



# A phenotyping system quantifies pollen populations during heat stress using high-throughput microscopy and computer vision

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## Abstract

Plant reproduction is sensitive to heat stress. Pollen tube growth can be accelerated or arrested by high temperatures, leading to unstable tubes, failed sperm cell delivery, and ultimately crop yield loss. Pollen growth dynamics have historically been observed on the scale of individual pollen grains, but there are only a few studies surveying pollen populations across genotypes and environmental conditions. Here we describe a phenotyping system that quantifies tomato pollen characteristics on a large scale and under varied heat stress conditions. In this system, we combined high-throughput bright-field microscopy with automated object detection and tracking to understand the life of growing pollen tubes. We used this method to survey pollen from a diverse panel of 220 tomato and close wild relative accessions under different temperatures. This method can be readily adapted to pollen from different species, providing a rapid way to characterize heat stress responses and molecular functions in flowering plants.

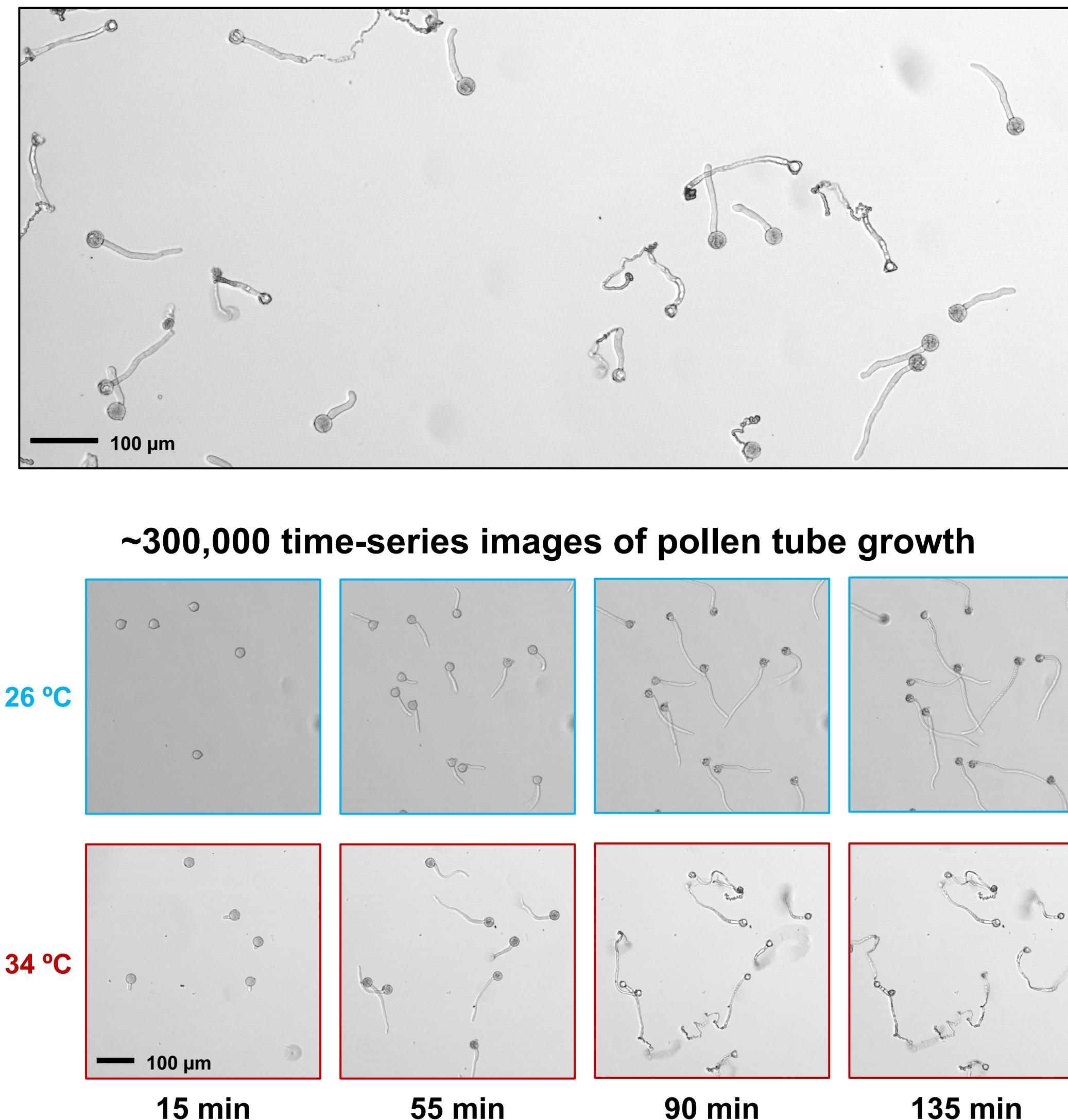
## 220 accessions capture genetic diversity of tomato and wild relatives



