



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

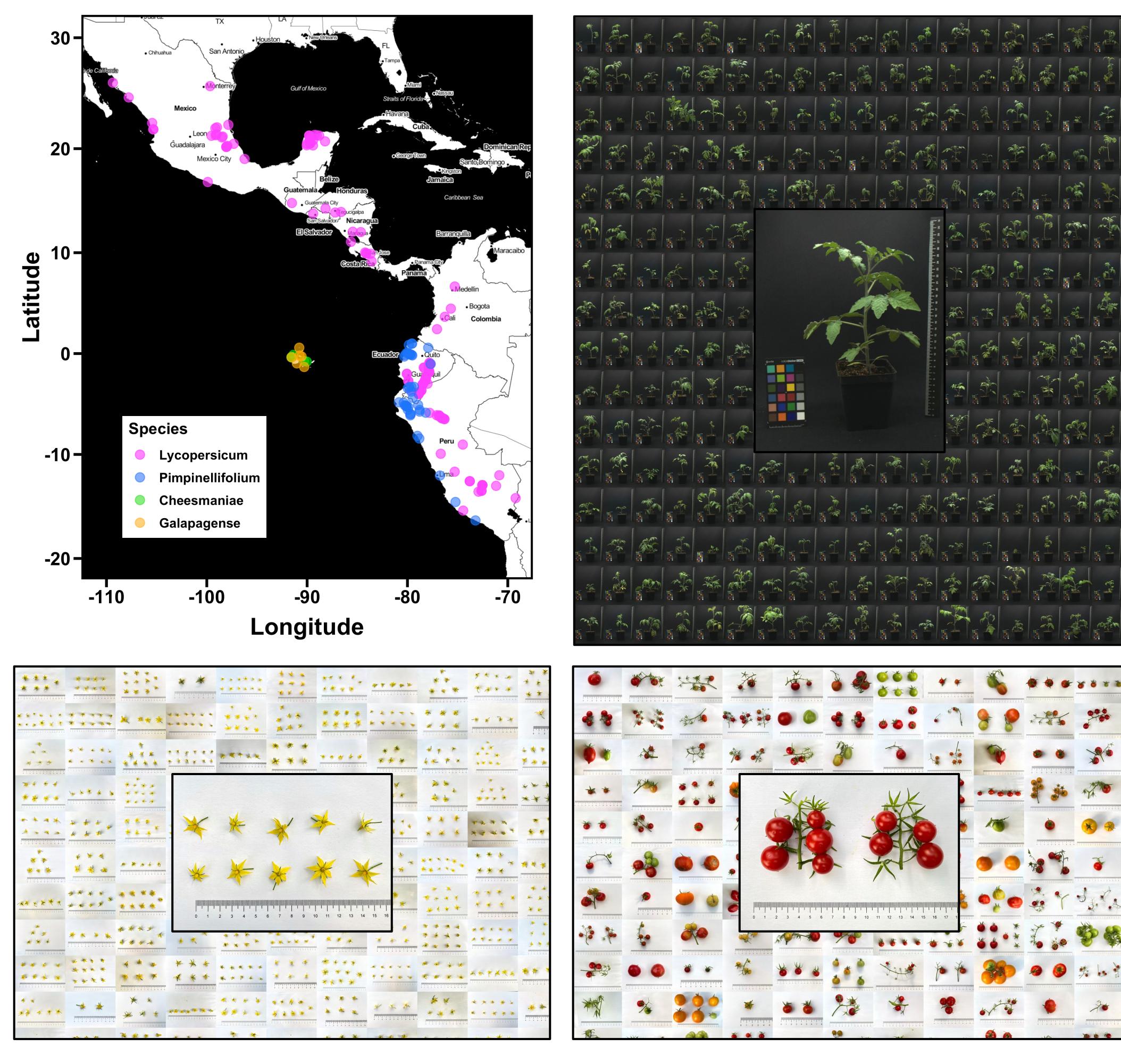
