

# Reconciling historic hypotheses regarding flower-leaf sequences in temperate forests for fundamental and global change biology

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To Do:

## Abstract

As the study of phenology progresses as a discipline, it is increasingly clear that it is not only individual phenological events that affect organism fitness and ecological functioning, but also the relationship between stages. Deciduous woody plants exhibit considerable variation in the relative order of their reproductive and vegetative events, or their flower-leaf sequence (FLS). A century of research suggests that FLS patterns are adaptive, and several competing hypotheses stand to explain their evolution and function.

Reconciling these hypotheses has been impeded by our conceptual orientation towards these patterns. Classically, FLSs are treated as discrete categories and described at the species level. However, this framework obscures important inter-specific differences and masks substantial intra-specific variation that remains unaddressed by the hypotheses. Here, we review and modify the existing hypotheses to account for the high levels of intra-specific FLS variation seen in nature. We then evaluate these hypotheses with four case studies from temperate forest species.

Our review and case studies provide three major insights towards a new conceptual framework for understanding FLSs. First, we find concurrent support for multiple hypotheses. Future research should accommodate this coincidence by allowing for overlapping hypotheses in large community models and by testing individual hypotheses in smaller sub-groupings that control for variation in other traits. Second, we show that the support for FLS hypotheses is highly sensitive to how FLSs are defined. Researchers should, when possible, move away from the classic categorization scheme and use continuous measures of FLS, such as number of days between flowering and leafing. Finally, researchers should use these intra-specific, continuous data to test for fitness consequences in FLS variation. This will advance our understanding of the fundamental biology of FLSs,

and help us to predict how climate related alterations to FLSs will affect tree communities in the changing future.

## Introduction

Phenology, the timing of seasonal life cycle events, allows organisms to synchronize important life history transitions with optimum environmental conditions (Forrest & Miller-Rushing, 2010), and is a critical component of ecosystem structure and function (Cleland *et al.*, 2007; Piao *et al.*, 2007). Recent work in woody plant phenology has shown that it is not only individual phenological stages that affect these processes, but also the relationships between them (Ettinger *et al.*, 2018).

One phenological relationship that has long received scientific interest (see Robertson (1895)), and recently, increased attention in the literature (Savage, 2019; Gougherty & Gougherty, 2018) is the flower-leaf phenological sequence (FLS) of deciduous woody plants. In a typical model of plant life-history, vegetative growth precedes reproduction. However, for many species in the forests of Eastern North America, it is not the green tips of new shoots that mark the commencement of the growing season, but the subtle, reds, and yellows of their flowers. This flowering-first FLS is common in these regions, and its prevalence suggests that this FLS has adaptive significance (Rathcke & Lacey, 1985).

A deep inquiry into the nature of this phenological pattern is necessary and timely because anthropogenic climate change is altering FLSs (Fig. 1). For the three European tree species we examined, the number of days between flowering and leafout have increased as a result of climate change, but the rate of change differs among them. If, as suggested, optimum FLS patterning is an important component of fitness, this differential FLS sensitivity to climate change may influence which species will persist under altered climate conditions.

Despite recent advances in characterizing the evolution and underlying physiology of FLS (Gougherty & Gougherty, 2018; Savage, 2019), a major challenge to predicting how FLS patterns will shift in response to climate change is that we don't have a solid baseline understanding of variability in FLS. While some authors present general correlations between flowering and leafing phenology (Lechowicz, 1995; Ettinger *et al.*, 2018), fine scale FLS variability has never been evaluated. We suggest that characterizing FLS variation among individuals and populations will not only improve our ability to predict how FLS patterns will change in the future, but also allow for a more biologically relevant evaluation of the current FLS hypotheses and reveal avenues for future, direct hypothesis testing.

Here we 1) Review the hypotheses of woody plant FLS and their respective predictions, 2) Evaluate variation in FLS, and explore how FLS variation within species, populations and individuals alters the predictions of the hypotheses, 3) Show how the incorporation of variation alters which hypotheses are supported using case studies from

temperate forests, and 4) make recommendations for future study of FLSs.

## Defining FLS

Flower-leaf sequences have traditionally been classified into qualitative categories that are almost always defined at the species level. The terms hysteroanthous, proanthous, proteranthous or precocious flowering describe plants that produce flowers before their leaves (Lamont & Downes, 2011; Heinig, 1899). A classic example of this FLS is *Acer rubrum*, which reaches peak flowering weeks before any sign of leaf development (Fig. 2). These species tend to exhibit a degree of physiological specialization, such as the separation of flower and leaf buds.

Seranthous describes species in which flowers open as leaves approach their full size. These species can still differentiate flower buds in the previous season, but may rely less on stored energy than flowering-first taxa.

But what about species whose FLS separation is less clear? It is possible to describe all species whose flowering period overlaps their leaf development as synanthous (Lamont & Downes, 2011), but this third category may obscure important inter-specific differences.

Take *Betula alleghaniensis* for example: One would be justified in classifying this species as hysteroanthous because its flower buds tend to burst before its leaf buds, or as synanthous because its open flowers overlap the beginning of leaf growth (Fig. 2). Neither category is descriptive enough, because no matter the choice, it is clear that the Phenological sequence of this species is fundamentally different from *Acer rubrum*, whose flowers open weeks before the leaves and *Acer pensylvanicum* whose flowers do not open until leaves are well along in their expansion.

In addition to obscuring the species differences within categories, the subjectivity of categorization makes it difficult to synthesize information across datasets. If a species is called hysteroanthous in one data set and synanthous in another, should we interpret this as temporal or geographic variability in FLS or as an artifact of observer decision-making? This uncertainty hampers our ability to accurately test the existing FLS hypotheses because any statistical relationship between FLS and other traits is biased by the original observer. However, we can extend our thinking regarding the hypotheses to overcome this bias. By examining the biological mechanisms underlying each hypotheses and incorporating their predictions regarding FLS overlap and variability into analyses, we can arrive at better ways to utilize existing data and identify a new framework for treating FLS moving forward.

# Hypotheses of FLS and their predictions about flower-leaf overlap

Behind each prevailing FLS hypothesis there are evolutionary drivers that yield the phenological sequences observed today, and these mechanisms inherently accommodate different degrees of overlap between vegetative and floral phenophases. Here, we review the current FLS hypotheses, identify the underlying biology of each, and clarify how much overlap between flowering and vegetative growth they predict.

## Wind pollination

The most prevalent FLS hypothesis associates hysteranthous flowering suggests that hysteranthy is an adaptation critical for effective wind pollination, with leafless flowering allowing for more efficient pollen dispersal and transfer (Whitehead, 1969; Stephen H. Spurr, 1980; Friedman & Barrett, 2009). This hypothesis hinges on the fact that leaves create a substantial physical disruption to pollen transfer, a premise that we would not necessarily expect to be true for the early stages of leaf expansion when tiny leaf primordia would have little impact on environmental structure. In this framework, we expect that trees that flower during the early stages of leaf expansion would gain similar mechanical advantage to those who complete their flowering before any leaf activity. We see that in Harvard Forest, while wind-pollinated species flower both before and after bud burst, the flowering of all species takes place before their leaves reach 75% of their final size (Fig. 2). This hypothesis predicts that wind pollinated species should flower before or with their leaves, while in animal pollinated species, FLS should be random or co-vary with pollinator activities.

