutants. Two independent T2 generation transgenic lines for each mutant were used for analysis. The peak area/internal standard (IS) normalized by leaf dry weight (DW) is shown from six plants $\pm$ SEM. **Figure 3 — source data 1** includes values for the analysis. **(C)** Confocal fluorescence images showing that GFP fluorescence driven by *Sl-AACS1* or *Sl-AECH1* is located in the tip cells of type I/IV trichomes. Their tissue specific expressions are similar to *Sl-ASAT1* (Fan et al., 2016), which locates in a chromosome 12 region that is syntenic to the locus containing *Sl-AACS1* and *Sl-AECH1*. **Figure 3 — figure supplement 2** provides the detailed information of the syntenic region. *Sl-AACS1*, *Sl-AECH1*, and *Sl-ASAT1* are the only gene models with demonstrated functions in acylsugar biosynthesis.

Figure 4. Functional analysis of *Sl-AACS1* and *Sl-AECH1* in *N. benthamiana* and recombinant *Sl-AACS1* enzyme analysis. **(A)** Confocal images of co-expression analysis in tobacco leaf epidermal cells using C-terminal CFP-tagged either *Sl-AACS1* or *Sl-AECH1* and the mitochondrial marker MT-RFP. Arrowheads point to mitochondria that are indicated by MT-RFP fluorescent signals. Scale bar equals 10 μ m. **Figure 4 — figure supplement 1B** describes that the expressed YFP-recombinant proteins were not co-localized with the peroxisomal marker RFP-PTS **(B)** Aliphatic fatty acids of different chain lengths were used as the substrates to test *Sl-AACS1* acyl-CoA synthase activity. Mean amount of acyl-CoAs generated

(nmol min⁻¹ mg⁻¹ proteins) was used to represent enzyme activities. The results are from three measurements ± SEM. **Figure 4 — source data 1** includes values for the measurements. **(C)** Enzyme activity of SI-AACS1 for six fatty acid substrates. **(D)** Identification of membrane lipid phosphatidylcholine (PC), which contains medium acyl chains, following transient expression of *SI-AECH1* in *N. benthamiana* leaves. The results from expressing *SI-AACS1* and co-expressing both *SI-AECH1* and *SI-AACS1* are also shown. Mole percentage (Mol %) of the acyl chains from membrane lipids with carbon number 12, 14, 16, and 18 are shown for three biological replicates ± SEM. *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01. Welch two-sample *t* test was performed comparing with the empty vector control. **Figure 4 — source data 2** includes values for the lipid analysis. Acyl groups of the same chain lengths with saturated and unsaturated bonds were combined in the calculation. **Figure 4 — figure supplement 2** shows that the putative *SI-AECH1* orthologs from *S. pennellii* and *S. quitoense* generated medium chain lipids in the infiltrated leaves.

Figure 5. AACS1 and AECH1 are evolutionarily conserved in Solanum plants. **(A)** A conserved syntenic genomic region containing *AACS1* and *AECH1* was found in three selected *Solanum* species. Nodes representing estimated dates since the last common ancestors (Sarkinen et al., 2013) shown on the left. The closest homologs of *AACS1* and *AECH1* in *Solanum quitoense* are shown without genomic context because the genes were identified from RNA-seq and genome sequences are not available. The lines connect genes representing putative orthologs across the four species. The trichome/stem RNA-seq data of two biological *S. pennellii* replicates are summarized (**Supplementary file2**) for genes in the syntenic region. The red-blue color gradient provides a visual marker to rank the expression levels in FPKM. Structures of representative medium chain acylsugars from *S. quitoense* (acylinositol, I4:26) (Hurney, 2018) and *S. pennellii* (acylglucose, G3:19) (Leong et al., 2019) are on the right. **Figure 5 — figure supplement 1** shows that stable *Sp-AACS1* transformation of the M82 CRISPR mutant *sl-aacs1* restores C12 containing acylsugars **(B)** CRISPR/Cas9-mediated gene knockout of *Sp-AACS1* or *Sp-AECH1* in *S. pennellii* produce no detectable medium chain containing acylsugars. The ESI⁺ mode LC/MS extracted ion chromatograms of trichome metabolites are shown for each mutant. The *m/z* 127.01 (left panel) corresponds to the glucopyranose ring fragment that both acylsucroses and acylglucoses generate under high collision energy positive-ion mode. The *m/z* 155.14 (center panel) and 183.17 (right panel) correspond to the acylium ions from acylsugars with chain length of C10 and C12, respectively. **Figure 5 — figure supplement 2A-C** describes the design of the gRNAs and the detailed information of gene edits. **(C)** Silencing *Sq-AACS1* (*Sq-c34025*) or *Sq-AECH1* (*Sq-c37194*) in *S. quitoense* using VIGS leads to

reduction of total acylsugars. The peak area/internal standard (IS) normalized by leaf dry weight was shown from sixteen plants $\pm$ SEM. *** $p < 0.001$, Welch two-sample t test. **Figure 5 — figure supplement 2E and 2F** describes the VIGS experimental design and the representative LC/MS extracted ion chromatograms of *S. quitoense* major acylsugars. **(D)** Reduced gene expression of *Sq-AACS1* or *Sq-AECH1* correlates with decreased acylsugar levels in *S. quitoense*. The qRT-PCR gene expression data are plotted with acylsugar levels of the same leaf as described in **Figure 5 — figure supplement 2E**. **Figure 5 — source data 1** includes raw data for the *S. quitoense* VIGS experiments.

Figure 6. Evolution of the acylsugar gene cluster is associated with acylsugar acyl chain diversity across the Solanaceae family. (A) The acylsugar gene cluster syntenic regions of 11 Solanaceae species and two outgroup species *Ipomea trifida* (Convolvulaceae) and *Coffea canephora* (Rubiaceae). This is a simplified version adapted from **Figure 6 — figure supplement 1**. Only genes from the three families – ACS (blue), BAHD acyltransferase (green), and ECH (orange) – are shown. For information about the syntenic region size in each species refer to **Figure 6 — figure supplement 1** and **Supplementary file 4**. **(B)** The evolutionary history of the acylsugar gene cluster and its relation to the acylsugar phenotypic diversity. The evolution of BAHD acyltransferase genes is inferred based on **Figure 6 — figure supplement 2** and **Figure 6 — figure supplement 5**. ECH genes based on **Figure 6 — figure supplement 3**. ACS genes based on **Figure 6 — figure supplement 4** and **Figure 6 — figure supplement 6**. The temporal order for the emergence for the three types of genes are shown in the colored boxes on the left: green box (BAHD acyltransferase), orange box (ECH), blue box (ACS). The yellow star represents the Solanaceae-specific WGD. Structures of representative short and medium chain acylsugars were shown on the right. **Figure 6 — figure supplement 8** describes distribution of acylsugar acyl chains with different lengths in species across the Solanaceae family.

Legends for supplementary figures and files

Figure 2 — figure supplement 1. Expression profiles of tomato ACS, ECH, and BAHD acyltransferase family genes used for phylogenetic analysis in this study. Each column represents one transcriptomic profiling dataset generated by RNA-seq analysis using samples from the cultivated tomato (*S. lycopersicum*). A total of 372 RNA-seq datasets were used for the analysis as described in the previous study (Moore et al., 2020). The normalized FPKM value of each gene across all the 372 datasets was illustrated by the color scale. The maximum FPKM value was set to 1 (red), while the minimum FPKM

value was 0 (blue). The datasets generated using tomato root hairs (first column) or trichomes (second column) were indicated by arrows. Genes (y-axis) and expression datasets (x-axis) were both grouped using hierarchical clustering. Genes involved in acylsugar biosynthesis, such as *Sl-ASATs*, *Sl-AACS1*, and *Sl-AECH1*, were clustered together, which are highlighted by the orange box. Hierarchical clustering also revealed another group of genes that are root hair-specific as pointed out by the purple box. The gene ID was colored based on which gene family it belongs. Blue: ACS genes; red: ECH genes; green: BAHD acyltransferase genes.

Figure 3 — figure supplement 1. CRISPR-Cas9-mediated gene knockouts in cultivated tomato *S. lycopersicum*. The gRNAs targeting *Sl-AACS1* (A), *Sl-AECH1* (B), and *Solyc07g043660* (C) in cultivated tomato are highlighted with red lines and text. Two pairs of gRNAs were designed that target *Sl-AECH1*, which were followed by two trials of plant transformation. DNA sequences of the self-crossed T1 generation transgenic lines carrying homozygous gene edits are shown beneath the gene model. Dotted rectangle boxes highlight edited sequences. (D) Electrospray ionization negative (ESI⁻) mode, LC/MS extracted ion chromatograms of seven major trichome acylsugars of the CRISPR mutant *solyc07g043660* and the M82 parent.

Figure 3 — figure supplement 2. The syntenic region of cultivated tomato *S. lycopersicum* chromosome 7 and 12 harboring the acylsugar and steroidal glycoalkaloid gene clusters. The gene models are represented by rectangles, with pseudogenes labeled with dotted lines. The lines linking the gene models of the two chromosomes denote putative orthologous genes in the synteny. GAME genes involved in glycoalkaloid metabolism were previously reported (Itkin et al., 2013).

Figure 4 — figure supplement 1. Characterization of cluster genes using leaf transient expression: protein subcellular targeting and impacts on lipid metabolism. (A) Confocal images of co-expression analysis in *N. tabacum* leaf epidermal cells using C-terminal CFP-tagged *Solyc07g043660* and the mitochondrial marker MT-RFP. Arrowheads point to mitochondria that are indicated by MT-RFP fluorescent signals. White bar equals 10 μ m. (B) Confocal images of co-expression analysis in *N. tabacum* leaf epidermal cells using N-terminal YFP-tagged *Sl-AACS1*, *Sl-AECH1*, or *Solyc07g043660*, and the peroxisomal marker RFP-PTS. Arrowheads point to peroxisomes that are indicated by RFP-PTS fluorescent signals. Bar equals 10 μ m. (C) *N. benthamiana* leaf membrane lipid acyl chain composition. The results from infiltrating *Sl-AACS1* or *Sl-AECH1* individually, and infiltrating *Sl-AECH1* and *Sl-AACS1*

together are shown. The lipid abbreviations are: phosphatidylglycerol (PG), sulfoquinovosyl diacylglycerol (SQDG), digalactosyldiacylglycerol (DGDG), monogalactosyldiacylglycerol (MGDG), phosphatidylinositols (PI), and phosphatidylethanolamine (PE). Mole percentage (Mol %) of the acyl chains from membrane lipids with carbon number 12, 14, 16, and 18 are shown for three biological replicates $\pm$ SE. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$. Welch two-sample t test was performed comparing each experimental with the empty vector control. PI and PE lipids were adjacent on the TLC plates and were pooled for analysis. Acyl groups of the same chain lengths with saturated and unsaturated bonds were combined in the calculation.

Figure 4 — figure supplement 2. The closest homologs of *Sl-AECH1* from other *Solanum* species generate medium chain lipids when transiently expressed in *N. benthamiana*. (A) ESI⁻ mode, LC/MS extracted ion chromatograms of two SQDGs with C12 as peaks diagnostic of lipids containing medium chain fatty acids. (B) Mass spectra of two SQDGs contain C12 acyl chain. Fragmentation of SQDG (16:0, 12:0) and SQDG (18:3, 12:0) in ESI⁻ mode revealed the fragment ion C12 fatty acid (m/z : 199.17) and the SQDG head group (m/z : 225.0). (C) Among the *Sl-AECH1* homologs tested, *Sopen07g023250* (*Sp-AECH1*) and *Sq_c37194* (*Sq-AECH1*), from *S. pennellii* and *S. quitoense* respectively, generated medium chain SQDG in the infiltrated leaves. The close homologs of *Sl-AECH1* in *S. lycopersicum*, *S. pennellii*, and *S. quitoense*, which also have trichome expressions, were used to build the phylogenetic tree. The nucleotide sequences were aligned with MEGA7 (www.megasoftware.net) using the default MUSCLE algorithm. The T92+G maximum likelihood model was selected for phylogenetic tree construction from 24 different nucleotide substitution models based on the lowest Bayesian Information Criterion. The bootstrap values were obtained with 1000 replicates. The closest *Sl-AECH1* Arabidopsis homolog *AT1G06550* serves as an outgroup.

