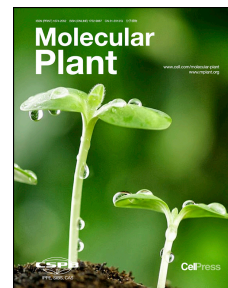


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Extensive inter-plant protein transfer between *Cuscuta* parasites and their host plants

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1 **Extensive inter-plant protein transfer between *Cuscuta* parasites and their host plants**

2

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12

13 **Running title:** Protein transfer between *Cuscuta* and its hosts

14

15 **Short Summary:** Hundreds to more than one thousand proteins were found to be transferred
16 between *Cuscuta* parasites and their hosts. Furthermore, large-scale protein exchange
17 occurred between different hosts through *Cuscuta* connections. The translocated proteins may
18 retain their activity and play important roles in the interactions between *Cuscuta* and hosts
19 and among *Cuscuta*-connected hosts.

20 **ABSTRACT**

21 *Cuscuta* species (dodders) are holoparasites that totally rely on host plants to survive.
22 Although various mobile proteins have been identified to travel within a plant, whether and to
23 what extent protein transfer between *Cuscuta* and host plants remain unclear. We found that
24 hundreds to more than 1500 proteins were transferred between *Cuscuta* and the host plants
25 *Arabidopsis* and soybean, and hundreds of inter-plant mobile proteins were even detected in
26 the seeds of *Cuscuta* and the host soybean. Different hosts bridge-connected by dodder were
27 also found to exchange hundreds of proteins. Quantitatively, the mobile proteins represent a
28 few to more than 10% of the proteomes of the foreign plants. Using *Arabidopsis* plants
29 expressing different reporter proteins, we show that these reporter proteins could travel
30 between plants, and importantly, retained their activity in the foreign plants. Comparison
31 between the inter-plant mobile proteins and mRNAs indicated that the majority of the mobile
32 proteins were not *de novo* synthesized from the translocated mRNAs, but *bona fide* mobile
33 proteins. We propose that large-scale inter-plant protein translocation may play an important
34 role in the interactions between host plants and dodder and even among the dodder bridge
35 connected hosts.

36

37 **Keyword:** dodder, *Cuscuta*, host plants, protein transfer, plant-plant interaction

38 **INTRODUCTION**

39 Approximately 1% of all flowering plants, 4000-5000 species in 12 or 13 lineages, have
40 evolved the parasitic lifestyle (Westwood et al., 2010). *Cuscuta* species (Convolvulaceae),
41 commonly known as dodders, are root- and leafless plant parasites, which do not or barely
42 photosynthesize. Like other plant parasites, dodder uses a specific organ named haustorium to
43 penetrate into hosts and extract water and nutrients (Clarke et al., 2019). A dodder parasite
44 grows many stems, which twist around the host, and along the dodder stems, many haustoria
45 are developed. Haustorial connections very likely allow flow or even exchange of various
46 molecules between dodder and hosts. It has been long known that viruses (Birschwilks et al.,
47 2006; Hosford, 1967) and phytoplasmas (Kaminska and Korbin, 1999) can be transmitted
48 between dodder and hosts. RNA-seq analysis also indicated trafficking of thousands of
49 mRNA species between hosts and dodder (Kim et al., 2014). miRNAs from dodder can
50 migrate into hosts and induce silencing of defense-related genes, facilitating the
51 establishment of parasitism (Shahid et al., 2018). Secondary metabolites can be translocated
52 from hosts into dodder and even protect dodder from insect feeding (Smith et al., 2016).
53 Insect feeding-induced systemic signals are also transferred from dodder to host plants, as
54 well as among different hosts through dodder bridge connections, inducing host defense
55 against insects (Hettenhausen et al., 2017; Zhuang et al., 2018).

56
57 Within a plant, various small molecules, mRNAs, small RNAs, and proteins traffic between
58 different cells, tissues, and organs (Batailler et al., 2012; Du et al., 2015; Hu et al., 2016; Liu
59 and Chen, 2018; Lopez-Cobollo et al., 2016; Lucas et al., 2013; Ostendorp et al., 2017;
60 Paultre et al., 2016; Thieme et al., 2015). Although the biological significance of the
61 movement of the mobile mRNAs and proteins remains largely elusive, some of these mRNAs
62 and proteins likely play important roles in coordinating the growth and development of
63 different plant parts and plant adaptation to stresses (Kim et al., 2001; Lough and Lucas, 2006;
64 Winter and Kragler, 2018). For example, day length is perceived by leaves and activates the
65 biosynthesis of a mobile protein signal, named flowering locus T (FT), which moves through
66 the phloem to the shoot apex to induce flowering (Turck et al., 2008). In the tomato *mouse*

67 *ears (me)* mutant, the *pyrophosphate-dependent phosphofructokinase (PFK)* is fused with
68 *LeT6*, which is a tomato knotted-1-like homeobox gene, and this fusion transcript is able to
69 move from the *me* stock to wild-type (WT) tomato scion and changes the morphology of WT
70 scion (Kim et al., 2001).