## Water dynamics

Another hypothesis, emerging from the dry deciduous tropics where flowering during the leafless season is also common (Janzen, 1967), suggests that flowering before leaf development is an adaptation to reduce water stress associated with maintaining floral hydration while leaves are transpiring (Franklin, 2016). This hypothesis asserts there is a significant cost to maintaining floral structures during any stage of leaf activity, and therefore only species whose flowering occurred before any leaf expansion would gain this drought advantage. This hypothesis predicts that species that are drought tolerant should flower before leafing out, with minimal overlap between the floral and vegetative phenophases. Species that are not drought tolerant gain no advantage from flowering first, so in these species FLSs should be random.

## Early flowering

A third possibility is that the flowering-first FLS is a physiological byproduct of selection for early flowering (Primack, 1987). Within this framework, there is no advantage to a species being hysteroanthous vs. seranthous, as long as the absolute flowering time of the contrasting FLSs were the same. However, recent work from Savage (2019) has demonstrated that floral hydration is primarily maintained by the phloem rather than the xylem. With leaf phenology constrained by the timing xylem re-growth, selection for early season reproduction could drive flowering into the early season when xylem function is still suppressed, producing the hysteroanthous FLS. This might explain why hysteroanthous species tend to be the earliest species to flower. Here, we expect increased time between flowering and leaf out to be associated with earlier flowering phenology in general, and we expect more phenological overlap or a switch to seranthous in later flowering species. We might also expect to see strong associations with other early flowering traits such as seed mass, dispersal season or cold tolerance, but hypothesis does not exclusively require the selective driver of early flowering to be one of these traits (Savage, 2019). This hypothesis predicts that early flowering times should be strongly associated with flowering-first FLSs. It also is likely there would be relationship between this FLS and other early flowering traits, but the absence of these associations does not invalidate the hypothesis.

## Phylogenetics

Finally, it is also possible that FLSs are highly conserved traits, and the preponderance of hysteroanthous in the temperate zone is a product of phylogenetic representation of the region rather than an adaptive quality to the trait. In this framework, a species' FLS is under very weak or no selection so there are no expectations regarding the degree of overlap between flower and leaf phenological activity, only that FLSs should map well onto a phylogeny. This hypothesis predicts strong phylogenetic patterning in the FLS with no correlation with other traits.

## Variation in FLS

All of the above hypotheses assume that FLSs are a species-level trait, but this assumption has not been well examined in the literature (e.g., Gougherty & Gougherty, 2018). Intra-specific variation is the engine of natural selection, and if it is substantial in FLS patterns, we can infer much about origins of this trait, and its trajectory as the climate changes. We investigated individual FLS variation using a long term phenological data set collected at Harvard Forest in Petersham, Massachusetts (O'Keefe, 2015). The time between flowering and leaf activity varied by as much as several weeks for most

species. This variability can significantly blur FLS categorization. For example, for *Q. rubra*), a species classically listed as flowering and leafing in synanthly, there are some years in which flower budburst is over a week before leaf budburst, and other years in which leaf buds burst weeks prior to floral budburst (Fig. 3). We also found significant population level variation in FLS, using the Pan European phenological database PEP725 (Templ *et al.*, 2018), with the average time between flowering and leafing varying between sites by a week more.

Given the variability of FLSs at the individual and population level, it is clear that considering FLS variability at only higher taxonomic levels may obscure important realities about the biology of this phenological trait. Below, we discuss how the observed variation below the species level may alter the existing FLS hypotheses.

## How FLS variation alters predictions

### Wind pollination

Pollination syndrome is generally treated as a species level trait, considered to be fairly immutable across ecological time and space. Because of this, we would not expect significant variation in FLS across population or individuals because we would not expect variation in pollination syndrome. However, as discussed above, a tree with no overlap between flowering and leafing phenology does not necessarily gain a significant pollen transfer advantage over an individual with some overlap. The pollination efficiency advantage from flowering-first diminishes as the canopy fills in, but we do not know at what point during leaf expansion pollination would become significantly encumbered. It is possible that interannual and population level variation in hysteranthous FLS could maintain a wind pollination advantage, as long as the overlap did not cross a certain unknown threshold. Therefore, based on the wind pollination efficiency hypothesis, we would not expect high levels of population or individual variation in FLS, but the detection of some FLS variability at these levels, does not inherently challenge this hypothesis.

### Water dynamics

If FLS's are driven by water dynamics, we would expect there to be significant population level variation in FLSs. Populations growing in drier habitats should flower earlier relative to their leaf activity than their counterparts growing in wetter areas that experience weaker selection for minimizing phenological overlap. Therefore, increased time between flowering and leafing should be negatively correlated with average soil moisture. Water availability may also drive interannual FLS variation, with drought years increasing hysteranthly, and wetter years permitting more FLS overlap. Because plants have many other physiological mechanisms for dealing with occasional drought, we only expect to see a signal for the association between drought tolerance and hysteranthly for observations of populations in consistently dry regions.

## Early flowering

This hypothesis predicts some variation on the population level based on local adaptation. We would expect populations in which selection for earlier phenology is stronger, perhaps those in regions with shorter growing seasons, to flower earlier relative to their leaf development. At the individual level, FLS variability could be driven by interannual variability in spring conditions. Both flowering and leaf phenology are strongly cued to temperature and photoperiod (Flynn & Wolkovich, 2018; Rathcke & Lacey, 1985), but with leaf phenology constrained by xylem activity and flowering phenology relatively independent of it, we would expect a more sensitive response to environment in flowering time resulting in FLS variation. This hypothesis predicts that early flowering years or populations should be associated with an increase in the time between flowering and leafing for hysteranthous species. It also predicts a tighter temporal correlation between flowering and leafing for seranthous species or those with mixed buds in which flower timing is constrained by leaf budburst.

## Phylogenetics

With the lack of treatment of intra-specific FLS variability in the literature, we have no strong basis for asserting whether the apparent variability in FLSs is a product of genetic or environmental controls. If there is a strong genetic component to FLS as has been shown for other phenophases (Wilczek *et al.*, 2010), some population level variation could be driven by reproductive isolation. With strong genetic control of FLS, we might also see consistent genotypic differences in FLS among individuals within a population, but would not predict high levels of interannual variation.

## Available evidence for FLS hypotheses in temperate woody species

Despite a strong conceptual basis, direct tests of these hypotheses are relatively rare in the literature, and—when tested—support for them is mixed. Many studies only test a single hypothesis, making comparison between them difficult. For example, the primary evidence for the wind pollination hypotheses comes from pollen diffusion studies, e.g., particle movement through closed and open canopies (Niklas, 1985; Nathan & Katul, 2005; Milleron *et al.*, 2012), which provide no framework for comparatively evaluating the other hypotheses. We are aware of no direct test that have tried and distinguish selection for hysteranthous from selection for early flowering but Primack (1987) notes that hysteranthous, wind-pollinated species tend to also have large seed mass, and lack primary seed dormancy for germination, traits associated with early flowering in general. This raises the distinct possibility that hysteranthous may simply be one component of a larger

suit of early flowering traits. We are also aware of no studies that have mechanistically evaluated the water dynamics hypothesis, though observations of flowering in the dry tropics by Borchert (1983); Reich & Borchert (1984) suggest that the timing of flowering in hysteroanthous taxa is associated with a plant water status recovery due to leaf drop. Only recently has it even been suggested that this hypothesis might be relevant in the temperate zone as well, as we wouldn't expect that water status would limit biological activity in the wet springs of the temperate zone (Gougherty & Gougherty, 2018).