Figure 5 — figure supplement 1. Stable *Sp-AACS1* transformation of the M82 CRISPR mutant *sl-aacs1* restores C12 containing acylsugars. (A) ESI⁻ mode, LC/MS extracted ion chromatograms are shown for seven major acylsugar peaks extracted from trichome of *S. lycopersicum* M82, *sl-aacs1*, and two independent T0 generation suppressed *sl-aacs1* transgenic lines expressing *Sp-AACS1* under its own promoter. (B) Peak area percentage of seven major trichome acylsugars of the suppression transgenic plants. The sum of the peak area percentage of each acylsugar equals to 100%. The results of acylsugar peak area percentage were calculated from six independent T0 transgenic lines $\pm$ SE.

1112 **Figure 5 — figure supplement 2. Functional analysis of AACS1 and AECH1 in *S. pennellii* and *S.***
 1113 ***quitoense* via CRISPR-Cas9 system and VIGS, respectively.** The design of gRNAs targeting wild
 1114 tomato *S. pennellii* LA0716 *Sp-AACS1* (A), *Sopen07g023250* (B), and *Sp-AECH1* (C) is highlighted with
 1115 red lines and text. The transgenic T0 generation carrying chimeric or biallelic gene edits are shown
 1116 beneath the gene model. DNA sequence of the gene edits was obtained through Sanger sequencing of
 1117 cloned plant DNA fragments. The gene edits are highlighted with dotted rectangular boxes. (D) ESI⁺ mode,
 1118 LC/MS extracted ion chromatograms shown for C10 (*m/z*: 155.14) and C12 (*m/z*: 183.17) fatty acid ions
 1119 corresponding to medium chain trichome acylsugars extracted from the CRISPR mutants
 1120 *sopen07g023220* and the *S. pennellii* LA0716 parent. (E) Experimental design of VIGS in *S. quitoense*. A
 1121 control group silencing the PDS genes was performed in parallel with the experimental groups. The onset
 1122 of the albino phenotype of the control group was used as a visual marker to determine the harvest time
 1123 and leaf selection in the experimental groups. The fourth true leaves were harvested and cut in half for
 1124 gene expression analysis and acylsugar quantification, respectively. (F) ESI⁺ mode, LC/MS extracted ion
 1125 chromatograms of six major acylsugars of *S. quitoense* for the experimental group. The three LC/MS
 1126 chromatograms show representative acylsugar profiles of the empty vector control plants and the VIGS
 1127 plants targeting *Sq-AACS1* and *Sq-AECH1*.

1128 **Figure 6 — figure supplement 1. Syntenic regions containing the acylsugar gene cluster.** The
 1129 species name and chromosome/scaffold identifier are indicated with *S. lycopersinum* in blue font.
 1130 Rectangle: protein-coding gene (solid line) or pseudogene (dotted line) colored according to the type of
 1131 genes. Line connecting two genes: putative orthologous genes. Numbers underneath chromosomes:
 1132 chromosome coordinates in million bases (Mb). The gene ID and location information used to generate the
 1133 synteny figure is provided in **Supplementary file 4**.

1134 **Figure 6 — figure supplement 2. Analysis of the evolutionary history of the BAHD acyltransferases**
 1135 **in the syntenic regions in different Solanaceae species.** (A) Phylogenetic tree of BAHD
 1136 acyltransferases homologous to *Solyc07g043670*. Genes colored with green and labeled with green
 1137 rectangles are from the syntenic regions of Solanaceae species shown in panel (B). Genes marked with
 1138 stars have been biochemically tested involved in acylsugar biosynthesis in previous studies. (B) The
 1139 acylsugar gene cluster syntenic regions of 11 Solanaceae species and two outgroup species *Ipomea*
 1140 *trifida* (Convolvulaceae) and *Coffea canephora* (Rubiaceae). (C) Reconciled evolutionary history of BAHD

acyltransferases based on panel (A) and (B). The colors of the branches correspond to different lineages shown in panel (A). Grey branch means enzymes from that lineage could not be found through BLAST and may have been lost. Numbers in the circle indicate the nodes in the phylogenetic tree as shown in panel A. The inferred evolutionary events were shown next to the nodes. Grey box highlighted the evolutionary history of the genes in the syntenic region. Before the Solanaceae specific whole genome duplication (WGD) events, the BAHD acyltransferase gene was tandemly duplicated. The WGD events resulted in at least two genomic regions (Chr07 and Chr12), each containing two BAHD acyltransferase genes. Before the divergence of *Solanum*, *Nicotiana*, and *Petunia* species, one of the tandem copies in Chr12 region was lost, and only orthologs of *Sl-ASAT1* was retained. The question mark next to *Petunia* denotes the inconsistency of the phylogenetic relationship and the chromosome location of the gene *Pa-B816* with an unknown mechanism.

Figure 6 — figure supplement 3. Analysis of the evolutionary history of the ECH genes in the syntenic regions in different Solanaceae species. (A) Phylogenetic tree of ECH genes homologous to *Sl-AECH1*. Genes colored with orange and labeled with orange rectangles are from the syntenic regions of Solanaceae species shown in panel (B). Genes marked with stars have been tested involved in acylsugar biosynthesis. (B) The acylsugar gene cluster syntenic regions of 11 Solanaceae species and two outgroup species *Ipomea trifida* (Convolvulaceae) and *Coffea canephora* (Rubiaceae). (C) Reconciled evolutionary history of ECH enzyme based on panel (A) and (B). The colors of the branches correspond to different lineages shown in panel A. Grey branch means enzymes from that lineage could not be found through BLAST and may have been lost. Numbers in the circle indicate the nodes in the phylogenetic tree as shown in panel (A). The inferred evolutionary events were shown next to the nodes. Grey box highlighted the evolutionary history of the genes in the syntenic regions. Before the Solanaceae specific WGD events, an ECH was inserted into the syntenic region through unknown mechanism. After the WGD events, there was one ECH gene in each syntenic region on Chr07 and Chr12. Before the divergence of *Solanum*, *Nicotiana*, and *Petunia* species, the ECH gene on Chr07 had experienced a tandem duplication event, leading to two branches on the phylogenetic tree. During the speciation, the ECH gene on Chr12 was deleted from the genome in the most recent common ancestor of *Nicotiana* and *Solanum* after divergent from *Petunia*, while one of the tandem duplicates on Chr07 was lost in *Petunia*.

1169 **Figure 6 — figure supplement 4. Analysis of the evolutionary history of the ACS genes in the**
1170 **syntenic regions in different Solanaceae species. (A)** Phylogenetic tree of ACS genes homologous to
1171 *Sl-AACS1*. Genes colored with blue and labeled with blue rectangles are from the syntenic regions of
1172 Solanaceae species shown in panel (B). Genes marked with stars have been tested involved in acylsugar
1173 biosynthesis. **(B)** The acylsugar gene cluster syntenic regions of 11 Solanaceae species and two outgroup
1174 species *Ipomea trifida* (Convolvulaceae) and *Coffea canephora* (Rubiaceae). **(C)** Reconciled evolutionary
1175 history of ACS enzyme based on panel (A) and (B). The colors of the branches correspond to different
1176 lineages shown in panel (A). Grey branch means enzymes from that lineage could not be found through
1177 BLAST and may have been lost. Numbers in the circle indicate the nodes in the phylogenetic tree as
1178 shown in panel A. The inferred evolutionary events were shown next to the nodes. A tandem duplication
1179 event happened before the Solanaceae specific WGD events, leading to two adjacent ACS genes on
1180 Chr02 (*Solyc02g082880* and *Solyc02g082870*), which were placed on two independent lineages in the
1181 phylogenetic tree. *Solyc02g082870* had gone through two rounds of WGD events, supported by the
1182 observation that *Solyc02g082870* and *Solyc03g032210* are located in corresponding syntenic blocks.
1183 *Solyc02g082880* may have experienced the segmental duplication, resulting in the ACS gene on Chr07,
1184 which had experienced another two rounds of tandem duplication in the common ancestor of *Solanum*
1185 species (*Sl-AACS1*, *Solyc07g043660*, and *Solyc07g043640*). However, whether the segmental duplication
1186 event happened before or after the Solanaceae specific WGD events cannot be well resolved by the
1187 phylogenetic analysis. Two hypotheses were proposed as shown in the grey boxes. If the insertion
1188 happened before WGD, two independent gene loss events on chromosomes 7 and 12 should have
1189 happened in *Petunia* (Hypothesis 2). If the insertion happened after WGD, only one gene loss in *Petunia*
1190 was supposed to have happened (Hypothesis 1). Note that node 4 in (A) leads to two clades, one without
1191 any *Petunia* ACS homolog (darker blue) and the other with *Petunia* homologs (cyan). With regard to the
1192 timing of the duplication event leading to these two clades, it was likely before the split between the
1193 *Petunia* and the tomato/tobacco lineages where one *Petunia* loss event occurred (darker blue). If it was
1194 after the split, the presence of a *Petunia* gene would need to be explained by a gene gain through
1195 horizontal gene transfer or other means (cyan) - a far less likely scenario than a gene loss.

1196 **Figure 6 — figure supplement 5. Phylogenetic analysis of the BAHD acyltransferase.** The BAHD
1197 acyltransferase pseudogene (*Cc-BAHD-pseu*) in the corresponding syntenic region (Figure 6) of *Coffea*
1198 *canephora* is one of the closest *Coffea* sequences sister to the ASAT clade. It indicates that the BAHD

acyltransferase gene was the first to harbor in this syntenic region before the divergence between Solanaceae and Rubiaceae. The translated amino acid sequence of *Cc-BAHD-pseu* was aligned with sequences used in Figure 6A of a previous study (Moghe et al., 2017) using MUSCLE. The phylogenetic trees were built using the maximum likelihood method with 1000 bootstrap replicates. The tree was generated using RAxML/8.0.6 with the following parameters: -f a -x 12345 -p 12345 -# 1000 -m PROTGAMMAAUTO --auto-prot=bic, and was shown with the midpoint rooting. Genes colored with green are from the focused syntenic regions. Genes marked with stars have been biochemically tested involved in acylsugar biosynthesis in previous studies.

Figure 6 — figure supplement 6. Additional evolutionary analysis of ACS genes in the syntenic regions to understand when the segmental duplication event happened. (A) *Sl-AACS1* homologs obtained from *Salpiglossis sinuate* trichome transcriptome dataset (Moghe et al., 2017) were added for additional phylogenetic analysis. Genes colored with blue are from the syntenic regions of Solanaceae species. Only the lineage derived by the number (4) evolutionary event as depicted in Figure 6 – figure supplement 5 was shown. **(B)** If the insertion happened before WGD, one gene loss on *Solanum* chromosome 12, as well as two independent gene losses on chromosomes 7 and 12 should have happened in *Petunia* and in *Salpiglossis sinuate* (Hypothesis 2). However, if the insertion happened after WGD, then only one gene loss event in *Petunia* and *Salpiglossis* was supposed to have happened (Hypothesis 1). The latter scenario is more likely due to the principle of parsimony.

Figure 6 — figure supplement 7. Ancestral trait state reconstruction analysis. Four traits were inferred for their ancestral states using the maximum likelihood model Mk1 in Mesquite 3.6. They are the presence of medium chain acylsugars, presence of ACS in the synteny, presence of ECH in the synteny, and presence of both ACS and ECH in the synteny. The proportional likelihoods were shown in each diverging node in the ball charts.

Figure 6 — figure supplement 8. Phylogenetic distribution of acylsugar acyl chains with different lengths across the Solanaceae family. (A) The collated results of acylsugar acyl chain distribution across different Solanaceae species. Red rectangles indicate detectable acyl chains in the acylsugars produced in the tested species and white rectangles indicate no detectable signals. The data source where the results are derived is listed on the right. **(B)** Results of acylsugar acyl chain characterization of selected

Solanaceae species. Mole percentage (Mol %) of acylsugar acyl chains with different lengths were obtained from GC/MS analysis of fatty acid ethyl esters.