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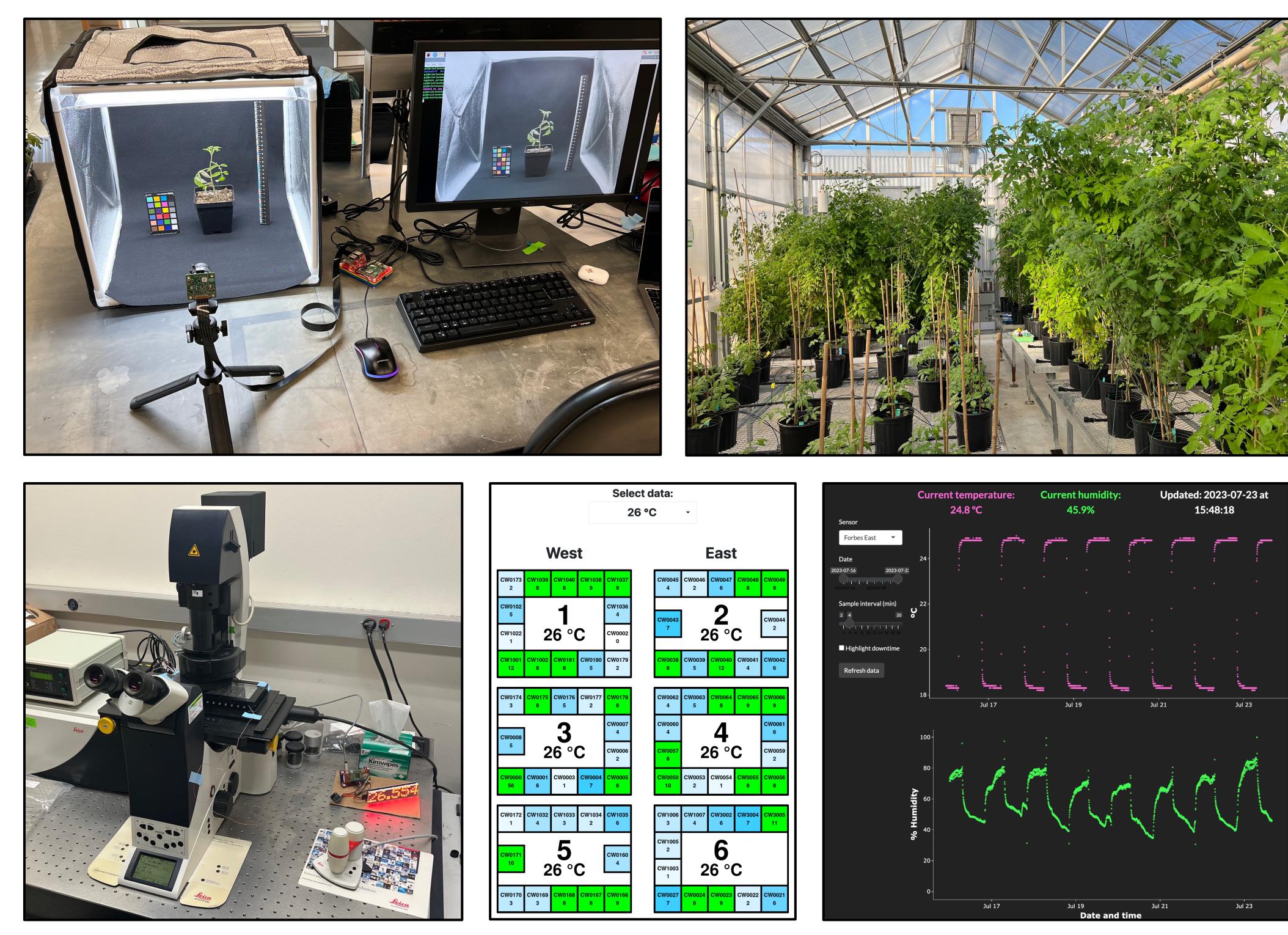
## Abstract