In contrast, studies testing multiple hypotheses have generally found support for more than one evolutionary driver of hysteroanth. One study by Bolmgren *et al.* (2003) showed that wind pollinated species tend to also be earlier flowering than their biotocially pollinated sister taxa, suggesting a relationship between the early flowering and wind pollination hypotheses. A recent study by Gougherty & Gougherty (2018) tested multiple hypotheses by modeling associations between species' trait and FLS patterns in the Great Lakes region. They found strong support for both the water dynamics and early flowering (flower timing and seed characteristics) hypotheses along with strong phylogenetic clustering.

In all of these cases, variability in FLS below the species level was not addressed. Yet, there are datasets widely available that allow for testing these several hysteroanth hypotheses concurrently, and at multiple taxonomic levels. To address this gap, we supplement our literature review by re-testing some previously-used datasets to examine all hypotheses, and leverage several widely-available datasets to test how support for these hypotheses varies across the inter- to intra-specific levels.

We evaluated hysteroanth in four phenological datasets. Michigan Trees and its companion volume Michigan Shrubs and Vines (Barnes & Wagner, 1981,2004; Burton V. Barnes, Christopher W. Dick, 2016) (MTSV) contains categorical FLS information for 195 woody plant species. The USFS Silvics manual volume II (Burns *et al.*, 1990) contains categorical FLS descriptions for 81 woody species. These data can be used to test inter-specific FLS variation. Within these datasets, we applied two alternative FLS classification schemes; physiological hysteroanth, which allowed for no overlap between floral and leaf phenophases, and functional hysteroanth, which allowed for a degree of overlap as predicted by the wind pollination hypotheses. The Harvard Forest data set (HF) contains quantitative flowering and leaf phenology measurements for individuals of 24 woody species over a 15 year period, allowing for both inter- and intra-specific comparisons (O'Keefe, 2015). In this data set, we approximated the two hysteroanth classification schemes mentioned above by measuring the time between several different floral and leaf phenophases. From the Pan European Phenological Database (PEP725) (Templ *et al.*, 2018) we obtained spatially and temporally explicit, quantitative flowering and leaf phenology for four common European tree species. This allows us to evaluate FLSs only at the intra-specific level, but permits us to address variability at the population.

In considering each species-level data set separately and in tandem two clear trends emerge: One, in accordance with the recent literature, we found support for multiple



hypotheses (figure 4). There was generally strong support for the early flowering and wind pollination hypotheses, poor support for the water dynamics hypothesis, and the phylogenetic signal was variable (figure 7). But we also found that relative importance of each predictor, and therefore, the strength of the support for hypotheses, changed significantly depending on how we defined hysternanthy in the data set. Using continuous measures of FLS stabilized this modeling artifact, and provided a more accurate assessment of the trait relationships than the using categorical data.

We used our intra-specific datasets to test some of the predictions we made about intra-specific variability in the water dynamics and early-flower hypotheses. Contrary to our prediction, we found that dry years correlate with a decrease in time between flowering and leafing for hysternanthous species, largely due to delayed flowering. When we examined the relationship between 30 year soil moisture records (DWD, 2019) and population level variation in FLS timing across Germany, we found a weak negative association between average soil moisture levels and time between flowering and leafing as predicted by the water dynamics hypothesis. However, when we incorporate other predictors like flowering time into our analysis, the negative association between soil moisture and increasing time between flowering and leafing disappeared (see figure 6).

In accordance with our predictions for the early flowering hypothesis, we found that for hysternanthous species, FLS variation is much more tightly correlated with variation in flowering timing than in leafing timing, but this contrast is far less stark in seranthous *Aesculus hippocastum* (figure 8). Though our intra-specific data set is species limited, we can refine our prediction to say that plasticity in the first phenophase of the season (flowering for hysternanthous species and leafing for seranthous species) seems to drive variability in in FLSs, but this observation should be tested more rigorously and explicitly in future work.

While the inter- and intra-specific case studies are not perfectly comparable (ie the wind pollination hypothesis cannot be evaluated on the intra-specific level), the general insights from our intra-specific studies supports the relationships found in the inter-specific case studies and provide novel insights of their own.

## Future

Perhaps more important than the results of all of our specific case studies themselves, is that in considering them together, we gain a more comprehensive picture of where our understanding of this phenological trait is currently, and where it needs to go. Below we highlight five characteristics of FLS that should be incorporated into future research.

### Multiple hypotheses explain FLSs

Our results underlie other lines of evidence that show multiple hypotheses should be starting point for all future FLS research. While there is certainly value to broad taxo-

onomic studies, and future large-scale analyses should continue, the consistent support for multiple hypotheses shows there are limits to the utility of these kinds of studies. We suggest that it is better to explore the evolutionary dynamics of hysteranthly with a more mechanistic approach, which may mean utilizing a more taxonomically restricted focus. One option is to look within the hypotheses to address sub-grouping of taxa in which overlap between hypotheses could be controlled. For example, what drives hysteranthly among biotically pollinated taxa? It certainly isn't wind pollination efficiency. Or, what factors accounts for variability in hysteranthly among wind pollinated taxa? Incorporating a more explicit phylo-biogeographic approach would be instructive at this level, for example: are their phylogeographic commonalities between biotically pollinated hysteranthous species in Eastern flora?

But even with drilling down to sub-groupings, interspecific trait association models can only take us so far. One reality of these kind of studies is that we never know we are picking the right traits. For example we used minimum precipitation across a species' range, one of the only available quantitative drought metrics at the scale of large interspecific models, to represent the water dynamics hypothesis. Is this really a good proxy for drought tolerance? Further, species evolve a suit of traits for any function, and unmeasured traits might bias our results (Davies *et al.*, 2019). For example, wind pollinated species could compensate for a pollen intercepted by a synanthous or seranthous FLS by over-producing pollen or through self-pollination. To really understand FLS across large taxonomic space, one would have to compare species across an unfeasibly large, N-dimensional trait space, suggesting we will need to utilize other, complementary approaches.

### **Intra-specific variation in FLS**

In this paper, we have shown that FLSs can be highly variable at the intra-specific level. This variation can be leveraged in research design to overcome many of the limitations of larger trait correlation models. Unlike with inter-specific approaches, focusing on FLS variation within species holds most other traits relatively equal, avoiding the problem of tradeoffs with latent unmeasured traits. Evolutionary theory predicts that intra-specific variation should follow the same trends as inter-specific variation, and consistent agreement between inter- and intra-specific, as we found in our analysis, will help narrow in on certain hypotheses.

### **The FLS is a quantitative trait**

Treating FLS observations as continuous variables are the most accurate way to describe these data. Our modeling work shows that this is an important step towards reducing observer bias and revealing important inter-specific differences that are masked

by categorization. Quantitative measure of phenology, e.g. the BBCH scale (Finn *et al.*, 2007), standardize data across time and space, observer and analyst. Adopting such measurements in the study of phenological sequences would allow for FLS patterns to be compared across larger temporal, geographic and taxonomic scales, giving researchers more power to accurately address questions about FLS variation.