Supplementary file 1. Co-expression analysis of tomato genes from ACS, ECH, and BAHD

acyltransferase families used for phylogenetic analysis in this study. The values of Pearson's correlation coefficient of the expression profiles between any of the two genes were shown in the table. The coefficient values were generated using the FPKM values of these genes in the 372 RNA-seq samples as shown in Figure 2-supplemental figure1. The orange box highlights a group of co-expressed genes involved in acylsugar biosynthesis, such as *Sl-ASATs*, *Sl-AACS1*, and *Sl-AECH1*. The purple box points out another group of co-expressed genes that are root hair specific.

Supplementary file 2. Gene expression levels of all analyzed transcripts in *Solanum pennellii*

LA0716. logFC: log2 fold change in stem trichomes versus shaved stems. logCPM: log (counts per million) in trichomes versus shaved stems. The F and Q-value test the significance of differential expression via a quasi- general linear model. The values noted in the sample columns represent the FPKM (Fragments Per Kilobase of transcript per Million mapped reads) analyzed via Cufflinks.

Supplementary file 3. Synthesized gene fragments and primers used in this study.

Supplementary file 4. The date used to generate the synteny figure shown in Figure 6 — figure supplement 1.

Supplementary file 5. The sequence alignment documents used to generate the phylogenetic trees for Figure 6 — figure supplements 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Figure 2 — source data 1. Data used to make Figure 2B. Peak area percentage of seven major trichome acylsugars in M82 and IL7-4.

Figure 3 — source data 1. Data used to make Figure 3B. Quantification of seven major trichome acylsugars in the CRISPR mutants *sl-aacs1* and *sl-aech1*, as well as the parent M82.

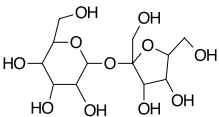
Figure 4 — source data 1. Data used to make Figure 4B. Aliphatic fatty acids of different chain lengths were used as the substrates to test *Sl-AACS1* acyl-CoA synthase activity.

1252 **Figure 4 — source data 2.** Data used to make Figure 4D and Figure 4-figure supplement 1C. *N.*
1253 *benthamiana* leaf membrane lipid acyl chain composition.

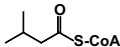
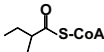
1254 **Figure 5 — source data 1.** Data used to make Figure 5C and 5D. Silencing *Sq-AACS1* or *Sq-AECH1* in *S.*
1255 *quitoense* using VIGS leads to reduction of total acylsugars.

1256

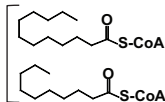
Sucrose



Acyl-CoAs



+



CoA

Fatty acids

acyl-CoA synthetase
(ACS)