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. We have developed 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 quantify pollen phenotypes. We used this method to survey pollen from a diverse panel of 220 genome-sequenced tomato and close wild relative accessions. Pollen from these accessions showed a wide variety of responses to heat stress across measured phenotypes, suggesting genetic components influence heat stress responses that can be used to improve tomato productivity in challenging climates. This method can be readily adapted to pollen from different species, providing a way to rapidly characterize molecular mechanisms of pollen functions and identify thermotolerant alleles for enhanced reproduction in flowering plants.

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



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



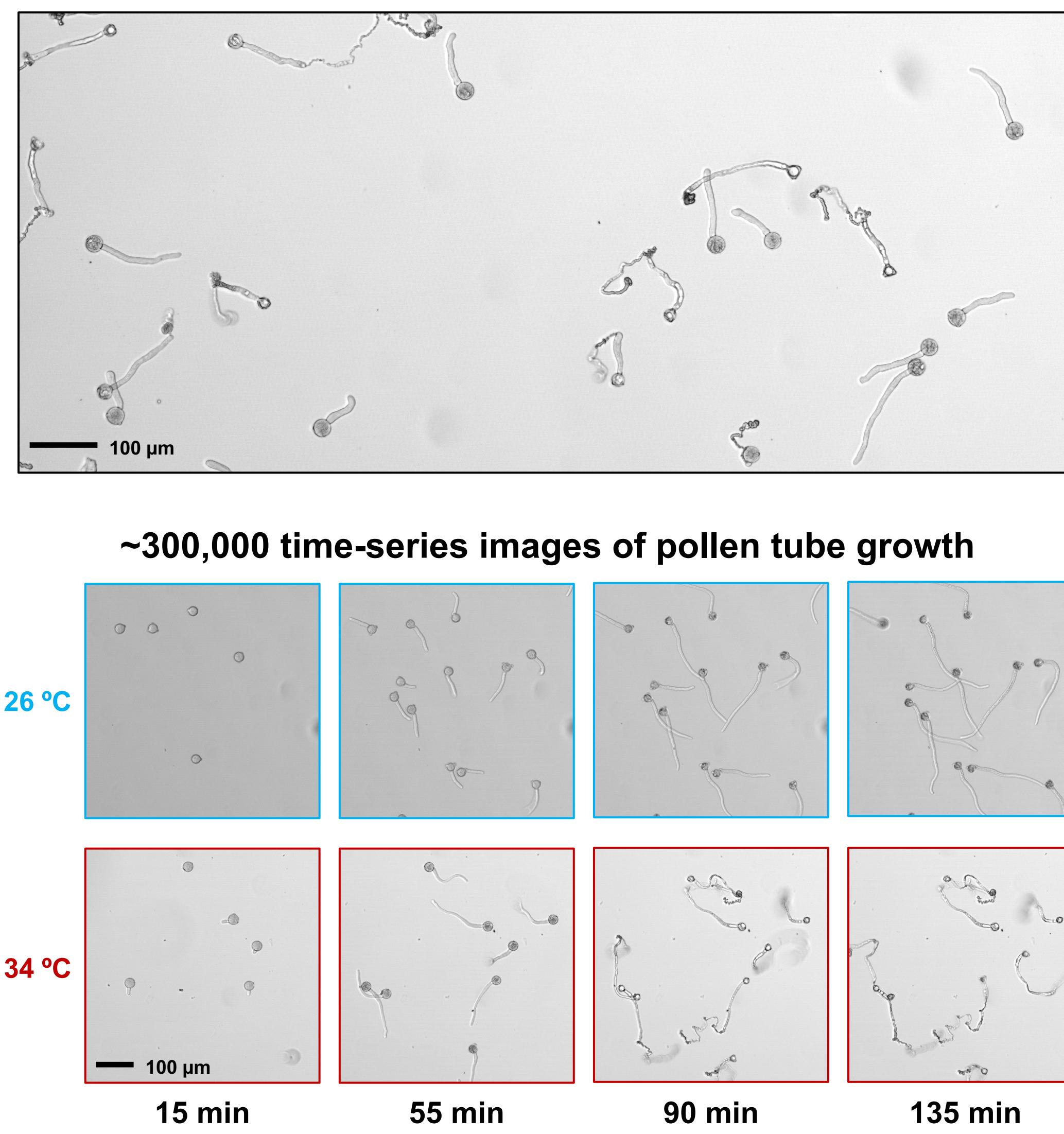
## Acknowledgements

Thank you to Sara McKinley, Berenice Gonzalez, Yaire Gutierrez, Jorge Munoz, Kekhrie Tsurho, Xander Nelson, Christopher Nacion, and Katrina Zearley for technical assistance. Thank you to University of Arizona High Performance Computing and Indiana University Jetstream2 for computational resources. Thank you to the C.M. Rick Tomato Genetics Resource Center, the USDA National Plant Germplasm System, Esther van der Knaap, and Zachary Lippman for tomato germplasm. This work was funded by National Science Foundation grants IOS-1939255 (Mark Johnson, Ravishankar Palanivelu, Gloria Muday, James Pease, & Ann Lorraine) and IOS-2109832 (Cedar Warman).