## **FLS and fitness**

While trait associations point to past selection, fitness is the driver of trait evolution, and at the core of each FLS hypothesis is a fitness prediction. By utilizing intra-specific comparisons and continuous measurements of FLS, we can move beyond trait associations and test the fitness consequences of FLS variation.

Variability in hysteresis should lead to variability in fitness outcome at the intra-specific level. For example, the wind pollination hypothesis predicts that with all else equal, years with increased time between flowering and leafing should correlate with more pollination success. The water dynamics hypothesis suggests hysteresis populations with a consistently large time between flowering and leafing should better tolerate drought. These predictions could be directly assessed through well designed experiments and field studies.

## **FLS and physiology**

Decades of research suggests that both floral and vegetative phenological events are cued by temperature and photoperiod (Forrest & Miller-Rushing, 2010; ?), suggesting they are under shared genetic and physiological control. But to yield the FLS variation seen in nature, there must be systematic differences in reproductive and vegetative phenological responses to the environment. Researchers can use intra-specific variation in FLS to identify which cues dominate each phenological process and better understand the underlying genetic and physiological constraints that structure phenological sequences.

With our proposed framework, we paint a picture of possibility for the study of FLSs in woody plants. Through examining FLS variation in more targeted taxonomic assemblages and using quantitative data with mechanistic metrics, we can refine the existing FLS hypotheses and better comprehend the causes and consequences of FLS variation at multiple taxonomic scales. This is an essential step towards a more complete understanding of the fundamental biology of temperate woody plants, and for predicting the fate of these species as global climate continues to change.

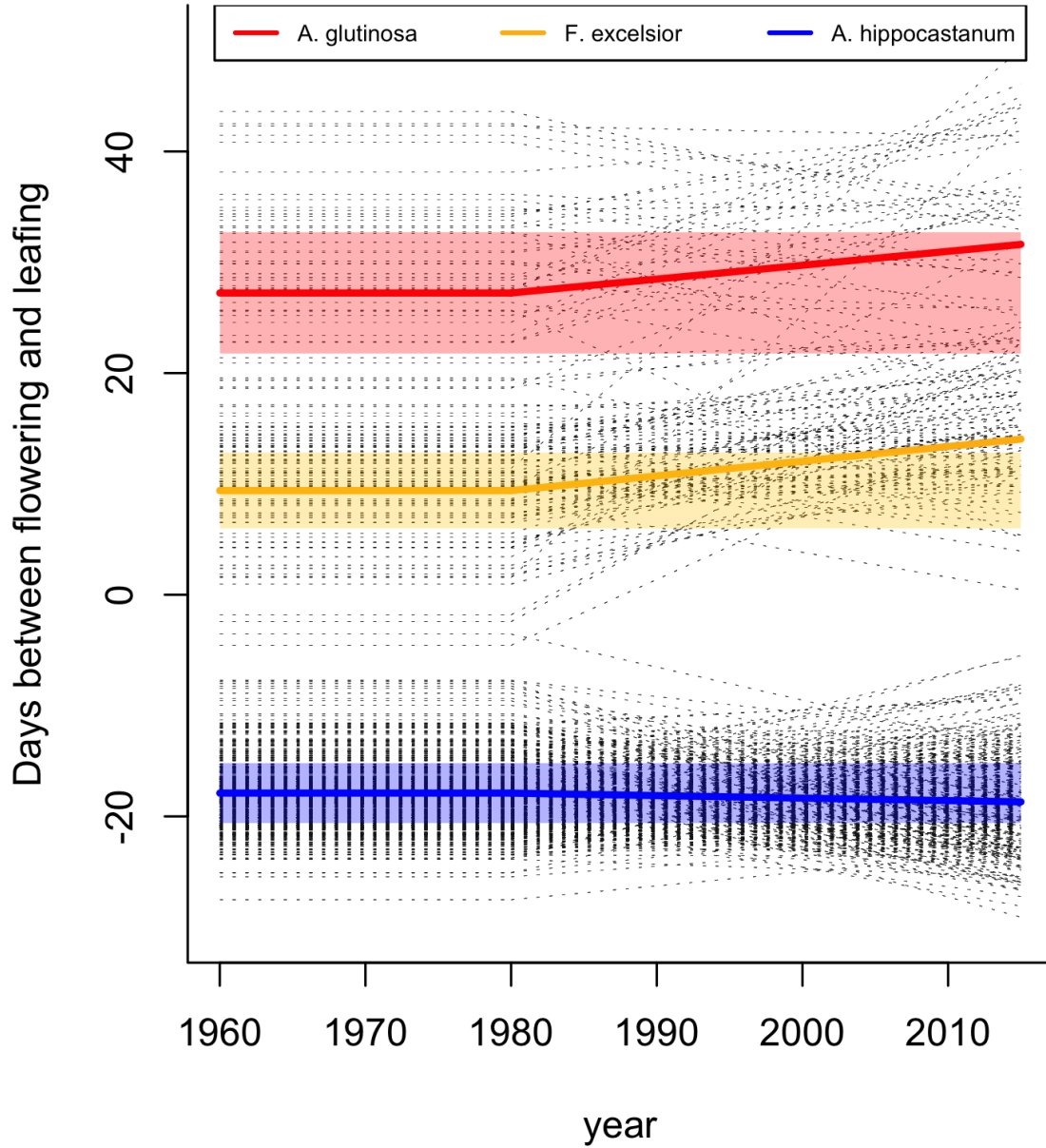


Figure 1: Trends in average FLS offset across Europe for 3 tree species from 1960 to 2015. Dashed lines indicate historic range of FLS variability. All species are increasing their offset, but the rate of change differs between species and sites