## Open-source phenotyping systems, sensors, and web apps



## Heat stress affects pollen tube growth



## A convolutional neural network was trained to label pollen features

### CenterNet Hourglass104

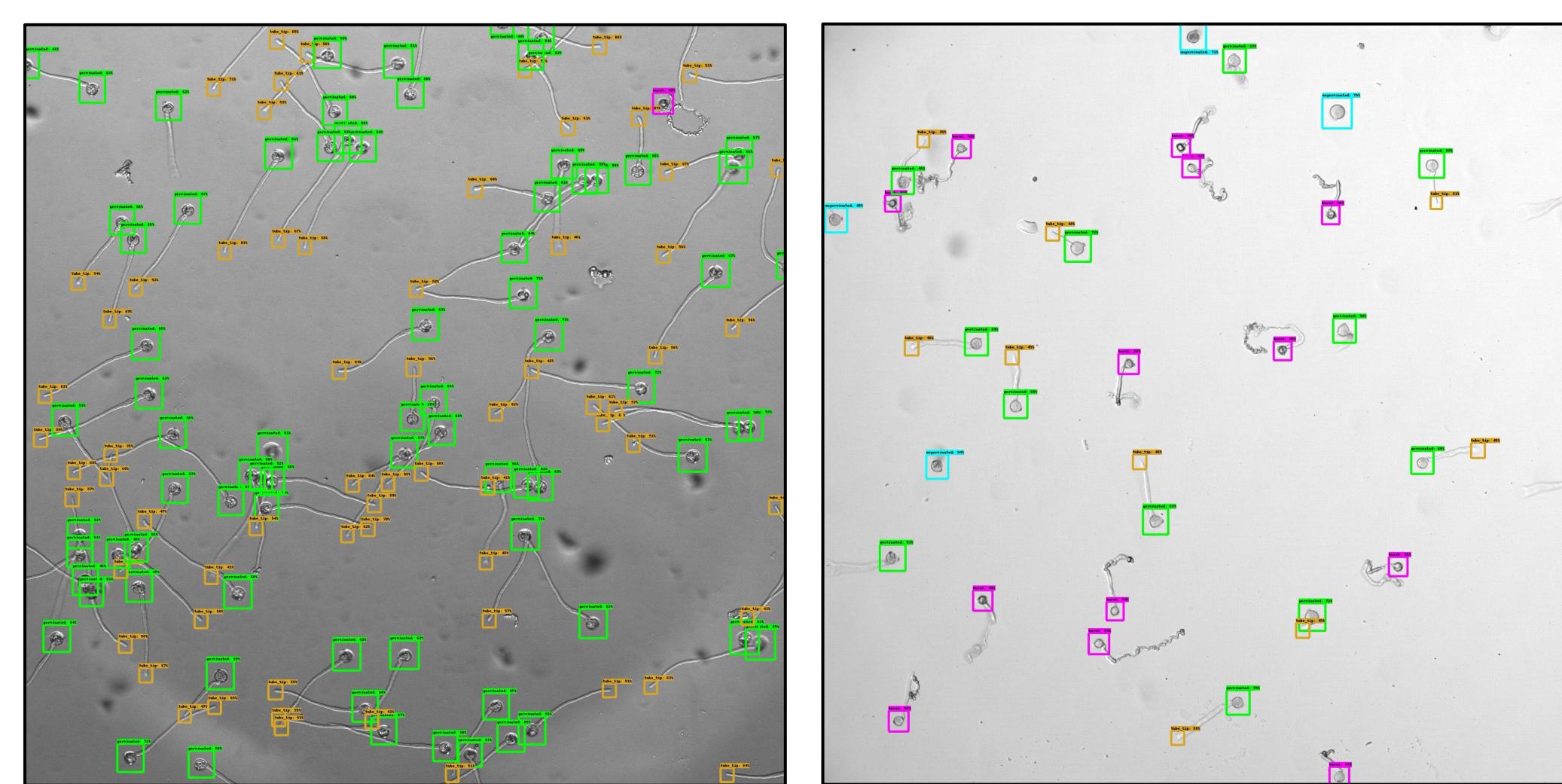
- 400 labeled images
- ~30,000 labels
- 9 minutes per image labeling
- Trained on Nvidia A100 for 3 hours
- Inference on 4 Nvidia V100s
- 19 hours for ~300,000 images
- 35,000x human speed