SI-ASATs

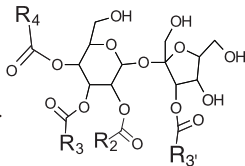


Figure 1

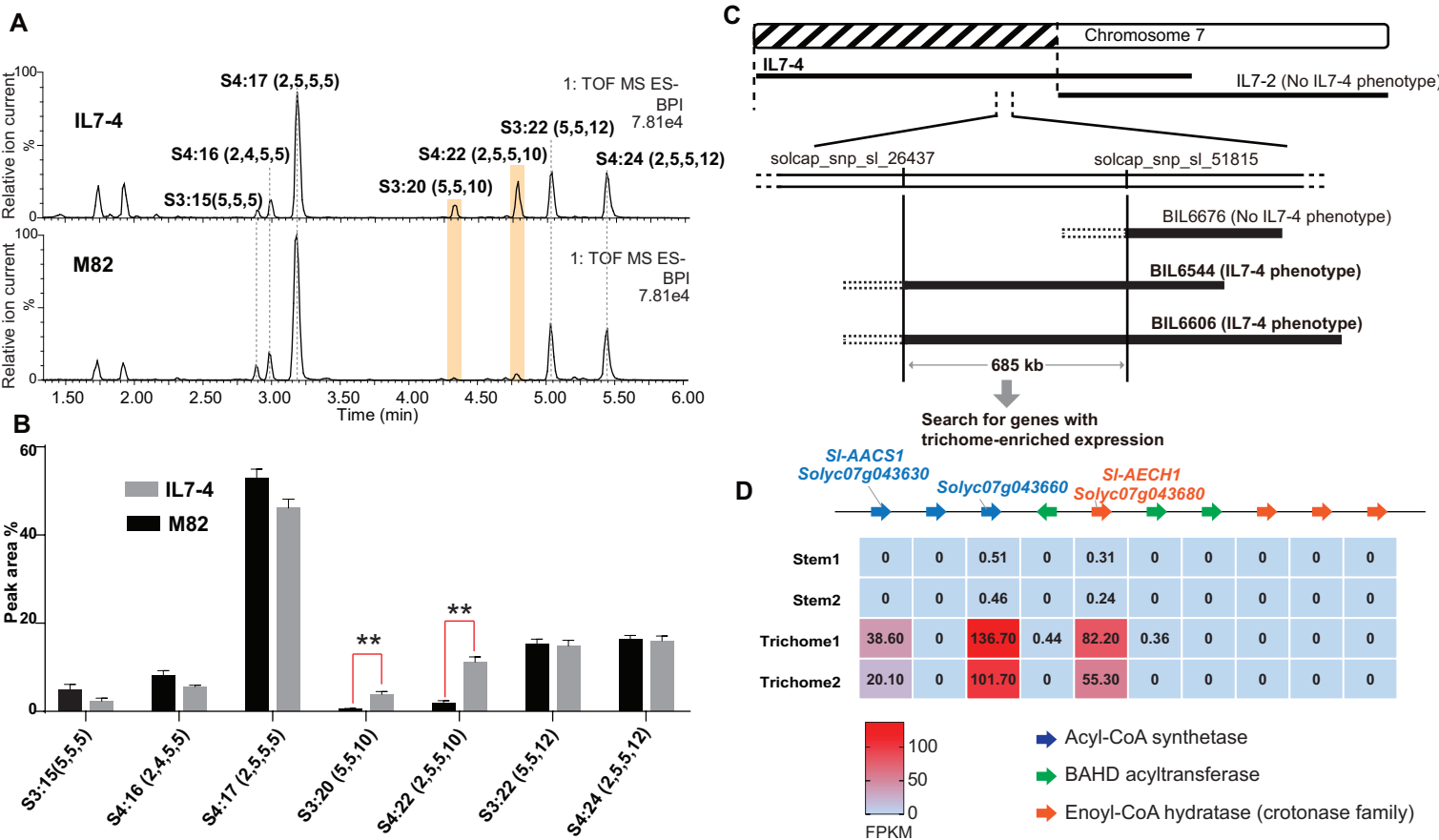


Figure 2

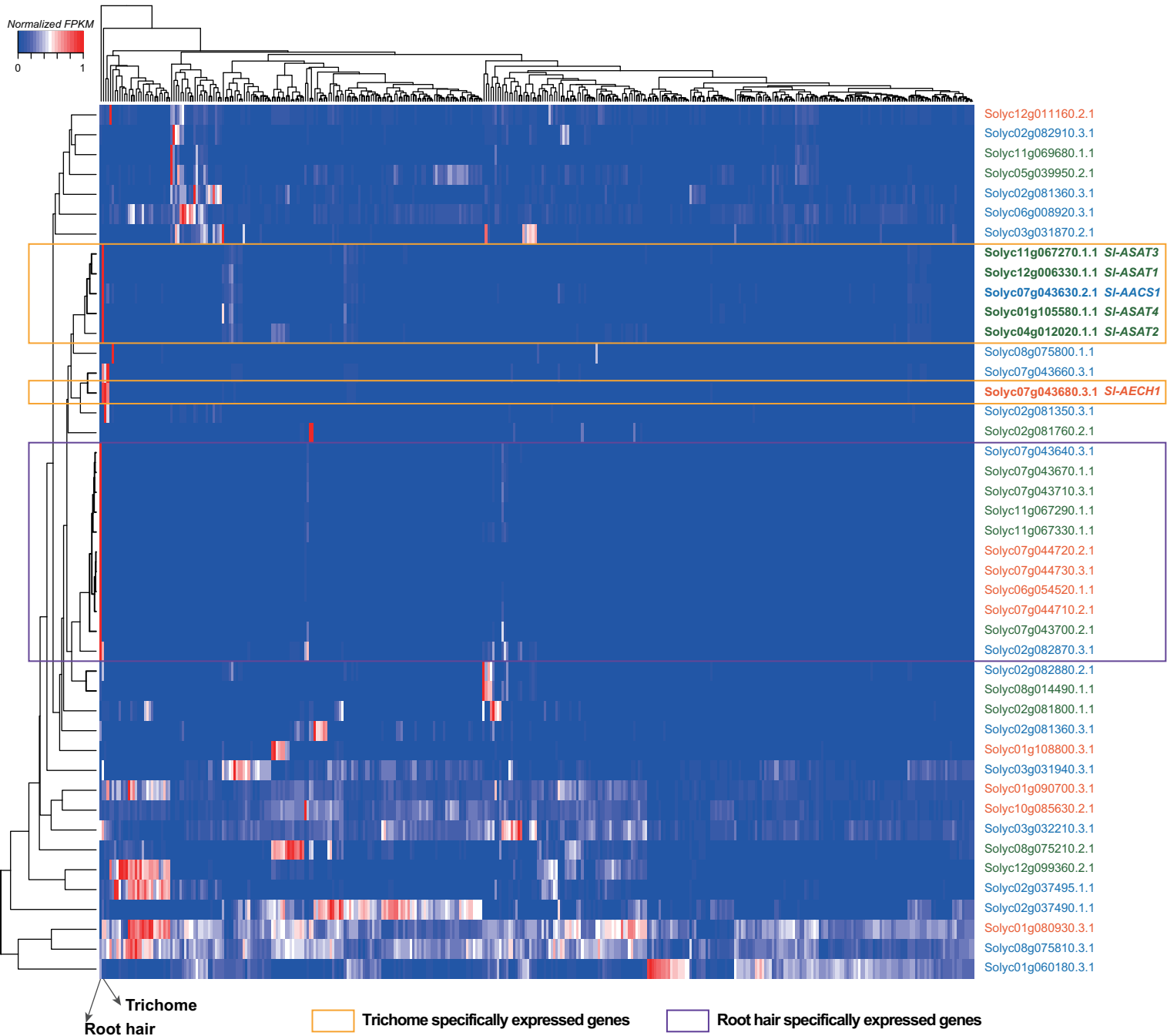


Figure 2 — figure supplement 1

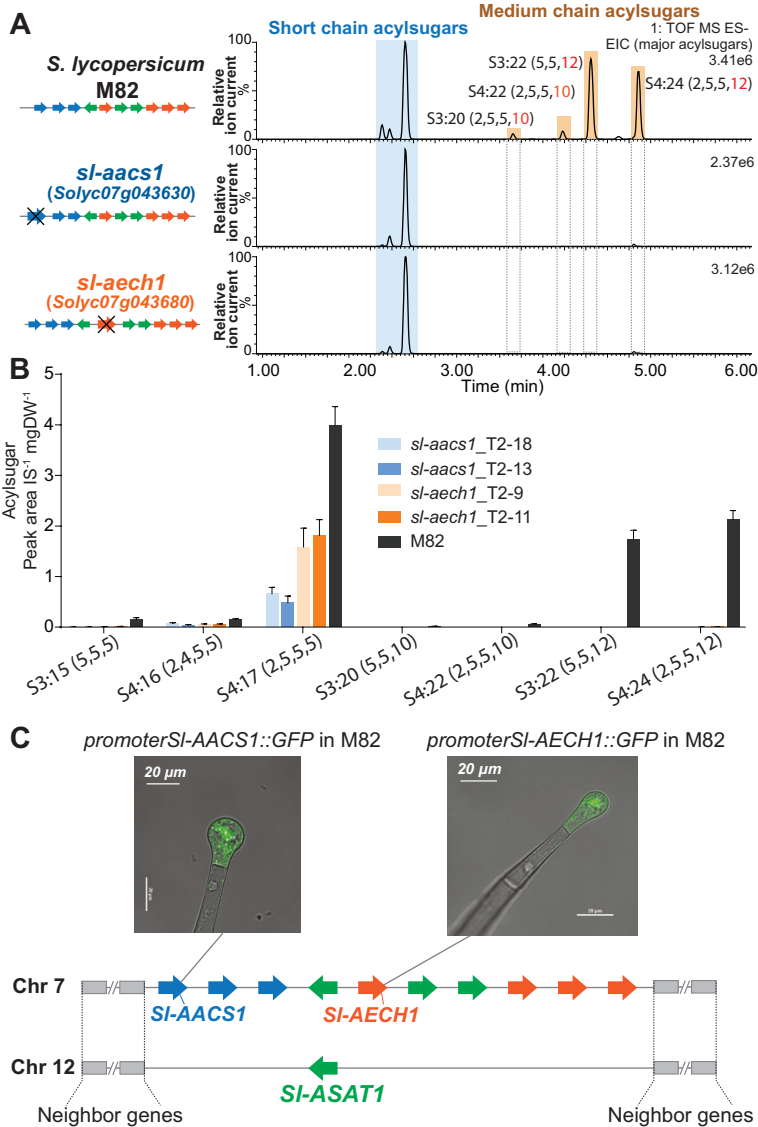


Figure 3

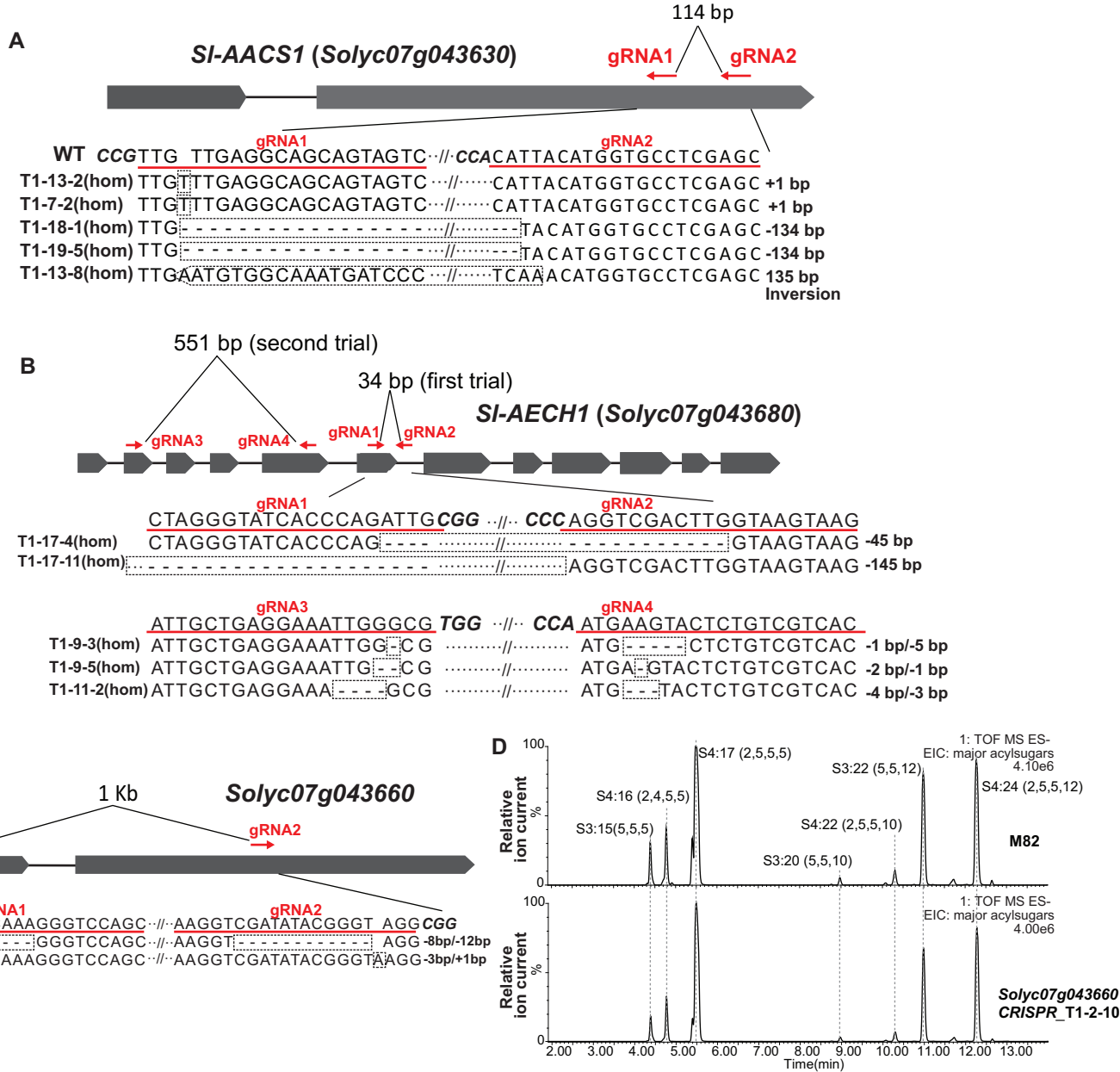


Figure 3 — figure supplement 1

Solanum lycopersicum

Chromosome 7