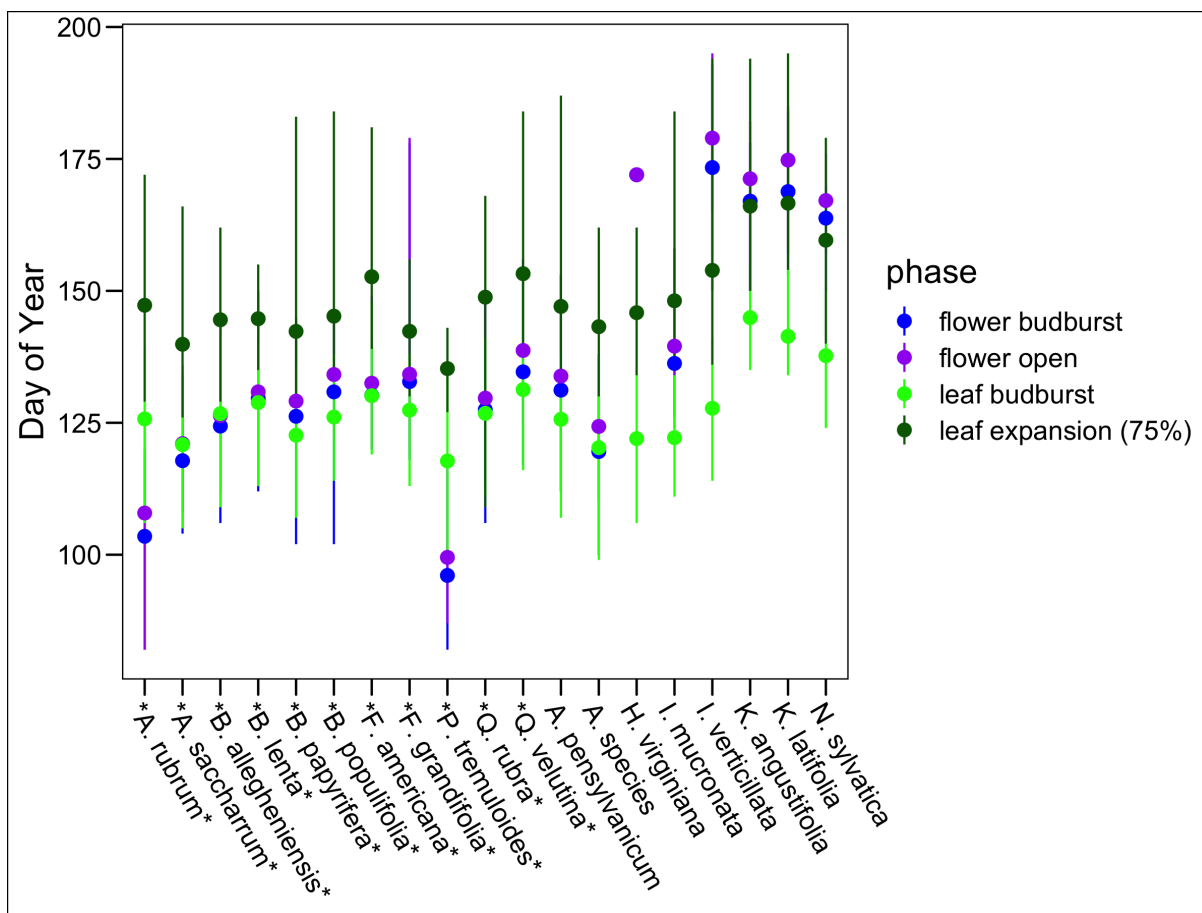


Figure 2: Average day of phenological events for highlighted woody plant species at Harvard Forest in Petersham, MA from 1990-2015

Figure 3: FLS variability among years and within a population of *Quercus rubra* at Harvard forest.