TensorFlow

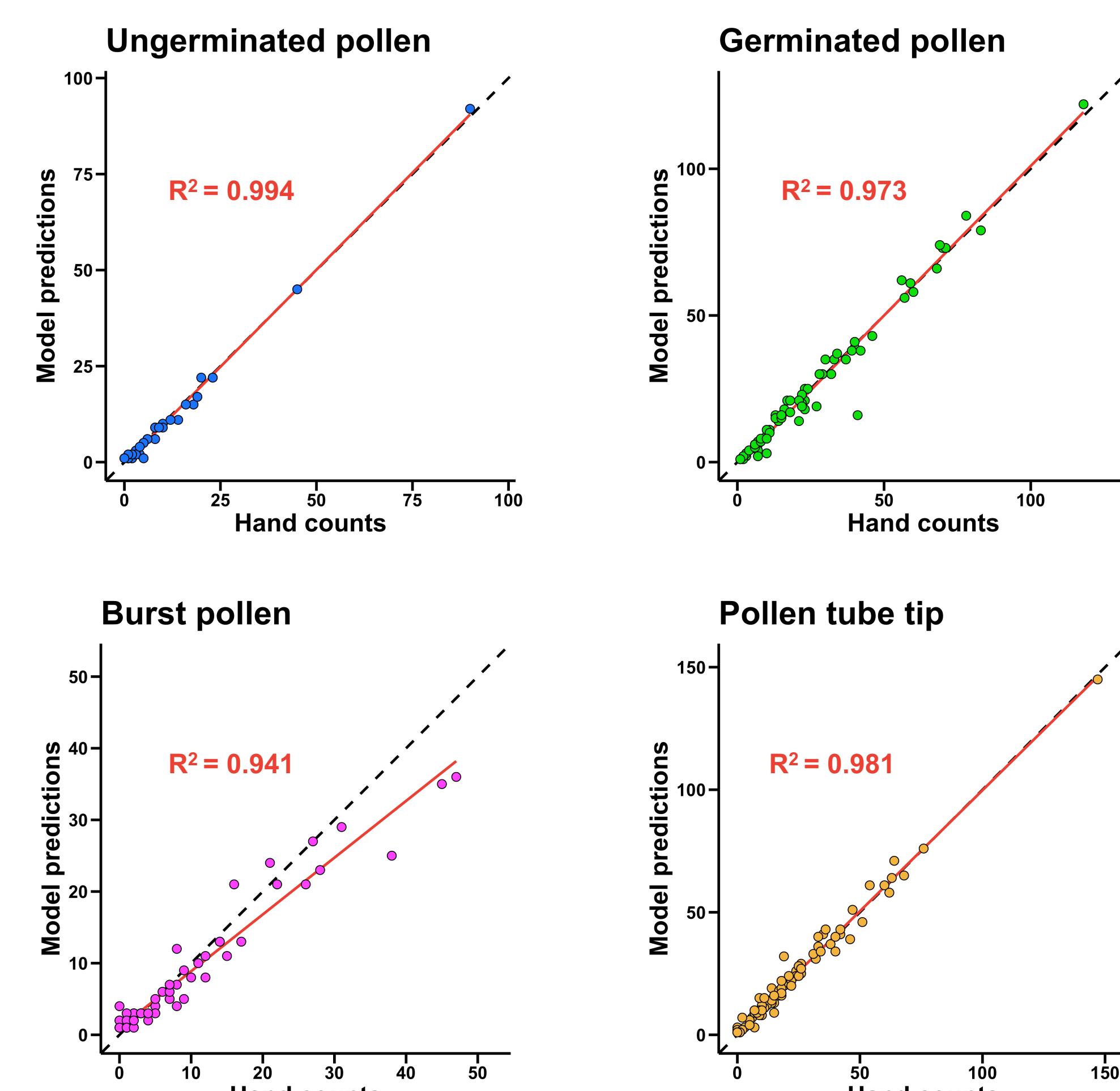
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
High Performance Computing

