

## Insects shape the genetic landscape through plant defenses

The new study, involving aphids and the broccoli-like research plant *Arabidopsis thaliana*, provides the first measureable evidence that this selective process is driven, in part, by the pressure that multiple natural enemies exert on plants by forcing them to create diverse natural defenses to avoid being eaten.

Findings from the study, conducted with researchers in Switzerland, Denmark and England, will appear in the Oct. 5 issue of the journal *Science*.

“Our data demonstrate that there is a link between the abundance of two types of aphids and the continental distribution of *Arabidopsis* plants that are genetically different in terms of the biochemicals they produce to defend against insect feeding,” said UC Davis plant scientist Dan Kliebenstein.

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