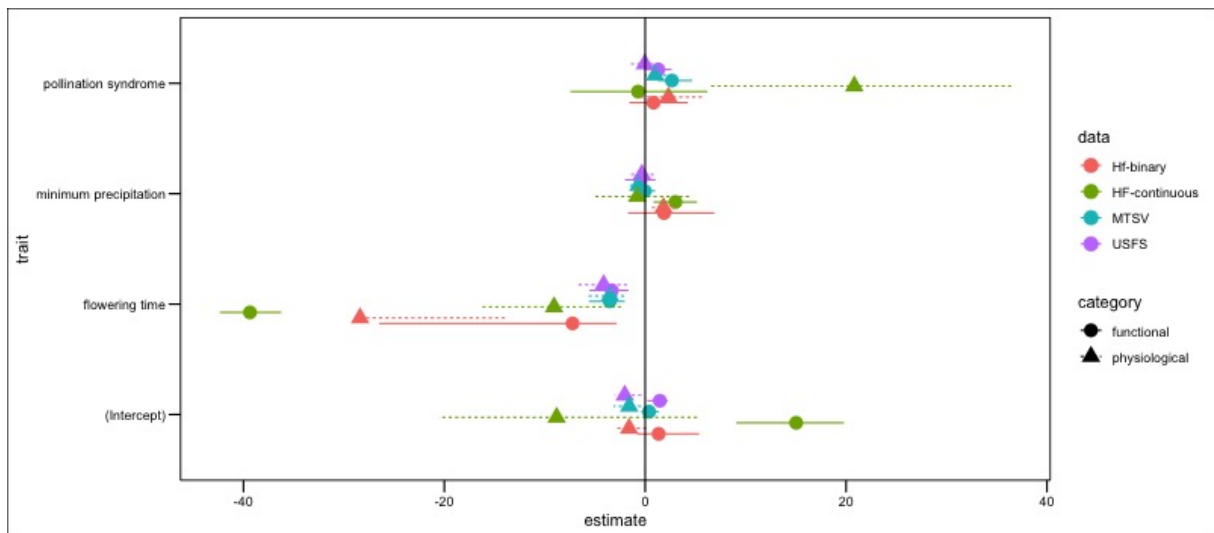


Figure 4: All case study model estimates, phyloglm with 95% bootstrap intervals

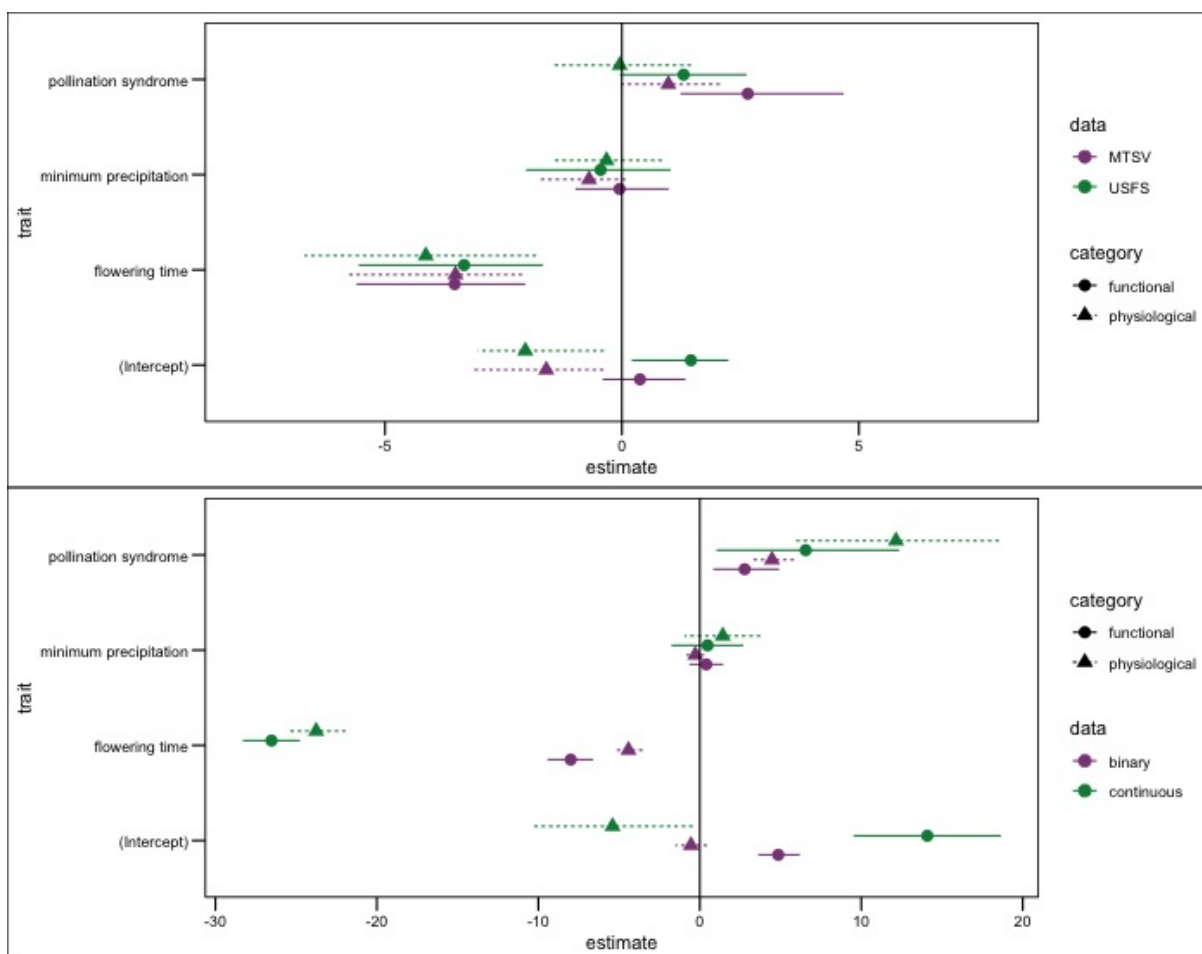


Figure 5: alternative to figure 4: 4a is phylog glm with 95% bootstrap intervals, 4b is brms estimates with 80% CIs

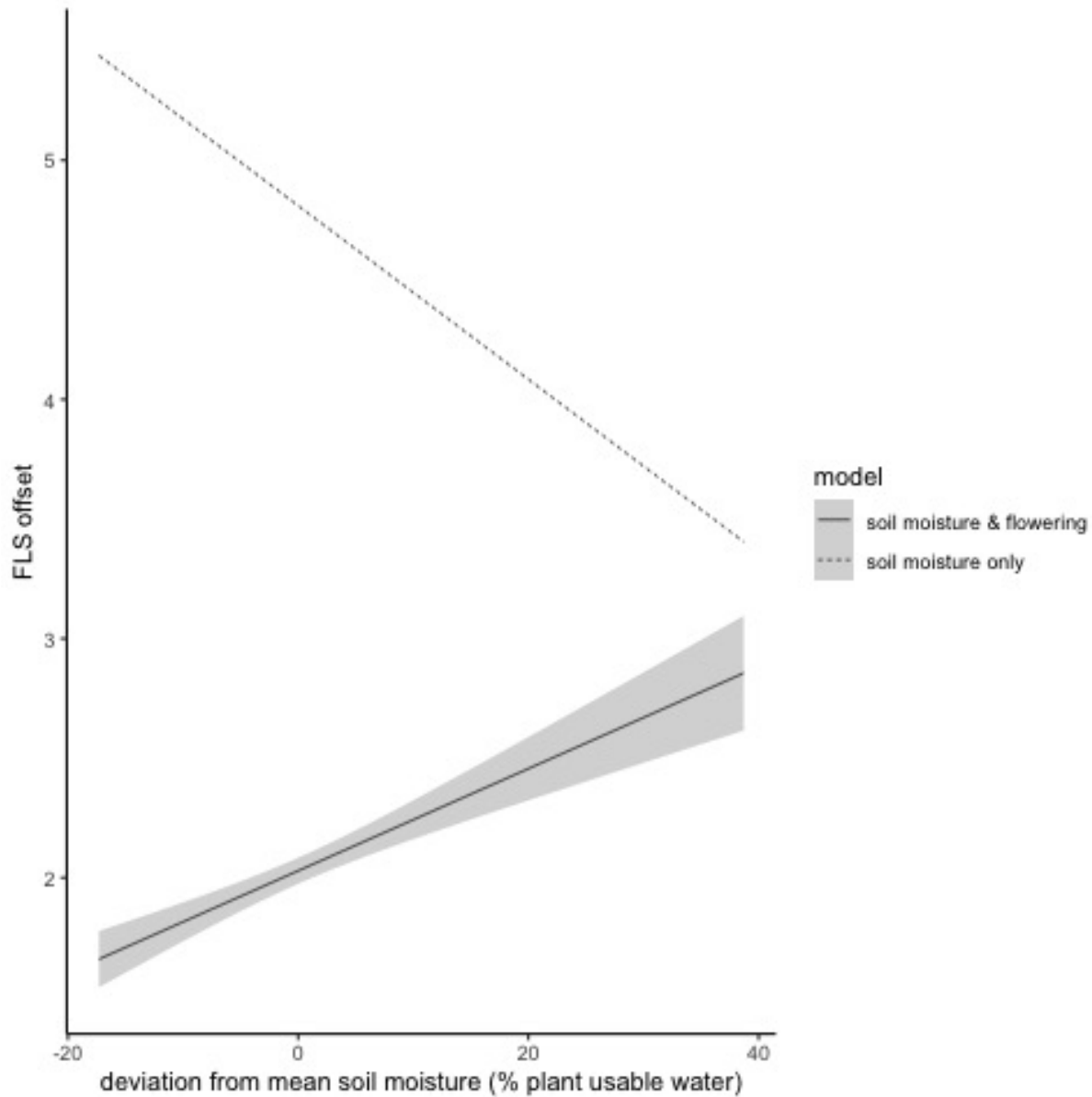


Figure 6: effect of soil moisture on FLS offset with (dashed) and without (solid) considering flowering time

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## Supplement

### Methods

#### Climate Change and FLS:

To evaluate how FLS patterns have overtime in association with climate change we obtained phenological data for three European woody plant species with long term records of both flower (BBCH 60) and leafout phenology (BBCH 11) from the Pan European

Phenological Database (Templ *et al.*, 2018). We restricted the data set to include only stations with great than 50 years worth of data. For each species, we modeled FLS offset (day of year leafing- day of year flowering) as a function of time, using a hinge model with 1980 as break point in accordance with climate change models of (?). For each species, we displayed the pre-1980 mean and standard deviation of FLS offset and the post-1980 change in mean FLS offset that can be associated with climate change.

## Case studies

**MTSV and USFS:** For these two, categorical, species level case studies, we converted verbal descriptions of flower-leaf sequences into a binary response variable. For our more inclusive "functional" definition of hysternanthy, we included species entries with descriptions "*flowers before the leaves*", "*flowers before or with leaves*" and textit"*flowers with leaves*" as hysternanthous. Our more restrictive "physiological" hysternanthy definition only included species described as "*flowers before the leaves*" as hysternanthous.

For modeling trait associates we chose three predictors to represent the three major FLS hypothesis; pollination syndrome, average flowering time and minimum precipitation levels across the species range. Pollination syndrome and average flowering time we obtained directly from the data sources, and estimates of minimum precipitation came from the USDA/NRCS Conservation plants characteristics (). We coded pollination syndrome as binary, biotic or wind pollinated, with known ambophilous species in the genus *Salix* assigned to the ancestral, biotic pollinated, state of angiosperms. Flowering time was the average of the range of months reported in each data source.

**HF:** For each species in the HF data set, we calculated a continuous mean off FLS "offset" defined here as the average foliate day of the year - average floral day of the year. We approximated our "physiological" FLS characterization be defining offset as (day of leaf budburst-day of flower bud burst) and our "functional" FLS categorization by defining offset as (day of leaf expansion to 75% of final size- day of first flower open). We also recoded the HF continuous offset variables as continuous with positive offset values coded as hysternanthous and negative values as seranthous.