71

72 A few lines of evidence have indicated that proteins can be translocated from hosts to dodder.
73 Green fluorescence protein (GFP) expressed in tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*) or Arabidopsis
74 (*Arabidopsis thaliana*) was found to be transferred into dodder (Birschwilks et al., 2007;
75 Haupt et al., 2001). Soybean (*Glycine max*) transformed with *phosphinothricin acetyl*
76 *transferase (PAT)* is resistant to the herbicide glufosinate, and dodder parasitizing on these
77 soybean plants exhibited increased tolerance to glufosinate than did the dodder grown on the
78 WT soybean, and PCR analysis ruled out the possibility of the transfer of *PAT* transcripts from
79 transgenic soybean to dodder (Jiang et al., 2013). However, whether and to what extent
80 proteins are transferred between dodder and hosts are mostly unclear.

81

82 Recently, the genomes of *C. australis* and *C. campestris* were sequenced and analyzed (Sun
83 et al., 2018; Vogel et al., 2018). The wide host range of dodder also allows distantly related
84 host plants to be selected, which in turn, facilitates proteomic discrimination of proteins from
85 different organisms based on the large sequence divergences among the homologous proteins
86 in dodder and hosts. With proteomic analyses, we found hundreds to more than one thousand
87 proteins to be translocated between the stems of dodder and those of Arabidopsis or soybean.
88 Large numbers of these inter-plant mobile proteins were also found in the seeds of dodder
89 and soybean plants. Moreover, when dodder bridge connected Arabidopsis and soybean
90 plants, the exchange of hundreds of proteins between these two hosts occurred. The quantities
91 of protein transferred were estimated to represent a few to more than 10% of the proteomes of
92 these plants and their seeds. Using transgenic host plants expressing different reporter
93 proteins, we showed that these reporter proteins retained their activity after inter-plant
94 movement. Comparison between the inter-plant mobile proteins and mRNAs indicated that
95 the majority of the mobile proteins were translocated from foreign plants, but not *de novo*

96 synthesized from the mobile mRNAs. This extensive inter-plant protein trafficking mediated
97 by parasitic dodders may influence the recipient plants' physiology.

98

99 **RESULTS**

100

101 **Protein transfer between host and dodder stems**

102

103 To examine the protein transfer between dodder and host plants, we infested Arabidopsis and
104 soybean plants with dodder (*C. australis*), and when the parasites were well-established,
105 Arabidopsis stems, soybean stems, and two segments of dodder stems that were proximal and
106 distal to the host stems were collected for label-free peptide quantitation proteome analyses.
107 Three biological replicates were used for each group of samples, and for each group only
108 peptides that appeared in at least two out of three replicates were considered to be positively
109 identified. The sequences of positively identified peptides were mapped to the dodder and host
110 (Arabidopsis or soybean) genome, if any did not match either genome (because of sequencing
111 errors and posttranslational modifications, etc.), they were filtered out; subsequently, 1)
112 peptides which matched to both genomes and only matched to native genome were considered
113 to be from native proteins; 2) peptides that only matched the foreign plant genome but not the
114 native plant genome were considered to be mobile proteins.

115

116 Six hundred-nineteen and 615 Arabidopsis proteins and 1535 and 1547 soybean proteins were
117 identified in dodder proximal and distal stem segments, respectively, which accounted for
118 27.0% (734/2714) and 37.9% (1807/4765) of the total Arabidopsis and soybean protein
119 species identified in the respective host stems (Figure 1A, 1B, and Supplemental Data 1).
120 Moreover, 1027 and 1674 dodder proteins were detected in Arabidopsis and soybean stems,
121 respectively, and these were 17.4 (1027/5914) and 28.3% (1674/5914) of the total dodder
122 protein species detected in dodder stems (Figure 1A, 1B, and Supplemental Data 1).
123 Although the host plant-produced proteins were mostly distributed throughout dodder
124 proximal and distal stem segments, some proteins were only detected in one or the other of
125 these two dodder stem segments (Figure 1C). We speculate that proteins specifically detected

126 in proximal parts may have high turnover rates, making them undetected in distal segments;
127 in contrast, some rapidly-transported host proteins might accumulate in dodder distal
128 segments and not be detected in the proximal parts.