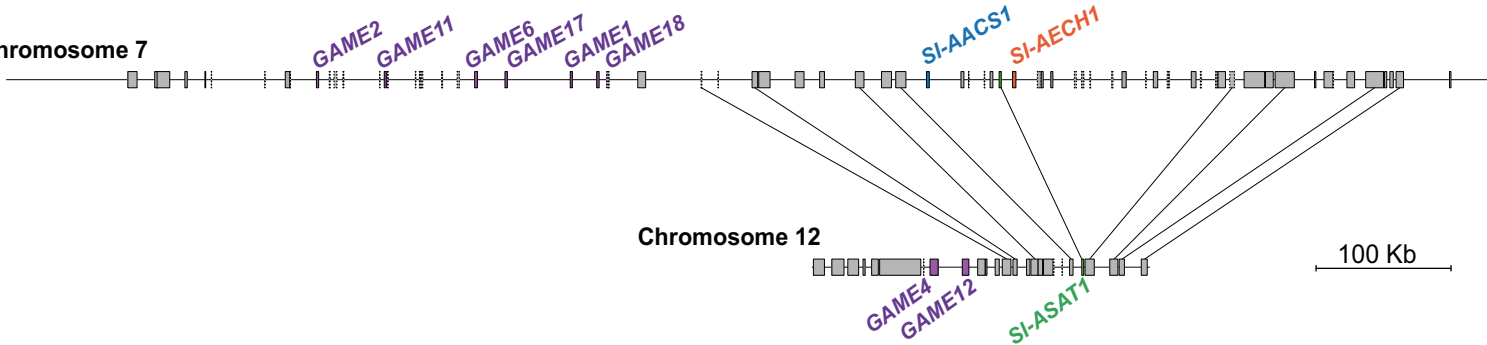


Figure 3 — figure supplement 2

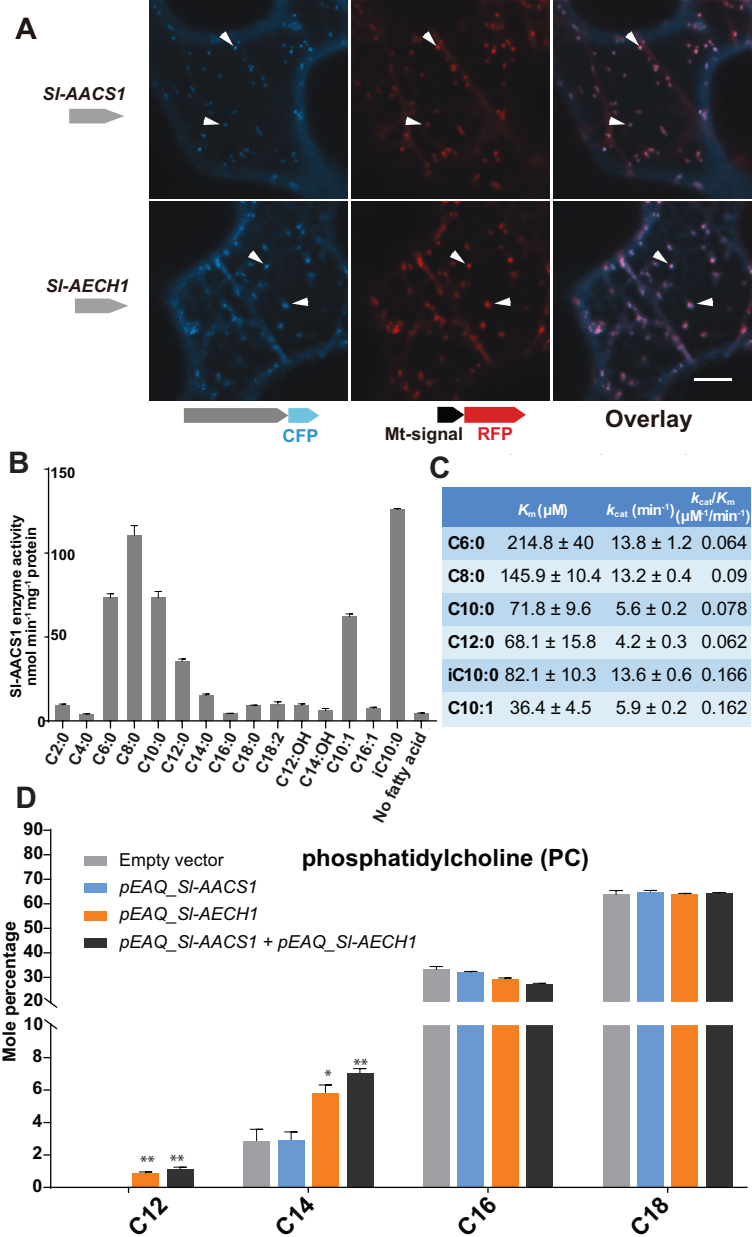


Figure 4

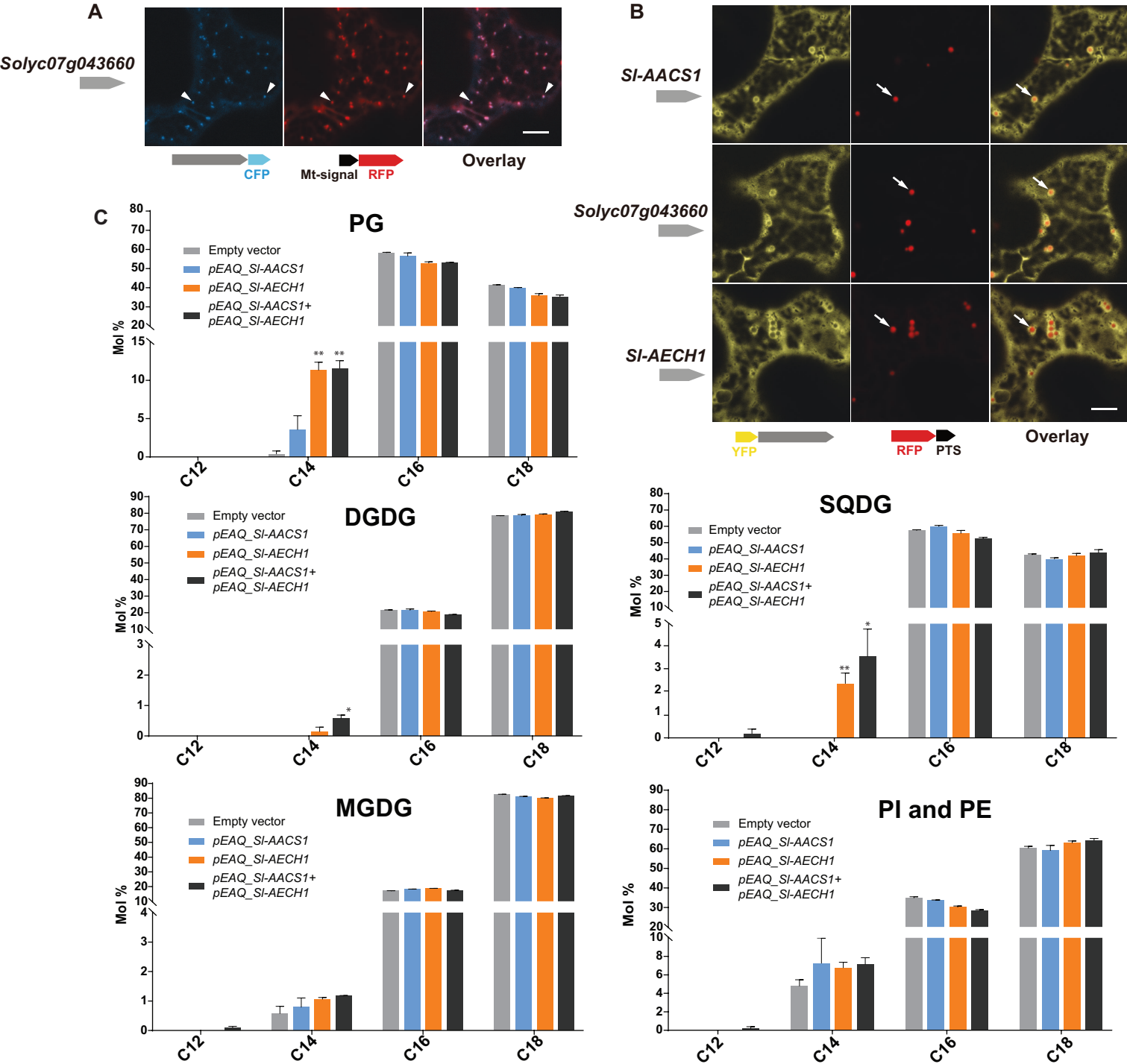


Figure 4 — figure supplement 1

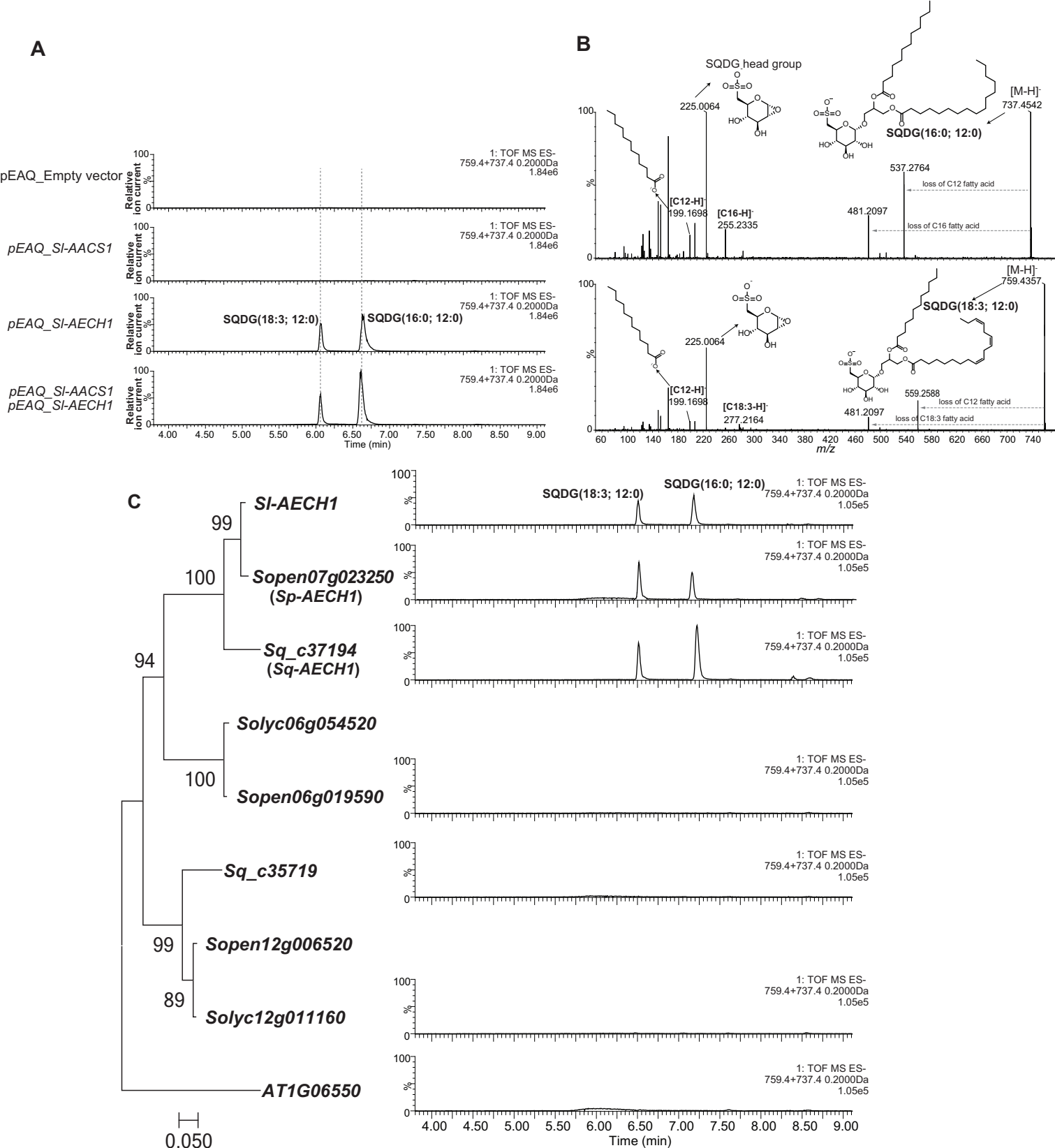


Figure 4 — figure supplement 2

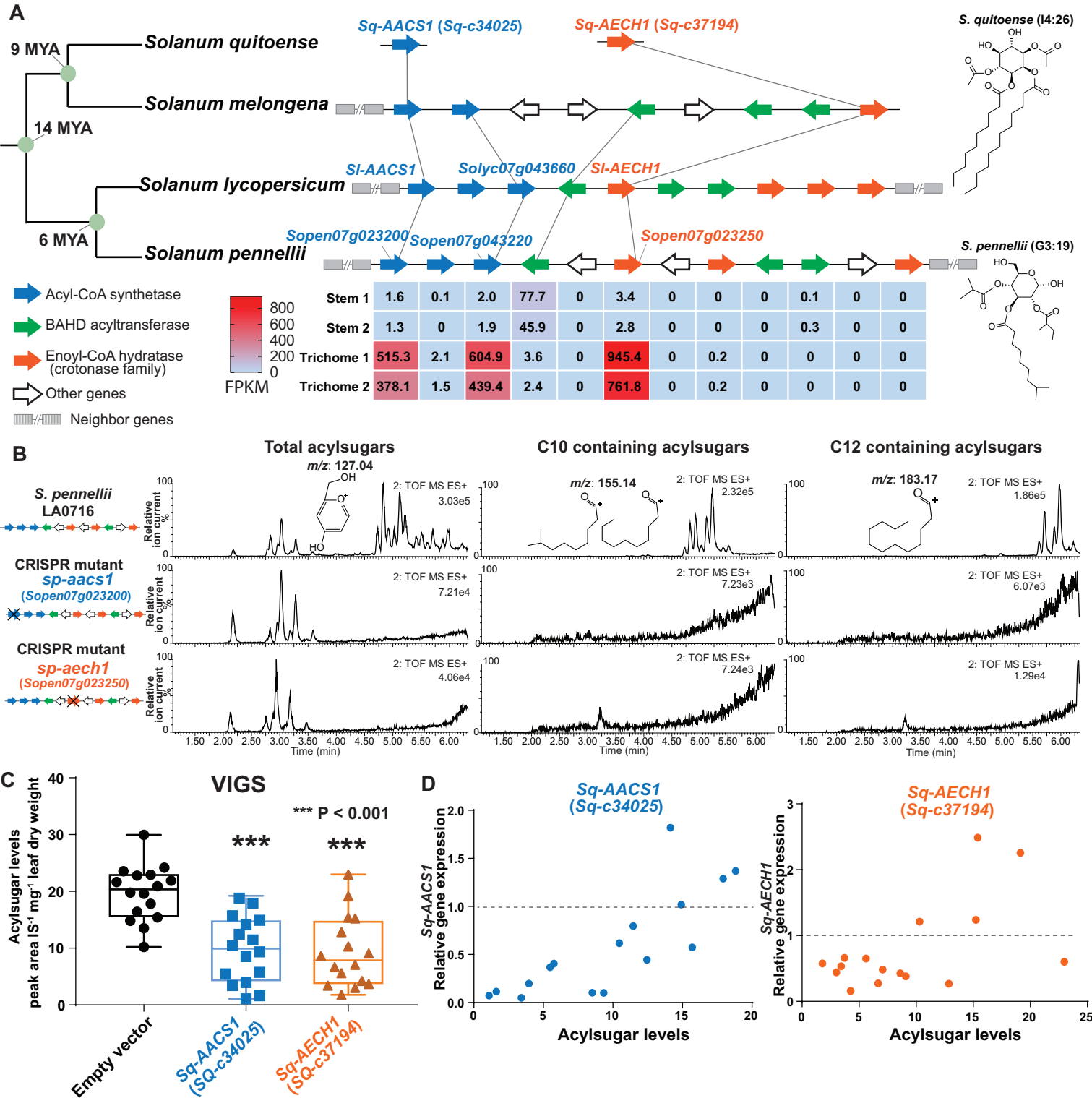
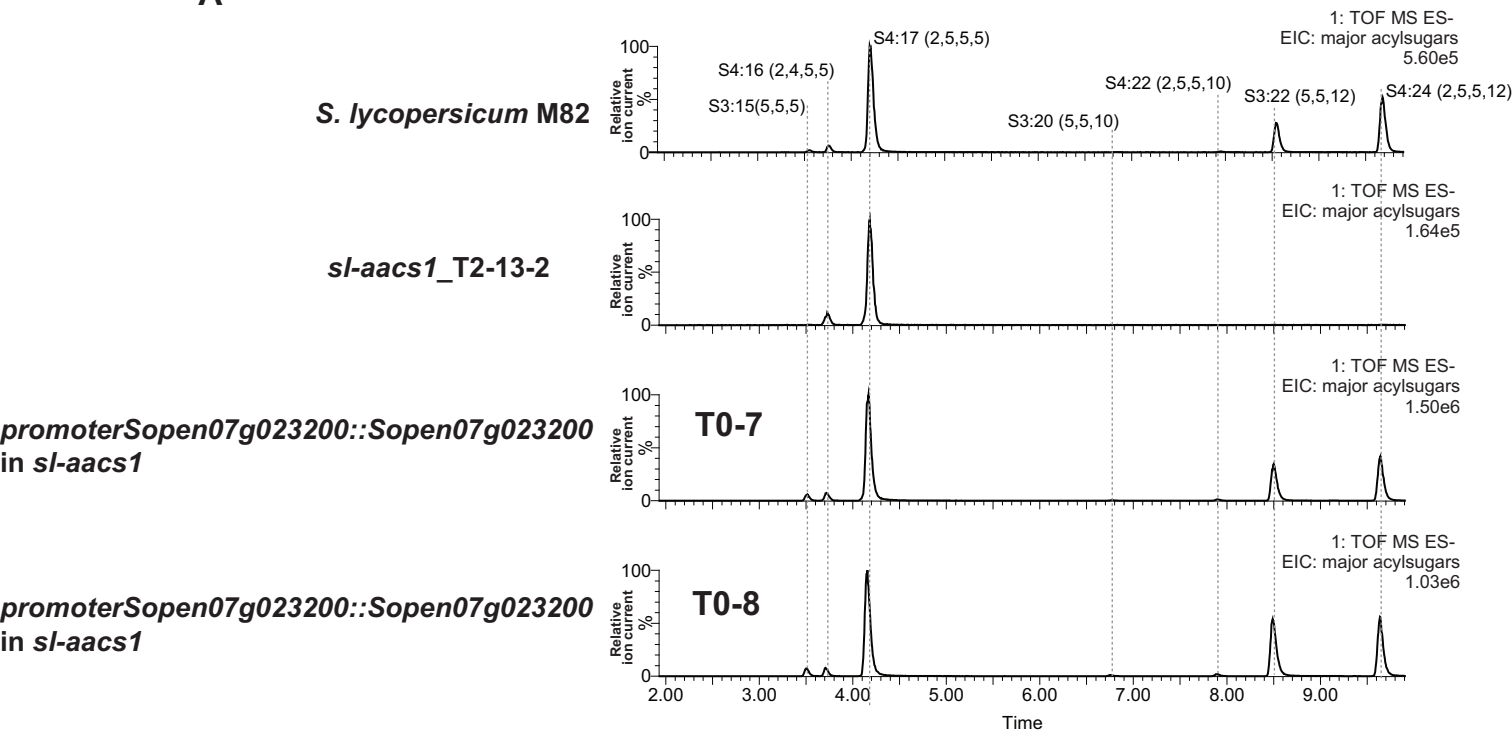