For all species-level case studies (USFS MTSV and HF), associations between hysternanthy and the trait predictors were modeled with logistical regressions in phylogenetic generalized linear modeling framework (Ives & Garland, 2010) using the R package phylolm (Ho & Ane, 2014). Our models incorporated a published angiosperm phylogenetic tree (Zanne *et al.*, 2013) pruned to match the species list for each case study. Species found in the trait data set but not in the original phylogenetic tree were added to the pruned tree at the genus level root. In total 32 species were added to the generic roots for the MTSV data set . We The models were run with 599 bootstrapped re-sampling iterations for each data set (?). Continuous predictors were re-scaled by subtracting the mean and dividing by two standard deviations to allow for a reasonable comparison of effect sizes between the binary and continuous predictors in this model (Gellman & Hill,

2997). To assess the phylogenetic structure of hysteranthous flowering, we used the Caper package (Orme *et al.*, 2013) to calculate a phylogenetic D statistic.

**PEP 725:** For intra-specific analysis, we utilized phenological records from PEP725 stations in Germany with more than 10 years worth of flowering and leafout records (Templ *et al.*, 2018) for species *Alnus glutinosa*, *Fraxinus excelsior* and *Betula pendula*. To test for associations between FLS variability and inter-annual water availability we modeled the association between FLS and drought years from 2003-2010 using a linear mixed modeling framework with the R package lme4 (?). Drought years were determined based on Ivits *et al.* (2013). To test associations for population level variation in FLS and long term soil moisture, we obtained average August soil moisture raster grids 1991-2010 for Germany from the German Weather Service (DWD, 2019), and extracted soil moisture values at every cell. We then tested associations between average soil moisture at each PEP725 phenological station and average FLS for species *Aesculus glabra*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Fraxinus excelsior* and *Betula pendula* using a Bayesian linear mixed model framework with the brms package in R (Bürkner, 2018). We also repeated the analysis with average April soil moisture data from the same time period and results were robust.

Using same PEP725 species records as above, we used linear models to test the relationship between flowering and leaf timing and FLS offset.

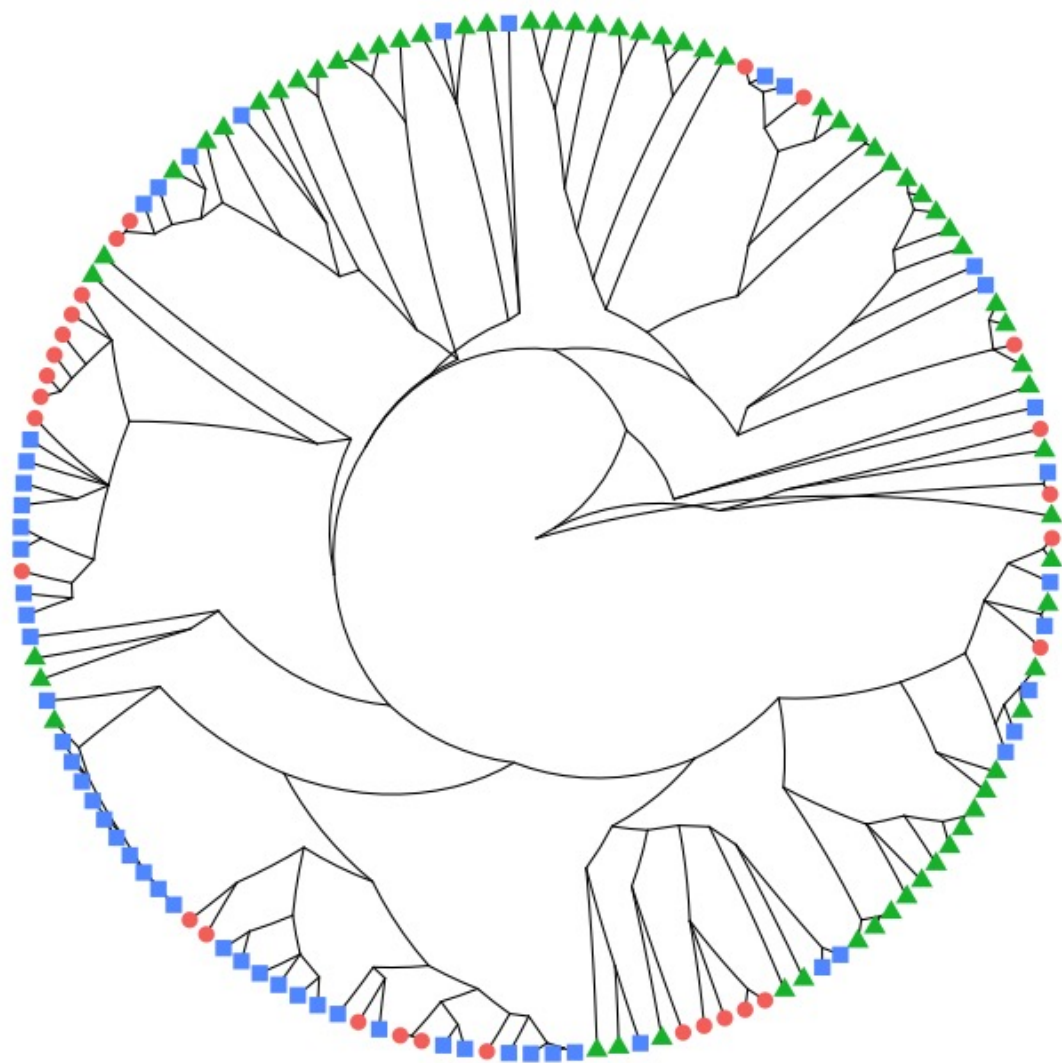
Data set	Physiological	Functional
MTSV	0.22	0.07
USFS	0.13	0.65
HF	0.01	0.27

Figure 7: Phylo.D estimates of phylogentic signal for hysteranthous flowering in three case studies

Species	Effect size flowering (sd)	R <sup>2</sup>	Effect size leafing (sd)	R <sup>2</sup>
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	-0.67 (0.002314)	0.58	0.24(0.005)	0.03
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	-0.53 (0.002)	0.41	0.24 (0.004)	0.05
<i>Aesculus hippocastum</i>	-0.28 (0.002)	0.10	0.411 (0.0019)	0.26