This poster is available online:  
<https://cedarwarman.com>



## Heat stress disrupts pollen tube growth



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

### CenterNet Hourglass104

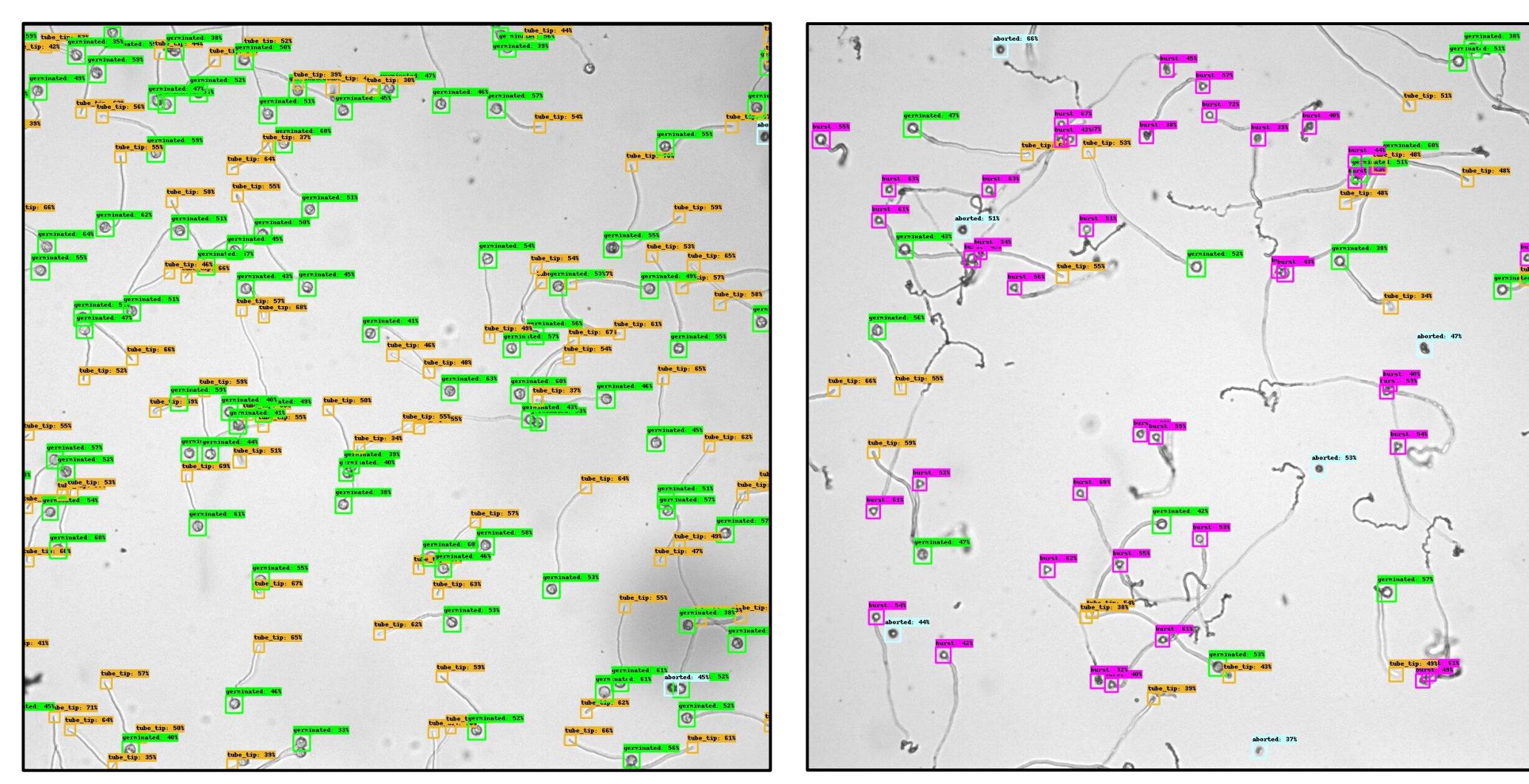
- 1000 labeled images
- ~80,000 labels
- 8 minutes per image labeling
- Trained on Nvidia A100 for 6 hours
- Inference on 4 Nvidia V100s
  - 19 hours for ~300,000 images
  - 2,000x human speed