129

130 Notably, even though transcription factors (TFs) usually have low protein abundance and
131 thus are hard to be detected in proteome analyses, 6 Arabidopsis and 8 soybean TFs were
132 found to be translocated from hosts to dodder (Supplemental Table 1). Four and 9 dodder TFs
133 were transferred into Arabidopsis and soybean, respectively (Supplemental Table 1). In
134 addition to TFs, some potential pathogen- (such as R proteins) and insect-resistant (such as
135 P450s) proteins were translocated into the foreign plants and may confer resistance to biotic
136 stresses (Supplemental Table 2): two R proteins and one P450 from Arabidopsis and two R
137 proteins and two P450s from soybean were transferred into dodder stems, and from dodder,
138 one R protein and one P450 were translocated into Arabidopsis; and one R protein and five
139 P450s were translocated into soybean stems.

140

141 Previously, more than 1100 proteins had been identified in cucumber and watermelon phloem
142 sap samples (Hu et al., 2016). Thus, combining our inter-plant mobile proteins and those
143 found in Cucurbitaceae, we next asked which mobile proteins are specific and which ones are
144 common in different plant families. Taking advantage of orthology and Venn diagram
145 analysis, it was found that that 54 protein species are likely to be conserved in long-distance
146 trafficking (Figure 1D), and gene Ontology (GO) analysis indicated that these 54 conserved
147 protein species are mainly related to adaxial/abaxial pattern specification, cell wall pectin
148 metabolic process, gluconeogenesis, response to glucose, actin filament bundle assembly, and
149 trehalose metabolism in response to stress (Supplemental Data 2). One hundred and
150 forty-eight dodder proteins were found to be specifically dodder-produced mobile proteins
151 (Figure 1D), and they were translocated to both Arabidopsis and soybean, implying that some
152 dodder-specific proteins may be important for dodder parasitism. GO analysis revealed that
153 these 148 dodder proteins are enriched in GTP biosynthetic process, UTP biosynthetic
154 process, nucleoside diphosphate phosphorylation, tricarboxylic acid cycle, and CTP
155 biosynthetic process (Supplemental Data 2).

156

157 Previously, it was shown that thousands of mRNAs were translocated between dodder and
158 hosts (Kim et al., 2014). To compare the inter-plant protein and mRNA transfer, the
159 transcriptomes of the same tissues from Arabidopsis-dodder and soybean-dodder systems,
160 which were used for the above proteomic analyses, were sequenced to obtain inter-plant
161 mobile mRNAs, except that the proximal and distal stems were equally mixed before samples
162 were sequenced (three biological replicates for each group), since the mobile host proteins
163 that found in dodder proximal and distal stem segments had little differences and RNA-seq
164 was considered to be much more sensitive than proteomic analysis to detect the foreign
165 mRNAs. In the Arabidopsis-dodder system, only 0.06% and 0.28% reads were originated
166 from foreign plants in the dodder and Arabidopsis transcriptomes, respectively (Supplemental
167 Figure 1A and Supplemental Data 3, the percentages are the reads number only mapped to
168 the foreign genome to the total reads number that mapped to the foreign and native genome);
169 the analysis of distribution of count numbers (CNs) of foreign and native mRNAs also
170 indicated that the abundance of individual mobile mRNAs was much less than was that of the
171 native ones (Supplemental Figure 1A). In contrast, in Arabidopsis stems the ratio between the
172 mass spectrometry (MS) total precursor intensities (TPIs) of dodder proteins and those of all
173 proteins was 16.68%. In dodder stems (including both proximal and distal segments), 4.30 to
174 4.53% of the TPIs of dodder stem proteins were contributed by the Arabidopsis mobile
175 proteins (Figure 1E). Generally, the estimated relative protein abundance (ERPA) of most
176 foreign proteins was lower than the native proteins, but compared with the relative abundance
177 of foreign mRNAs, the individual mobile proteins were much greater in their ERPA (Figure
178 1E and Supplemental Figure 1A). Similarly, in soybean-dodder system, dodder transcriptome
179 contained 1.22% of soybean reads and soybean transcriptome contained only 0.19% of
180 dodder reads (Supplemental Figure 1A and Supplemental Data 3); however, 13.70% of the
181 TPIs in soybean proteome and 10.95 to 11.17% of TPIs in dodder proteome were from
182 dodder and soybean proteins, respectively (Figure 1E). Again, the translocated proteins'
183 relative abundance was generally much higher than that of mRNAs (Figure 1E and
184 Supplemental Figure 1A). Furthermore, among the 734 Arabidopsis proteins and 172
185 Arabidopsis mRNAs that were found in dodder stems, only 14 were co-transferred