Figure 8: Flowering vs leafing influence on hysteranthy

## Phylogenies



hysteranthy ● always hysteranthous ▲ always seranthous ■ transitional

Figure 9: MTSV phylogeny

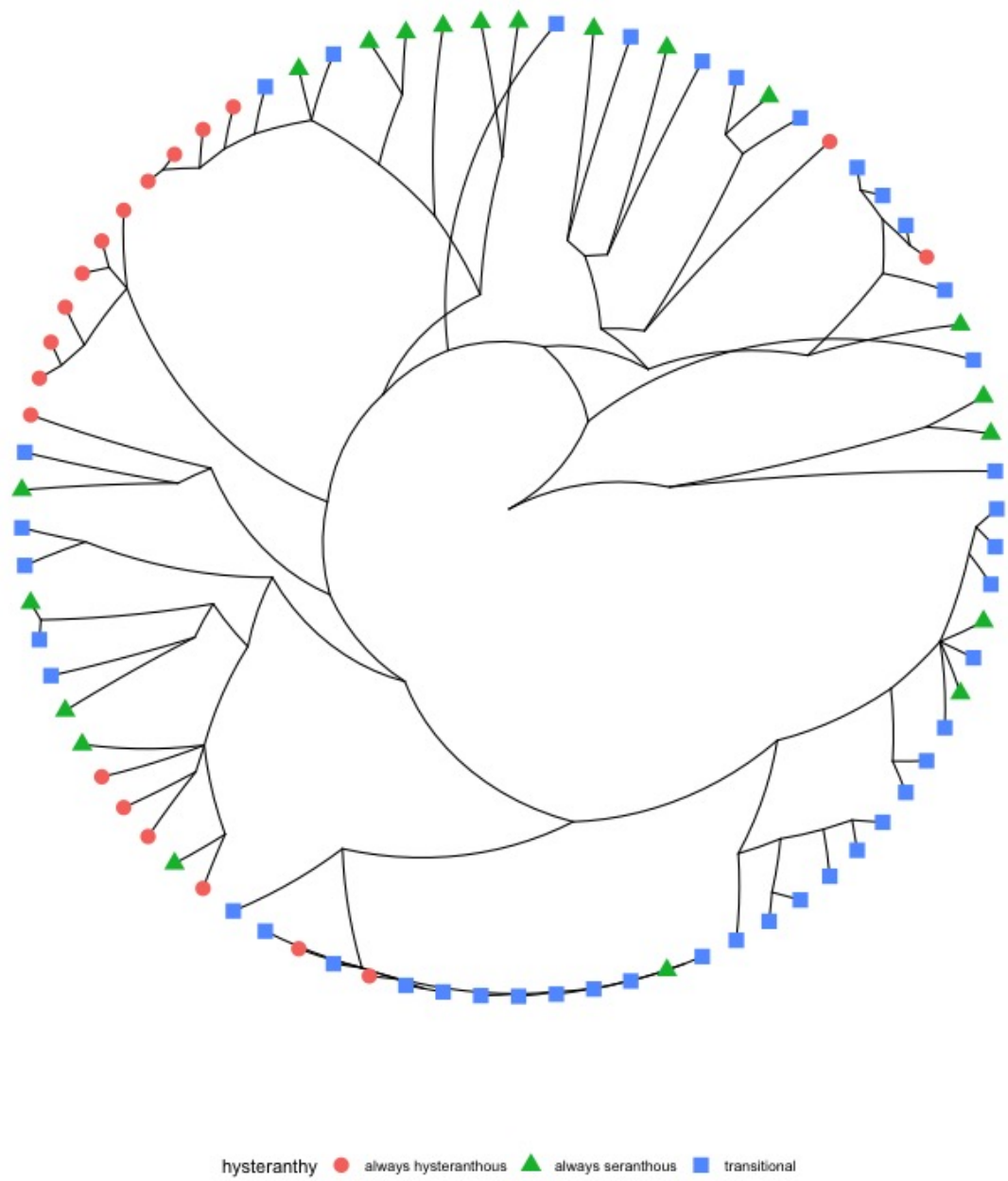


Figure 10: USFS Phylogeny

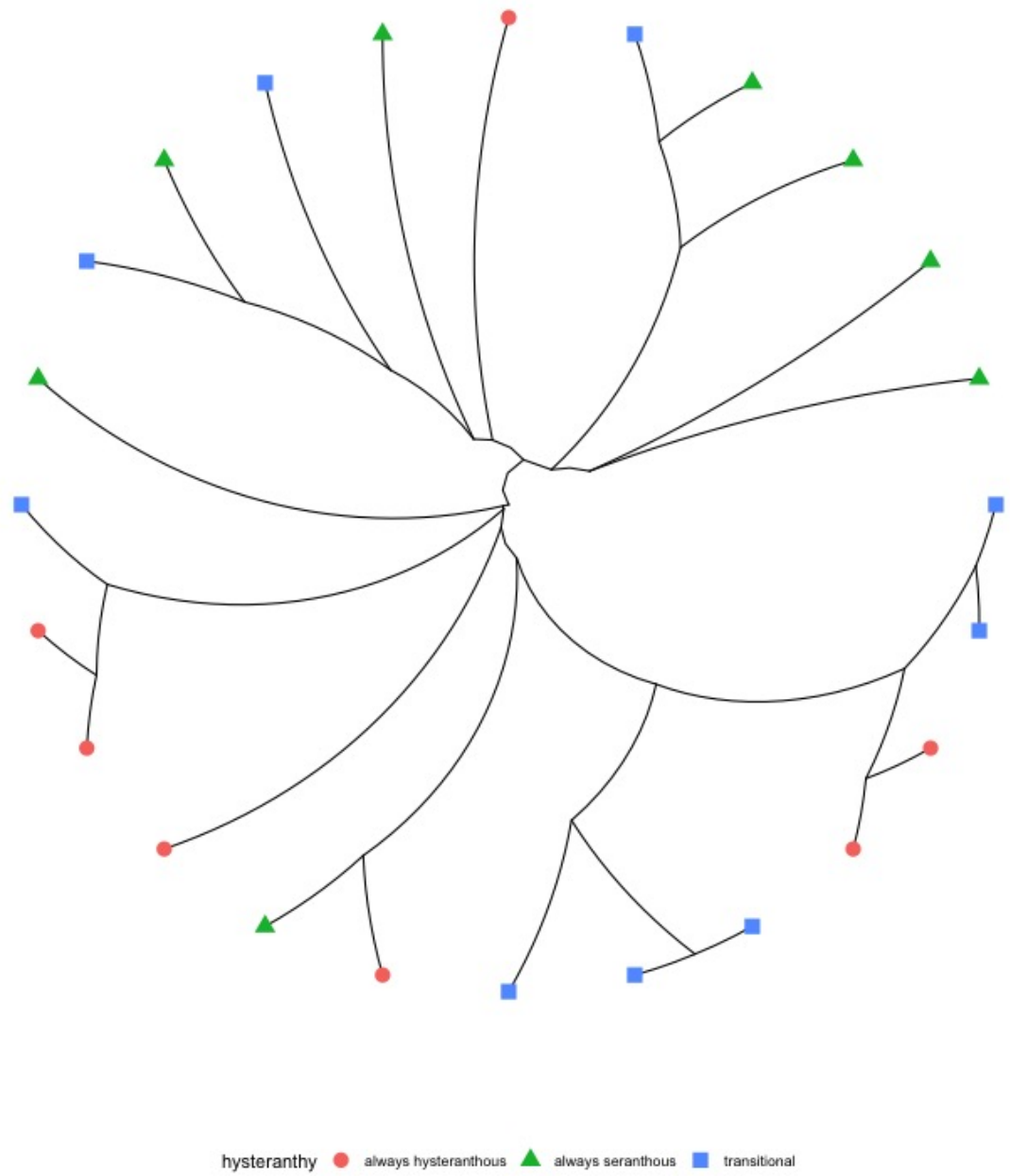


Figure 11: HF Phylogeny