TensorFlow

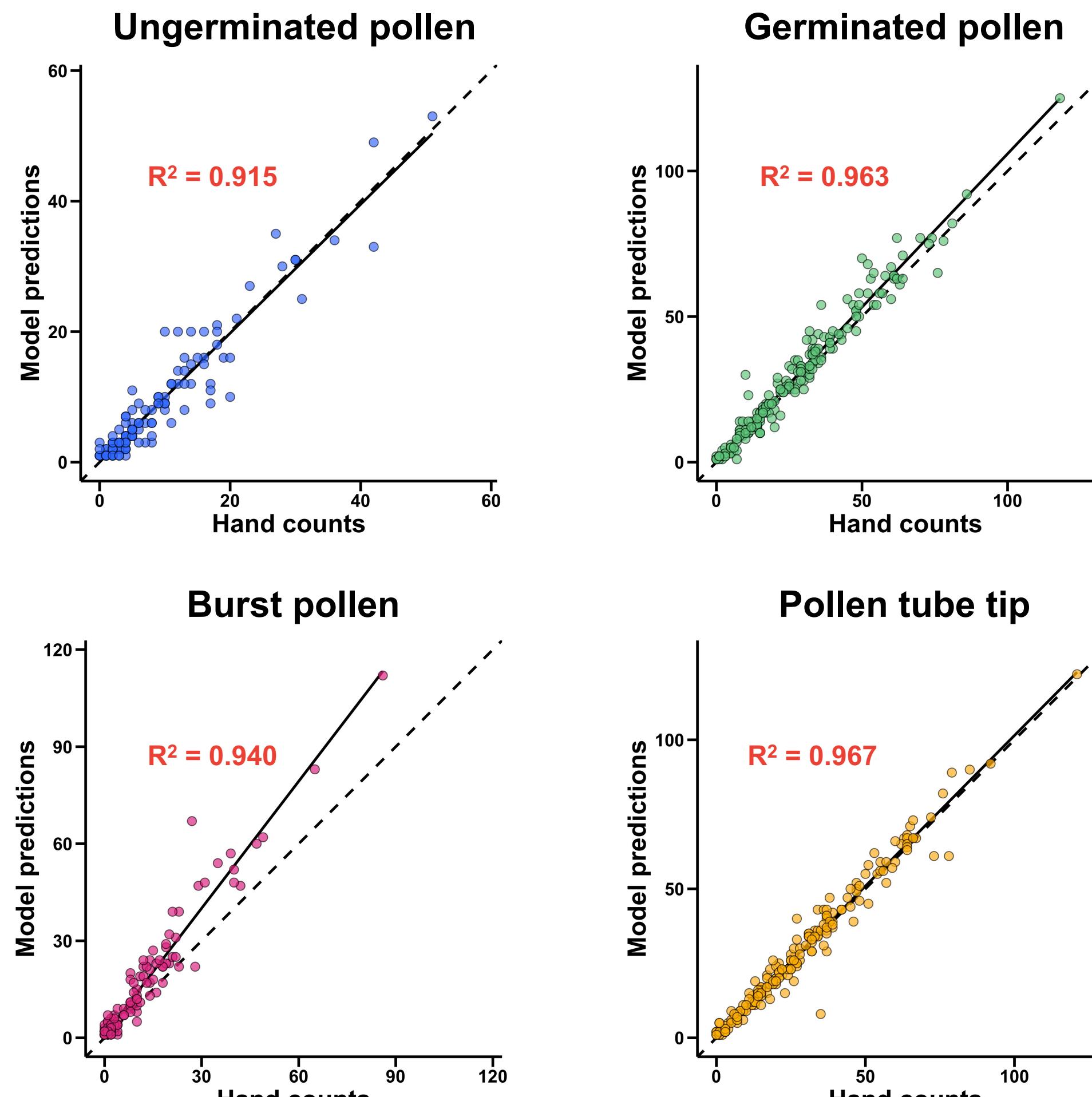
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
High Performance Computing