186 (Supplemental Figure 1B). Similarly, comparison of the 1027 dodder proteins and 1417
187 dodder mRNAs identified in Arabidopsis stems revealed that transcripts and proteins from
188 381 dodder loci were co-transferred (Supplemental Figure 1B). In the soybean-dodder system,
189 we found no soybean mRNAs and proteins to be co-transferred to dodder stems, and among
190 all the proteins (1674) and mRNAs (708) transferred from dodder to soybean stems,
191 transcripts and proteins from 259 dodder loci were co-transferred (Supplemental Figure 1C).
192 These data suggest that these inter-species mobile proteins are mostly translocated proteins,
193 but not *de novo* synthesized from the mobile mRNAs in the foreign plants.

194

195 **Activity of inter-plant transferred reporter proteins**

196

197 To further evaluate inter-plant protein trafficking and examine whether inter-plant mobile
198 proteins retain their activity after long-distance transfer, Arabidopsis plants expressing five
199 reporter proteins, eGFP (enhanced GFP)-GUS (β -glucuronidase) fusion protein (90 kDa), GUS
200 (68 kDa), LUC (luciferase) (60 kDa), eGFP (27 kDa), and PAT (phosphinothricin acetyl
201 transferase, 22 kDa) (Supplemental Table 3) were prepared, and these plants were infested
202 with dodders. GUS activity was clearly detected in the stems of dodder grown on the
203 Arabidopsis plants expressing eGFP-GUS or GUS (Figure 2A to C and Supplemental Figure
204 2A). Importantly, eGFP-GUS protein was specifically located in the sieve cells of dodder
205 (Figure 2A), indicating that it was translocated through phloem. Similarly, LUC activity was
206 detected in the proximal and distal parts of dodder stems, whose hosts expressed LUC (Figure
207 2D and Supplemental Figure 2B). Using Western blotting, eGFP was clearly detected in the
208 proximal and distal dodder segments when they grew on Arabidopsis expressing eGFP (Figure
209 2E), although eGFP fluorescence was undetected visually, probably due to the dodder
210 autofluorescence and the relatively low levels of transferred eGFP. Furthermore, consistent
211 with what was found in dodder grown on glufosinate-resistant soybean (Jiang et al., 2013),
212 dodder parasitizing Arabidopsis plants which had been transformed with the *PAT* gene
213 (*phosphinothricin acetyl transferase*, which encodes a 22-kDa protein) became tolerant to
214 glufosinate (Supplemental Figure 2C). According to our proteomic data, a jasmonic acid (JA)
215 biosynthetic enzyme AOS (allene oxide synthase) was transferred between dodder and

216 soybean hosts (Supplemental Data 1). To further confirm the movement of AOS, Arabidopsis
217 AOS fused with a *FLAG* tag (58 kDa) was expressed in Arabidopsis under the control of its
218 native promoter. AOS-FLAG was clearly detected in dodder stems when they grew on
219 Arabidopsis expressing AOS-FLAG, while the dodder stems on the WT Arabidopsis had no
220 detectable signals (Figure 2F). We also examined whether the transcripts of these six
221 transgenes could be detected in dodder with PCR, but no PCR products were obtained
222 (Supplemental Figure 2D).

223

224 Therefore, eGFP-GUS, GUS, LUC, eGFP, PAT, and AOS proteins were translocated from
225 Arabidopsis into dodder stem, but not translated from the mobile Arabidopsis mRNAs.
226 Importantly, these mobile eGFP-GUS, GUS, LUC, and PAT retained their activity in the
227 foreign plants, although the activity of eGFP and AOS was not detected due to the low level of
228 eGFP and complex biochemical analysis procedure for AOS.

229

230 **Inter-plant translocation of proteins to soybean and dodder seeds**

231

232 Next, we asked whether inter-plant mobile proteins can be translocated into seeds, given our
233 findings of extensive protein trafficking in stems. Didders were grown on soybean plants
234 until both produced seeds, and the seeds were sampled for proteome analyses (three
235 biological replicates were used for each group of samples; dodder makes no seeds when
236 parasitizing Arabidopsis, thus the Arabidopsis-dodder system was excluded from this
237 analysis). In dodder and soybean seeds, we identified a total of 4186 and 4797 proteins,
238 respectively, and among these, 978 soybean proteins and 608 dodder proteins
239 were found to have been delivered into the seeds of dodder and soybean, respectively (Figure
240 3A and Supplemental Data 1). The TPIs of these translocated proteins were estimated to
241 quantitatively represent 8.84% and 2.23% of dodder and soybean seed proteome, respectively;
242 the distribution of ERPA of the foreign and native proteins indicated that overall the
243 abundance of individual foreign proteins in the seeds were only moderately less than that of
244 the native proteins (Figure 3B). Although little enrichment of GO terms were found for the
245 proteins from soybean to dodder seeds (Supplemental Table 4), GO analysis on the dodder

246 proteins that travelled to soybean seeds indicated that the enriched GO terms were mainly
247 related to primary metabolism, including glycolytic process, tricarboxylic acid cycle, and
248 gluconeogenesis, and GO terms oxidation-reduction process and response to heat were also
249 enriched (Supplemental Table 4).