Figure 5

A



B

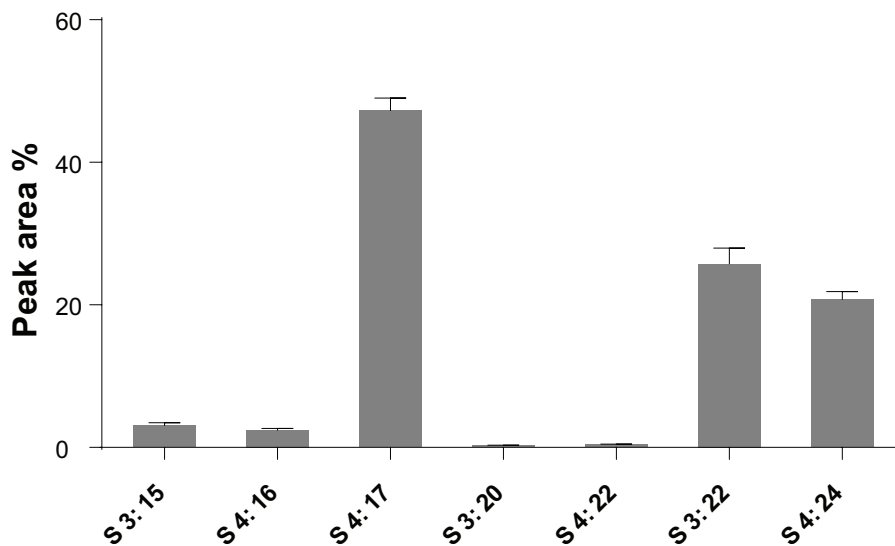


Figure 5 — figure supplement 1

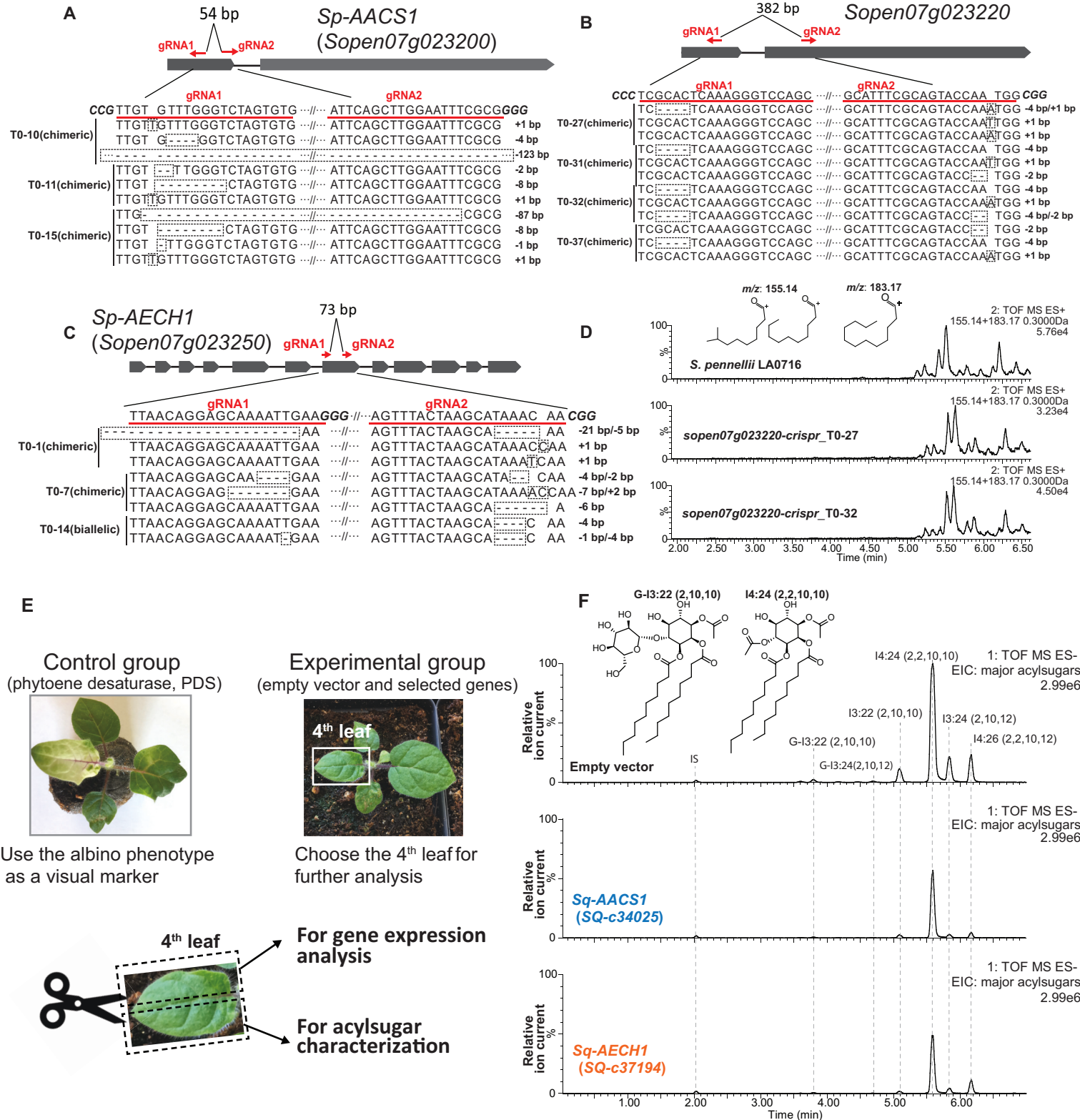


Figure 5 — figure supplement 2

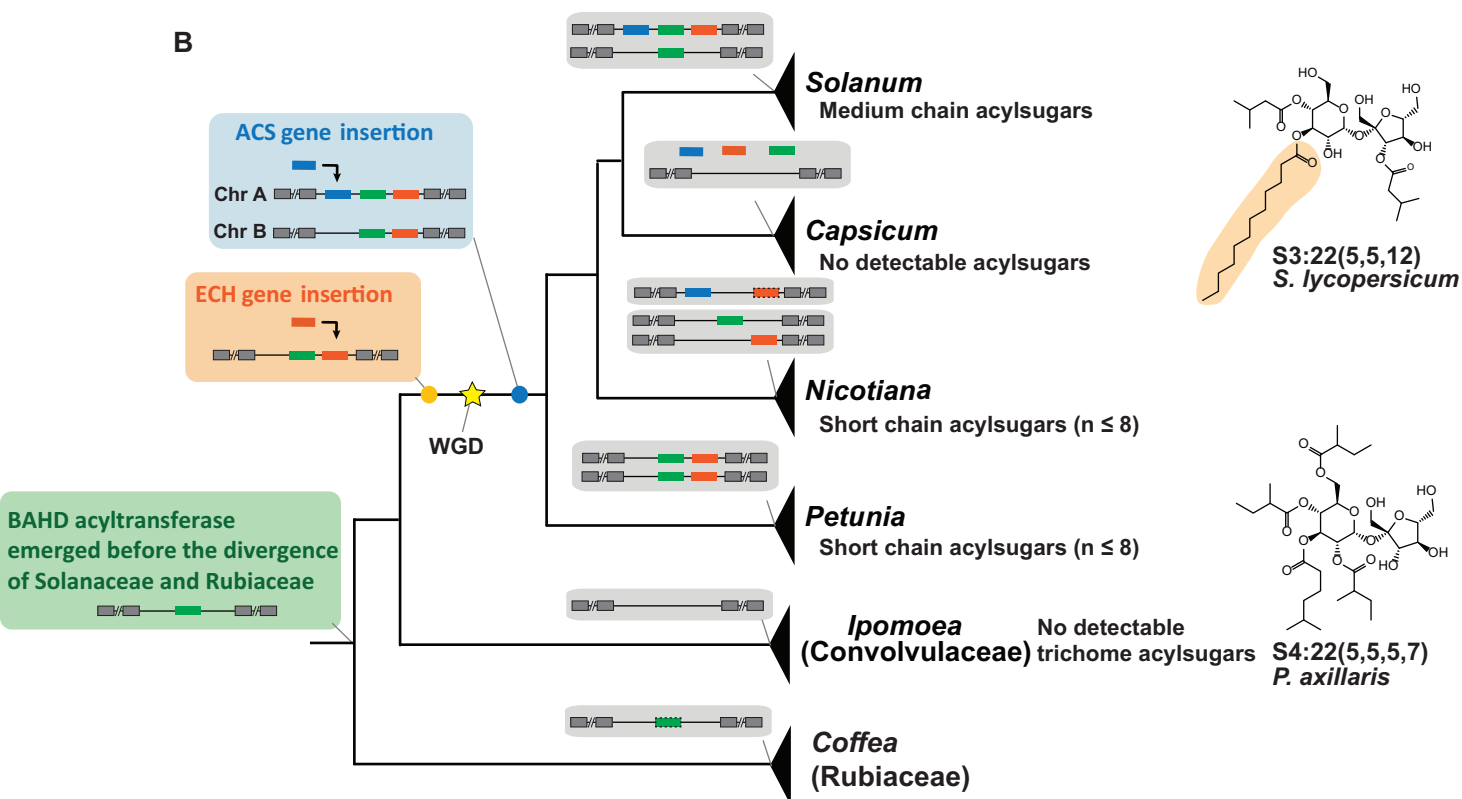
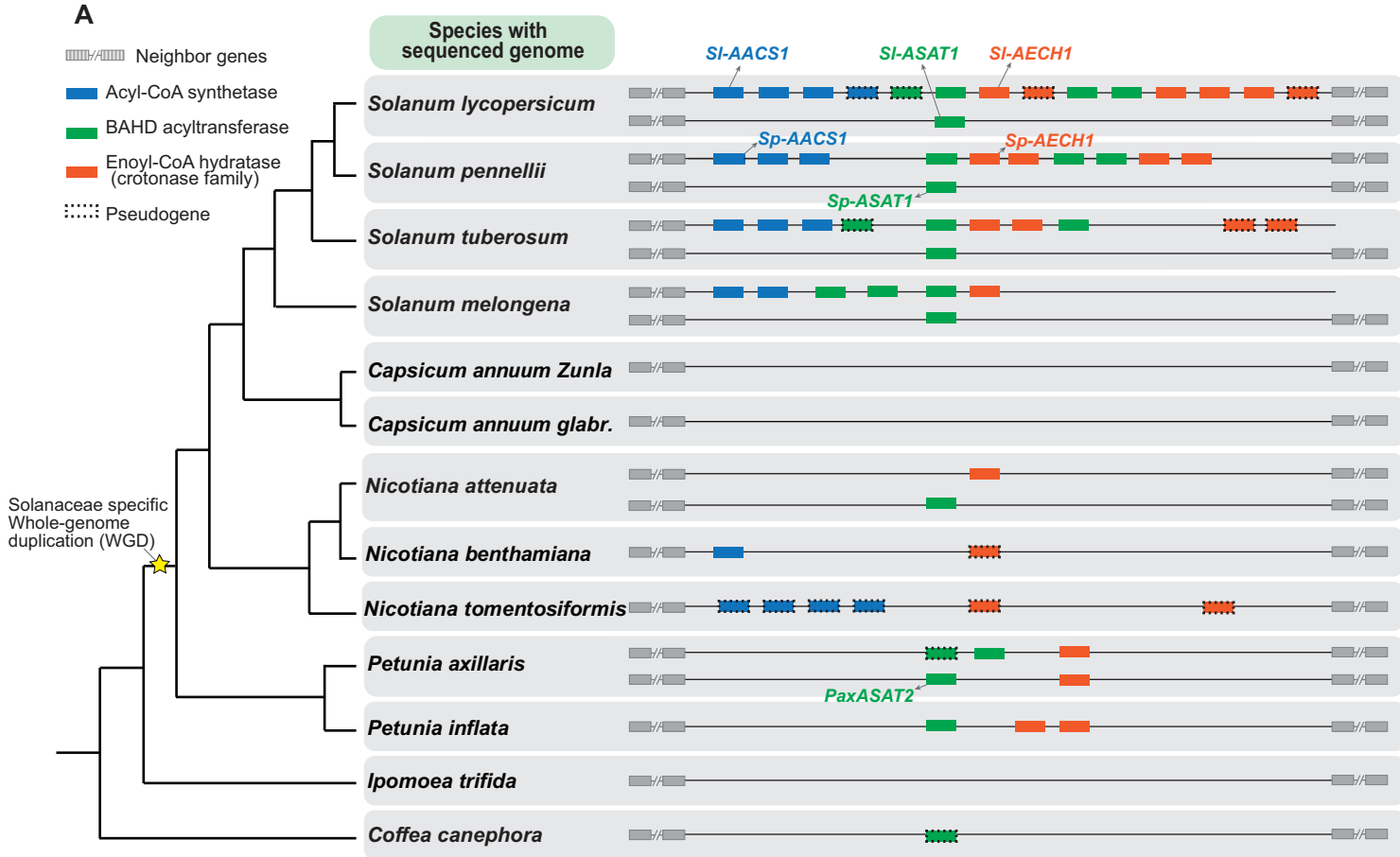