Jetstream2

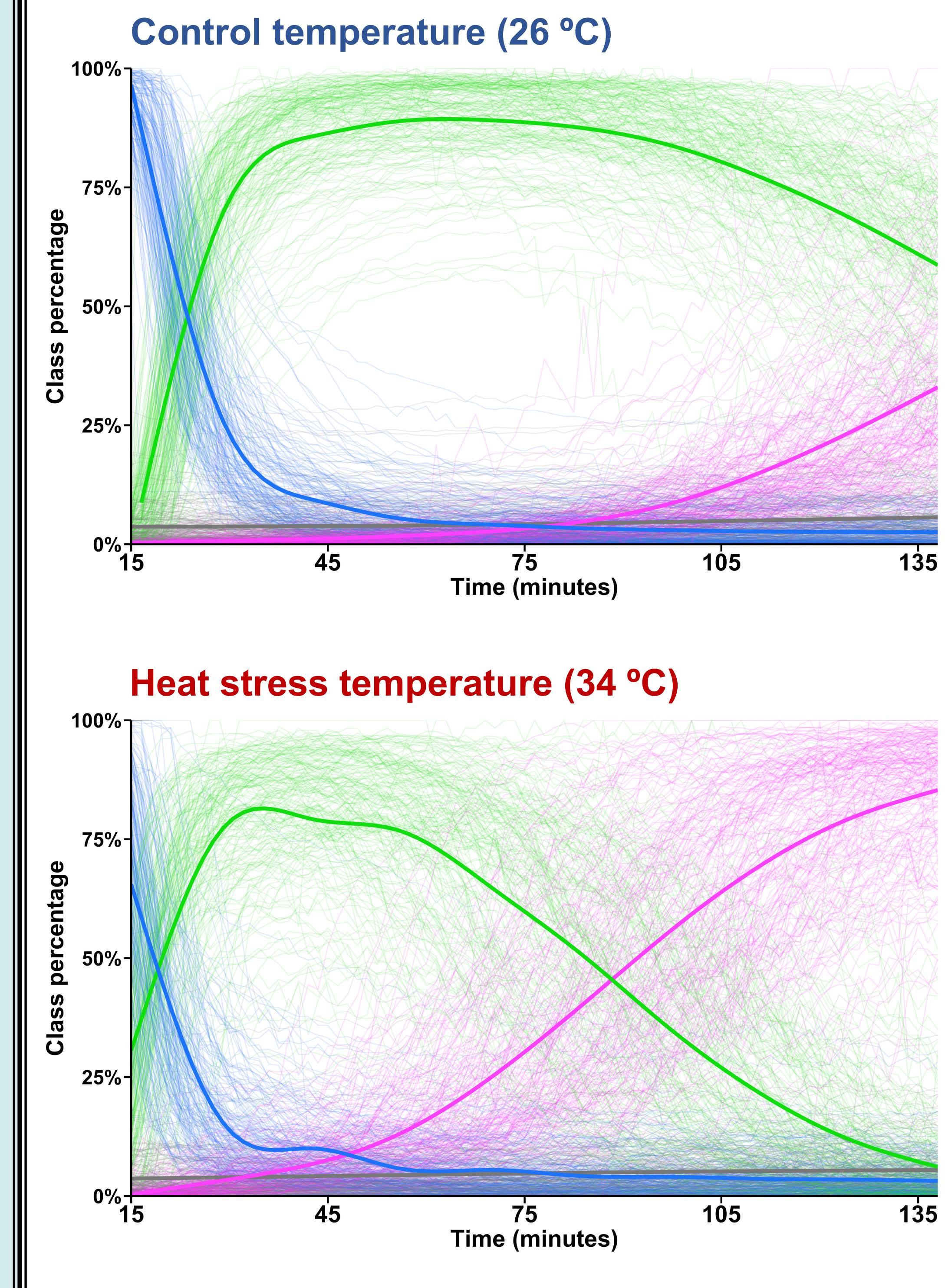
### Neural network inference



## The neural network is accurate



## Pollen populations were measured by the phenotyping system

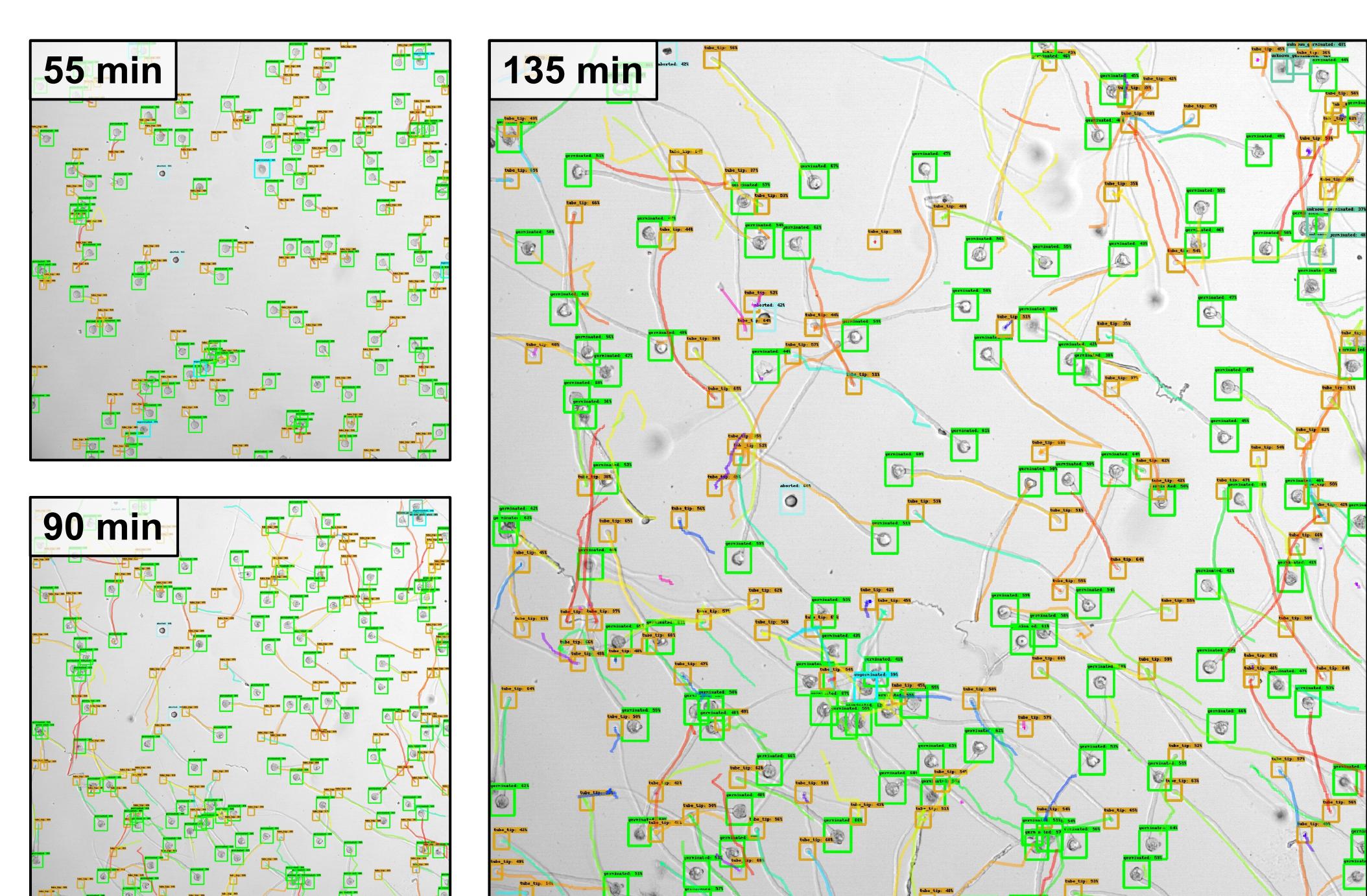


## Tube tip tracking provides additional phenotypes

### BayesianTracker

- Multiple object tracking reconstructs tube tip trajectories in crowded fields
- [github.com/quantumjot/BayesianTracker](https://github.com/quantumjot/BayesianTracker)

btrack  
Lowe Lab, UCL



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This poster is available online:



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