250

251 The same samples were used for RNA-seq analyses to study whether there is mRNA transfer
252 to the seeds of hosts and dodder. Indeed, foreign mRNAs accumulated in seeds: 860 soybean
253 mRNAs and 91 dodder mRNAs were identified in dodder and soybean seeds, respectively
254 (Supplemental Data 3). Reads from soybean were estimated to be 0.41% of the total
255 mappable reads in dodder seeds, and 1.37% of the reads from soybean seeds were from
256 dodder, and most of the foreign mRNAs had very low CNs, compared with the native
257 mRNAs (Figure 3B). Comparison between the identities of 978 proteins and 860 mRNAs
258 translocated from soybean to dodder seeds revealed that only 121 soybean loci's transcripts
259 and proteins were co-transferred (Figure 3C). Similarly, among the 608 proteins and 91
260 mRNAs from dodder, only 17 dodder mRNAs and the corresponding proteins were
261 co-transferred from dodder to soybean seeds (Figure 3C). Similar to what was found in stems,
262 3 soybean and 3 dodder TFs were found in dodder and soybean seeds respectively
263 (Supplemental Table 1). Two soybean and one dodder P450s were translocated into foreign
264 plant' seeds (Supplemental Table 2).

265

266 Next, we intended to demonstrate whether protein translocated from foreign plants to dodder
267 or host seeds could retain their activity and may impact the seed physiology. Didders were
268 infested on transgenic soybean lines expressing GUS or EPSPS
269 (5-enolpyruvyl-shikimate-3-phosphate synthase, an herbicide glyphosate-resistant protein)
270 and didders on WT soybean served as comparisons. High GUS activity, which could be
271 detected by GUS staining, was clearly detected in dodder flowers when they grew on soybean
272 expressing GUS (Figure 3D). Even though GUS activity in dodder seeds was only detectable
273 with a fluorescence-based quantitative assay, the GUS activity in the seeds which were
274 harvested from didders grew on GUS-expressing transgenic soybean was greater than that in
275 the seeds from didders on the WT soybean (Figure 3E). The seeds of didders grown on the

276 EPSPS-expressing soybean plants were germinated under the glyphosate treatment or water
277 (as control condition). Under the control and glyphosate treatment conditions, the
278 germination rates of dodder seeds collected from EPSPS-expressing soybeans were the same,
279 but the germination rate of seeds collected from dodders on the WT soybeans was 30%
280 decreased under glyphosate treatment compared to their germination rate under the control
281 condition (Figure 3F).

282

283 **Dodder-mediated inter-host protein transfer**

284

285 In nature, a dodder parasite often simultaneously parasitizes two or multiple host plants,
286 forming dodder-connected plant clusters. Through the dodder bridges, these hosts are
287 indirectly “grafted” together and could exchange macromolecules. We created plant clusters,
288 each containing an Arabidopsis and a soybean as hosts, which were bridge connected by
289 dodders (Figure 4A). Arabidopsis rosette leaves and young soybean cauline leaves were
290 collected for proteome analyses (three biological replicates were used for each group of
291 samples). In Arabidopsis and soybean leaves, in total 4716 and 6193 proteins were
292 respectively identified, and 20.1% and 11.6% (949 and 719) were found to be transferred into
293 the other host (Figure 4A and Supplemental Data 1). Based on the MS-based signal TPIs, the
294 transferred proteins from Arabidopsis to soybean occupied ~ 8.26% of soybean proteome,
295 and ~ 8.80% of Arabidopsis proteome was soybean proteins (Figure 4B). Although most of
296 the mobile proteins showed somewhat lower ERPA than did the native proteins, the ERPA of
297 some foreign proteins was even greater than the averages of native proteins (Figure 4B).
298 These data indicated that by functioning as a conduit, dodder mediates extensive protein
299 trafficking between different host plants.