Figure 6

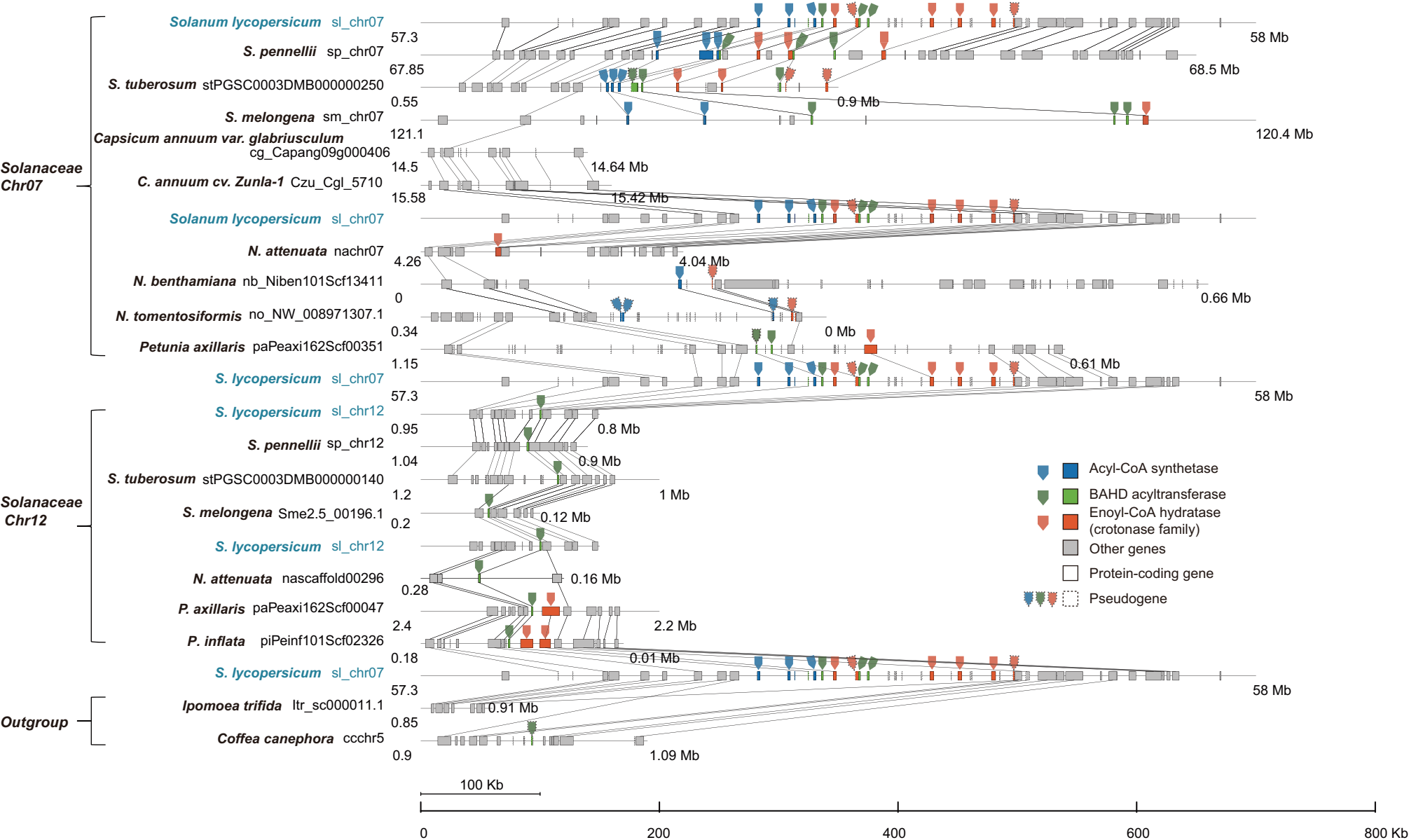
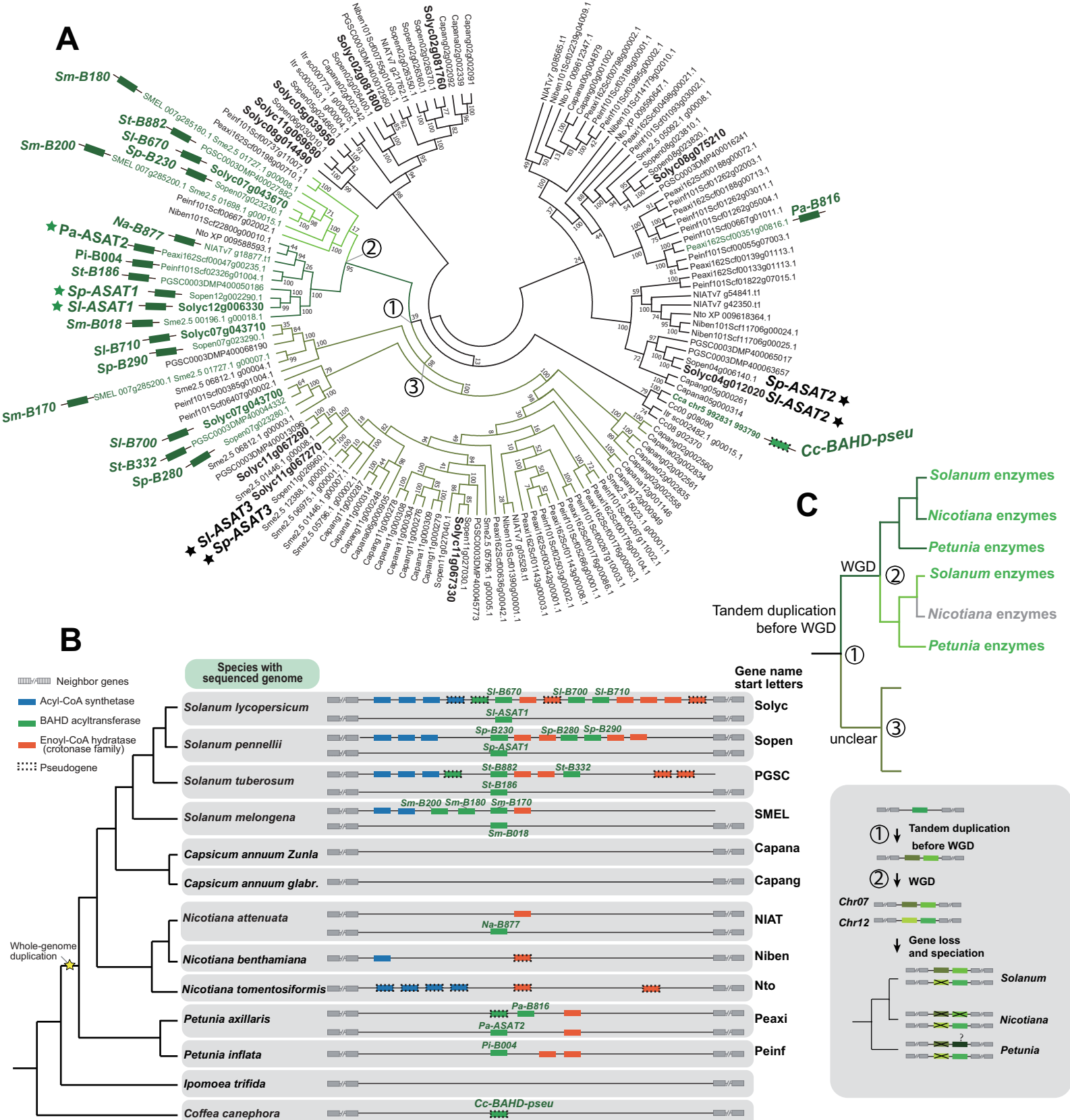
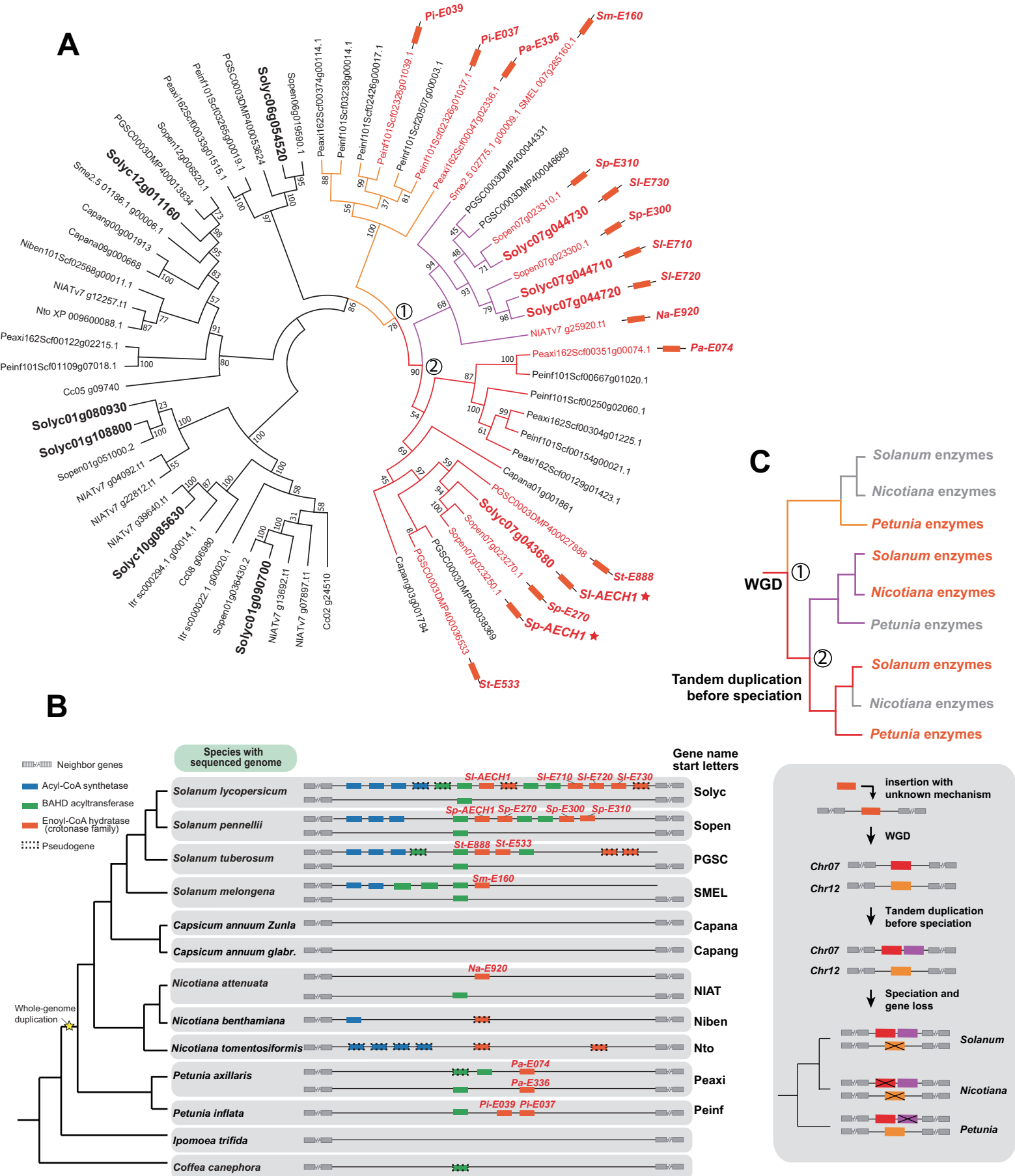


