

How plants evolved to cope with cold

In a study that appeared last week in [Nature](#), researchers have found new clues to how plants evolved to withstand wintry weather. The team constructed an evolutionary tree of more than 32,000 species of flowering plants — the largest time-scaled evolutionary tree to date. By combining their tree with freezing exposure records and leaf and stem data for thousands of species, the researchers were able to reconstruct how plants evolved to cope with cold as they spread across the globe. The results suggest that many plants acquired characteristics that helped them thrive in colder climates — such as dying back to the roots in winter — long before they first encountered freezing.

The researchers plan to use their evolutionary tree to find out how plants evolved to withstand other environmental stresses in addition to freezing, such as drought and heat.

Read the full, original article: [Clues to How Plants Evolved to Cope With Cold](#)