300

301 GO analysis on the proteins transferred from soybean to Arabidopsis resulted in very little
302 GO terms (Supplemental Table 4), but the proteins moved from Arabidopsis to soybean
303 showed enrichment in a number of GO terms, including responses to cadmium, salt stress,
304 and cold (Supplemental Table 4). Notably, among the proteins transferred between

305 Arabidopsis and soybean, 217 were orthologous, while 657 Arabidopsis and 462 soybean
306 proteins were species-specific (Figure 4C). TFs and insect- and pathogen-resistant proteins
307 were found to be transferred between Arabidopsis and soybean. One Arabidopsis TF was
308 translocated into soybean leaves, and 4 soybean TFs were transferred into Arabidopsis leaves
309 (Supplemental Table 1), and five Arabidopsis and one soybean P450s were transferred into
310 soybean and Arabidopsis leaves, respectively (Supplemental Table 2).

311

312 To further examine whether the inter-host transferred proteins could retain their activity,
313 Arabidopsis plants expressing eGFP-GUS or WT Arabidopsis plants were connected with
314 soybeans by dodder bridge connections. Elevated GUS activity was detected in soybean
315 leaves, when the soybeans were bridge-connected with Arabidopsis expressing eGFP-GUS,
316 compared with soybeans connected with WT Arabidopsis (Figure 4D), indicating that
317 eGFP-GUS retained its activity after being transferred to another host. The AOS mutant
318 *dde2-2* is male-sterile because of the defect in JA biosynthesis, and *dde2-2* does not make any
319 seeds (von Malek et al., 2002). Five *dde2-2* mutants were individually bridge-connected with
320 five soybeans, which served as AOS suppliers. One out of these five mutants was
321 self-pollinated successfully, and its mutation and homozygosity was confirmed by PCR and
322 sequencing (Figure 4E and Supplemental Figure 3A); furthermore, quantification of the JA
323 content in this *dde2-2* mutant, whose flowering phenotype was rescued, indicated that its JA
324 recovered to the normal level, while the remaining four *dde2-2* had very low JA levels
325 (Supplemental Table 5). In this experiment, only a one in five of the tested *dde2-2* mutants
326 was phenotypically rescued. This was consistent with the results of our proteomic analysis on
327 the leaves of Arabidopsis and soybean, which were bridge connected by dodders:
328 Arabidopsis AOS protein with very large differences of the relative abundance (undetectable
329 in one replicate and the other two showed a 5-fold difference) was detected in soybean leaf
330 samples (Supplemental Figure 3B).

331

332 **The general properties of mobile proteins**

333

334 The large numbers of *bona fide* inter-plant mobile proteins (6504 in total from this study)
335 allowed us to investigate whether there are certain general rules that long-distance protein
336 translocation follows. First, Arabidopsis-dodder and soybean-dodder proteomic data were
337 exploited to compare the quantities of mobile proteins in their original and foreign plants.
338 The majority of mobile proteins exhibited strongly decreased MS signals after translocation
339 into the foreign plants (Figure 5A and Supplemental Data 1), indicating their decreased
340 concentrations. This is conceivable, as the translocated proteins cannot be synthesized in the
341 foreign plants and their rates of degradation are greater than the rates of being replenished
342 from the source plants. We used the relative signal intensity ratios (RSIRs; the ratios of the
343 mobile proteins' ERPA in the foreign plants to their ERPA in the native plants) to
344 quantitatively estimate the changes of abundance of the mobile protein after they traveled to
345 the foreign plants. In the stems of Arabidopsis, soybean, and dodder, the RSIRs of 3.9 to 10.2%
346 mobile proteins were between 0.5 and 1, and more than 5% of the mobile proteins' RSIRs
347 exceeded 1 (Supplemental Figure 4). Thus, at least 10% and 18% of the mobile dodder and
348 host proteins remained to have at least 50% of their abundance in their native plants,
349 respectively, after they were translocated to the foreign plants. Remarkably, 0.7 to 22.9%
350 mobile proteins were only detected in foreign plants (Supplemental Figure 4), and these
351 proteins are likely more stable in the foreign plants than in their native plants and probably
352 these proteins' turnover rates are lower than the rates of being translocated.

353

354 Next, we sought to study whether the inter-plant mobile proteins possess certain properties
355 that enable them to be mobile. First of all, these inter-plant mobile proteins were found to be
356 more abundant than were the non-mobile proteins in source plants (Figure 5B). Secondly,
357 analyses on the molecular weights of the mobile proteins in phloem saps of cucurbits
358 (Supplemental Figure 5A) from a previous study (Hu et al., 2016) and the mobile proteins
359 identified in our parasitic systems indicated that the mobile proteins mainly ranged from 20 to
360 70 kDa (Figure 5C to D). In the Arabidopsis-dodder system, using Kolmogorov-Smirnov
361 Test (KS-test) analysis, we found that the size distribution patterns of the dodder native
362 proteins and those trafficked to Arabidopsis (hereafter named MTFP proteins, for "moved to
363 foreign plants") had no difference; however, the distribution patterns of Arabidopsis native