Figure 6 — figure supplement 1





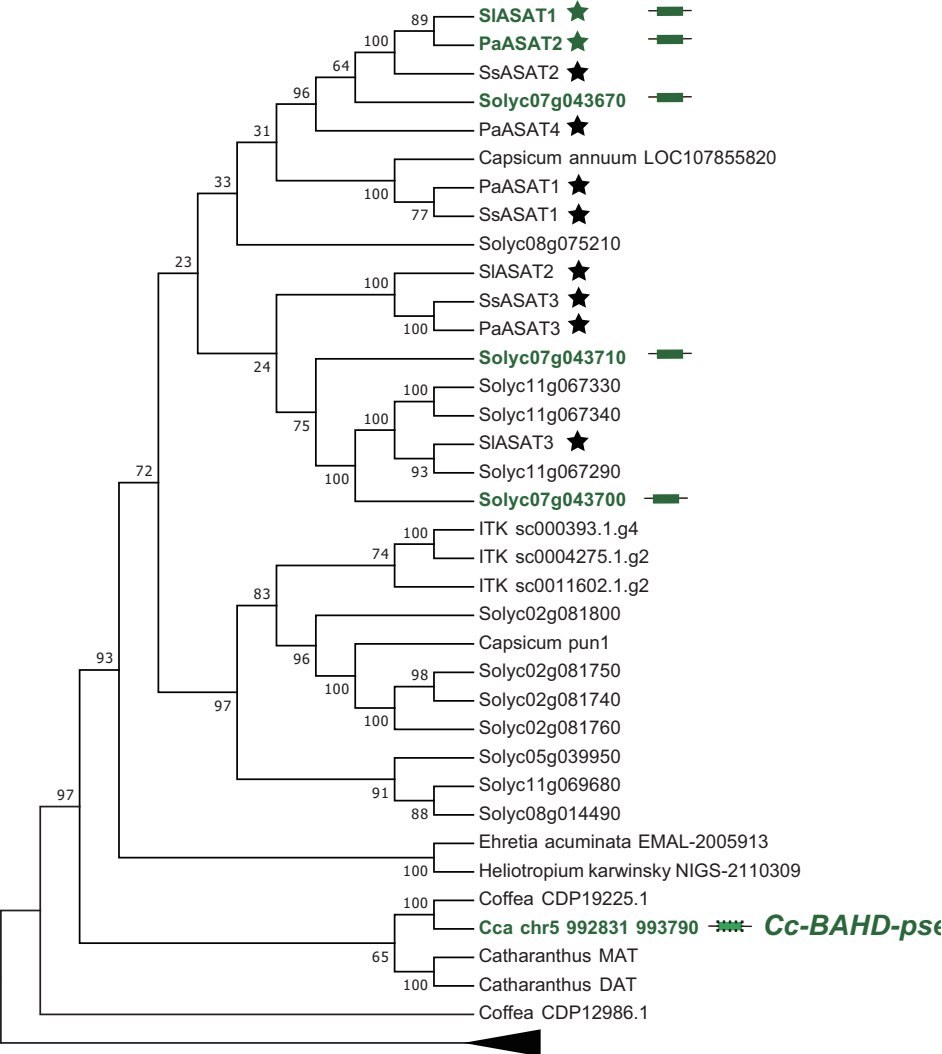


Figure 6 — figure supplement 5

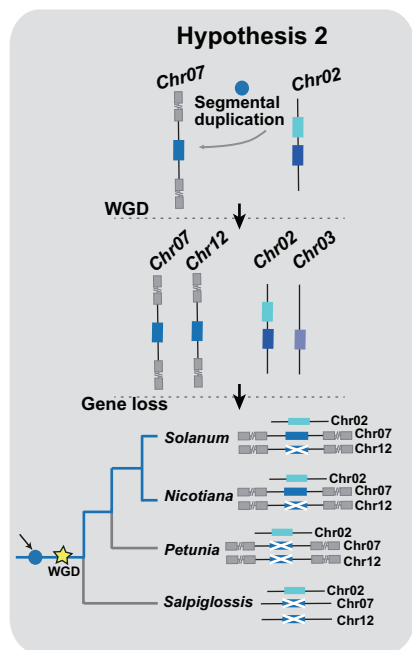
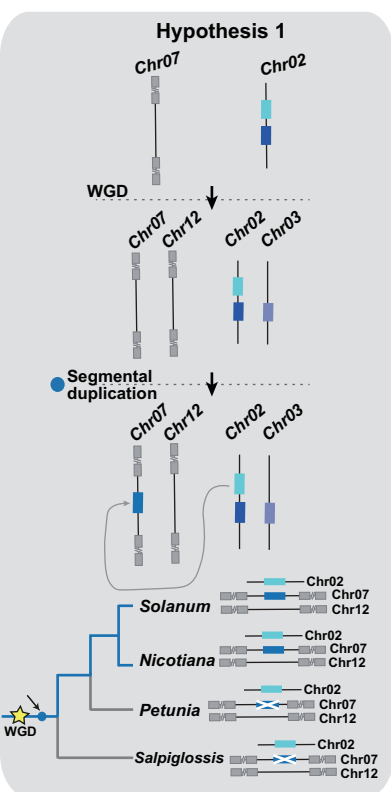
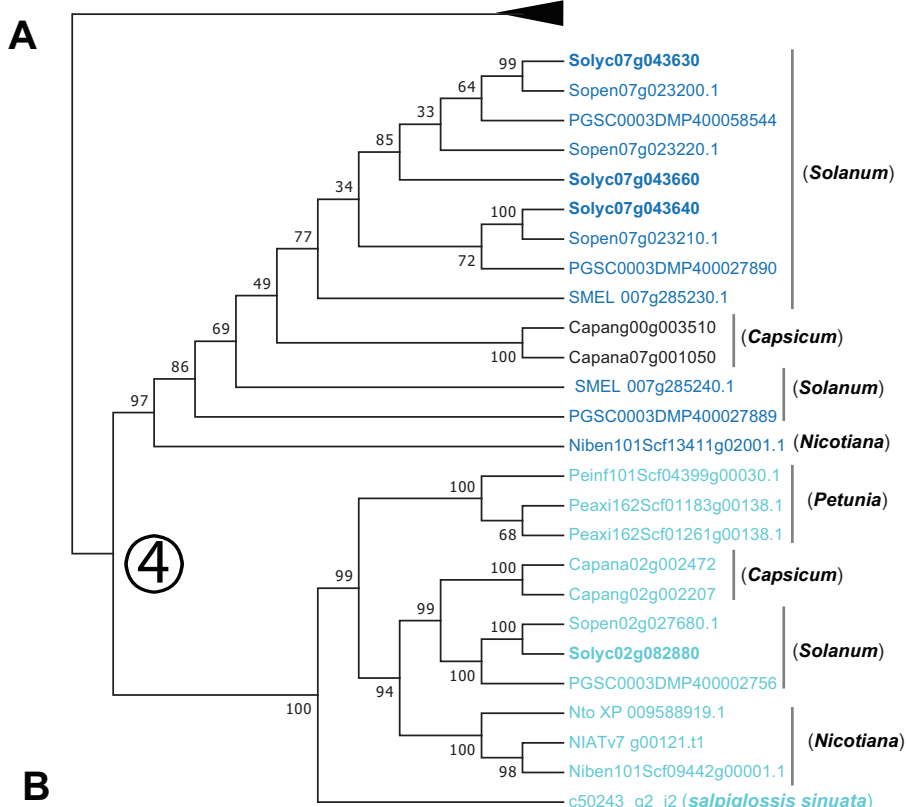


Figure 6 — figure supplement 6

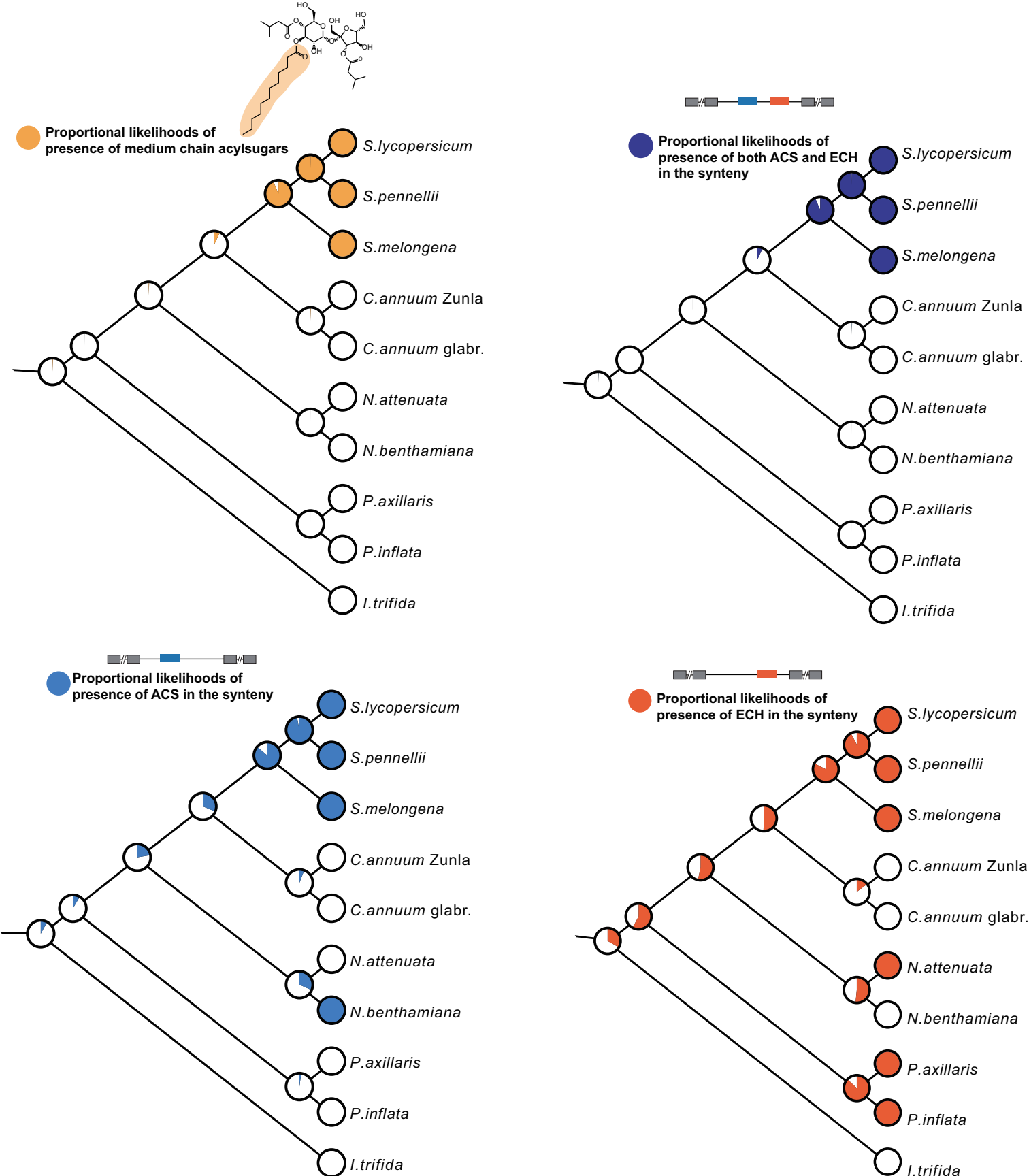


Figure 6 — figure supplement 7

