

extension to the realm of fungi, developmental competition may be found to be a broadly generalizable mechanism for ensuring the early elimination of low fitness offspring (Bruggeman et al. 2004). Likewise, the sibling competition arena should be broadly generalizable to plants, where selfing and early sibling competition for establishment in a saturated environment are frequent (Table 1).

We demonstrate here that selfing in the plant fungal pathogen *Microbotryum* dramatically reduces hybridization between closely related species by two mechanisms: directly by intrapromycelial mating and indirectly by the sibling competition arena's influence on competitive exclusion. The magnitude of the reduction in gene flow attributable to selfing appears to strongly diminish natural selection for other prezygotic isolating barriers between sympatric species of *Microbotryum*, consistent with observation of natural populations (Refrégier et al. 2010). These results, and the predominance of mating systems that facilitate inbreeding in fungal pathogen and plant species (Billiard et al. 2011), support the inclusion of mating system and selfing rate as critical components of reproductive isolation in the study of speciation.

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