364 and MTFP proteins were statistically different, and the median of mobile proteins was 5.6
365 kDa larger than that of the native proteins (Figure 5C). In the soybean-dodder system, KS-test
366 analysis showed that the size distribution patterns of the native and MTFP proteins were also
367 statistically different (Figure 5D): Compared to the native proteins, the medians of MTFP
368 proteins increased 7 kDa and 2.2 kDa for dodder and soybean, respectively (Figure 5D). Thus,
369 the inter-plant mobile proteins tend to be larger than the proteins in the native plants.
370 Remarkably, ~ 20% of the mobile proteins detected in this study were over 70 kDa, among
371 which the largest one reached 611 kDa (At1g67120, midasin). Lastly, the subcellular
372 locations of mobile Arabidopsis, soybean, and dodder proteins were predicted according to
373 their sequence properties (Chou and Shen, 2010). Chloroplast, nucleus, cytoplasm, and
374 mitochondrion were the four principal subcellular locations of these inter-plant mobile
375 proteins (Figure 5E and Supplemental Table 6), and 4.0% of the inter-plant mobile proteins
376 were predicted to be located at endoplasmic reticulum (ER) or Golgi apparatus (Figure 5E
377 and Supplemental Table 6). The mobile proteins identified in the cucurbits (3085) were also
378 analyzed for their subcellular localizations: 21.4, 41.5, 18.8, 5.1, 1.7, and 2.6% proteins were
379 predicted to be in chloroplast, nucleus, cytoplasm, mitochondrion, ER, and Golgi apparatus,
380 respectively (Supplemental Figure 5B and Supplemental Table 6). Hence, generally abundant
381 proteins with molecular weights smaller than 70 kDa have a high tendency to be mobile, and
382 protein subcellular location does not strictly limit protein trafficking.

383

384 To determine whether there are certain sequence motifs can be enriched from the mobile
385 proteins, all the sequences of inter-plant mobile proteins were used for the analysis with the
386 Multiple EM for Motif Elicitation (MEME) program (Bailey et al., 2006). However, no
387 sequence motifs were found to be enriched.

388

389 **Discussion**

390

391 Plant phloem translocation stream carries numerous mRNAs and proteins, and some of these
392 mobile mRNAs and proteins may play a role in regulating the growth and development in the
393 systemic tissues (Turnbull and Lopez-Cobollo, 2013). Moreover, stress-induced mobile

394 signals control the systemic responses, which are important for plant adaptation to stresses.
395 For example, in response to nitrogen starvation, plants produce peptides CEPs (C-terminally
396 encoded peptides) in roots, which are translocated to shoot to induce N starvation responses,
397 and the leaf-originated peptide CEPD (CEP downstream) is another mobile signal that travels
398 to roots and plays important roles in nitrogen systemic signaling (Ohkubo et al., 2017; Tabata
399 et al., 2014). Grafting is common practice in agriculture and often the phenotypes of scions
400 (such as pathogen resistance) are influenced by the rootstocks and vice versa (Warschefsky et
401 al., 2016), indicating that the mobile mRNAs, proteins, and other signals travel across the
402 graft junctions and influence the physiology of the systemic tissues (Hettenhausen et al., 2017;
403 Kim et al., 2014; Liu and Chen, 2018; Shahid et al., 2018). Here, we show that various
404 proteins are able to traffic between host plants and dodder and even between different hosts
405 through dodder bridges, and the mobile foreign proteins represent substantial portion
406 (quantitatively, a few to more than 10%) of the recipient plants' proteomes. The
407 long-distance mobile proteins can even be transferred into the foreign plants' seeds.

408
409 The following two lines of evidence strongly support the notion that some of the mobile
410 proteins still have biological functions after long-distance translocation: 1) Using transgenic
411 hosts expressing eGFP-GUS, GUS, LUC, PAT, and EPSPS, we demonstrate that these
412 proteins retained their activity after inter-plant movement; 2) importantly, although most
413 mobile proteins' abundance strongly decreased in the foreign plants, we still found that at
414 least 12% of the mobile proteins retained at least 50% of their original abundance, and some
415 proteins even exhibited elevated levels, and some were undetected in the native plants but
416 were identified in the foreign plants. Given that dodder has a very wide host range (across
417 many plant families), proteins with the same functions can be exchanged or transferred, as
418 well as lineage-specific proteins with novel functions can be transferred to recipients through
419 haustorial connections, between dodder and hosts and among phylogenetically distant host
420 plants. Some of these inter-plant mobile proteins may function in the recipient plants by
421 modulating their physiology and may even function in their seeds, such as conferring stress
422 resistance and altering growth and development of subsequent generations.