Jetstream2

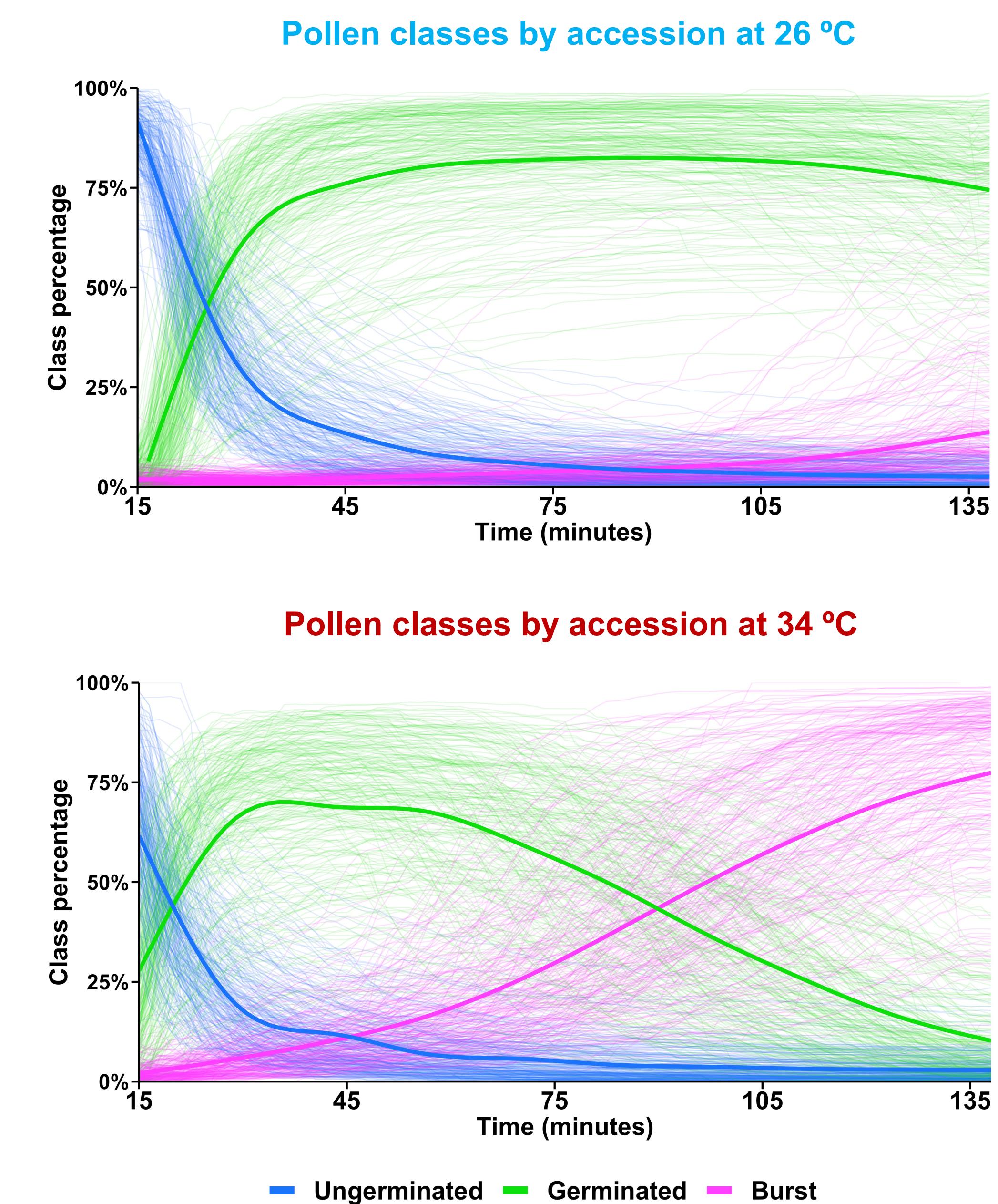
### Neural network inference



## The neural network is accurate



## Pollen populations were measured by the phenotyping system

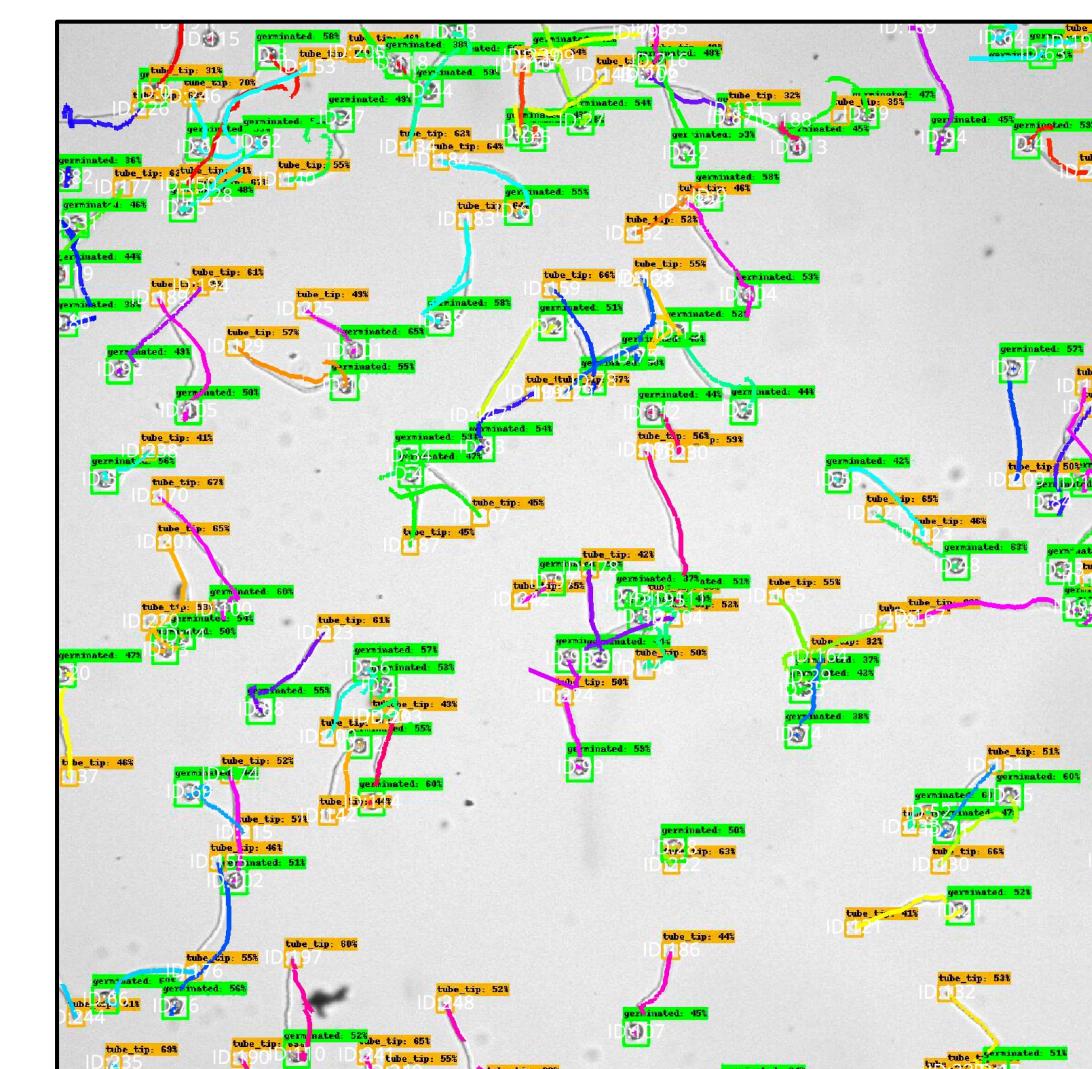


## Tube tip tracking quantified additional phenotypes

### Multiple object tracking

- Modified version of Bayesian Tracker reconstructs pollen and tube tip trajectories.
- Tracks revised with pollen tube growth characteristics.

btrack  
Lowe Lab, UCL  
<https://github.com/quantumjot/btrack>



## Pollen tube phenotypes are affected by heat stress