423

424 Venn diagram analysis (Figure 1D) indicated that in addition to the mobile proteins from
425 dodder that are common to the mobile proteins from one or more other species, 148 mobile
426 proteins are dodder-specific. Importantly, some of these dodder-specific mobile proteins may
427 be essential for establishment and/or maintenance of parasitism. Many plant pathogens
428 secrete effector proteins into plant cells to suppress the host plant defense (Deslandes and
429 Rivas, 2012). Similarly, studies on the secretomes of malaria parasites (*Plasmodium*
430 *falciparum*) also indicated that the secreted proteins remodel the host red blood cell for the
431 survival of these parasites (Hiller et al., 2004; Marti et al., 2004). Whether these
432 dodder-specific long-distance mobile proteins, which could be a part of the dodder parasite
433 secretomic proteins, have functions in manipulating host physiology remains to be
434 determined. Although the mechanism remains unclear, artificial grafting can only be done
435 between plants from the same family, and plants from different families are incompatible
436 (Goldschmidt, 2014), dodder can parasitize plants from various families. It is conceivable
437 that certain secreted dodder proteins function at the haustorium-host junctions and probably
438 other host tissues to enable dodder to form stable graft with the host stem, without inducing
439 rejection reactions in the hosts.

440

441 Previously, RNA-seq analysis indicated that more than 9000 and 8000 unigenes from
442 Arabidopsis and dodder (*C. campestris*) were identified in dodder and Arabidopsis stems,
443 respectively; however, between tomato and dodder, there were only 347 and 288 mobile
444 unigenes (Kim et al., 2014), and 2110 mRNAs were found to be transported from
445 Arabidopsis into dodder *C. reflexa* (Thieme et al., 2015). Our RNA-seq analysis on the
446 Arabidopsis-dodder (*C. australis*) system indicated that in Arabidopsis and dodder there were
447 only 1416 and 172 foreign mobile mRNAs; similarly, in the soybean-dodder system, only 64
448 soybean and 708 dodder mRNAs were found in dodder and soybean, respectively
449 (Supplemental Data 3). The relatively large differences between the numbers of mobile
450 mRNAs in the Arabidopsis-dodder systems identified the previous (Kim et al., 2014; Thieme
451 et al., 2015) and this study may be resulted from the different dodder species (*C. campestris*,
452 *C. reflexa*, and *C. australis*) and different stages of plants. Importantly, we found that the
453 ratios of mobile mRNAs to the total mRNAs were much lower than the ratios of mobile

454 proteins to the total proteins. For example, in our Arabidopsis-dodder system, only 0.06% of
455 Arabidopsis stem transcriptome reads were from dodder mRNAs, while 4.3% of Arabidopsis
456 stem proteomic signals were from dodder proteins. Furthermore, the distribution patterns of
457 the foreign proteins' ERPA and foreign mRNAs' CNs indicated that the majorities of the
458 foreign proteins exhibited much greater abundance than did the foreign mRNAs. Lastly, in
459 the foreign plants very little mobile proteins and mRNAs were from the same loci. Recently,
460 it was shown that the m⁵C (5-methylcytosine)-modified transcript of *YFP-TCTPI* (*yellow*
461 *fluorescence protein-translationally controlled tumor protein 1*) moved from shoot to root
462 and was translated in root cells to regulate the root growth; however, YFP protein can be
463 translocated into root cells despite that *YFP* transcripts were undetectable in roots (Yang et al.,
464 2019). Therefore, it is very likely that the majorities of the mobile proteins are not *de novo*
465 synthesized from the transferred mRNAs in the foreign plants, but they are *bona fide*
466 long-distance mobile proteins, which occupy large portions of the foreign plants' proteomes,
467 even though the possibility that small numbers of mobile mRNAs can be translated in the
468 recipient plants cannot be completely ruled out.

469

470 It had been proposed that three determinants affect the mobility of proteins: protein
471 expression level, subcellular location, and molecular weight (Paultre et al., 2016). In
472 dodder-host parasitic systems, the proteins with relatively high expression levels showed high
473 tendency to be mobile (Figure 5B), and this is in line with the previous studies, in which
474 mRNAs and proteins with high expression levels tend to be mobile (Calderwood et al., 2016;
475 Liu and Chen, 2018; Paultre et al., 2016; Thieme et al., 2015). Consistent with the scenario
476 that macromolecules with molecular weights below 70 kDa could enter the phloem by default
477 (Paultre et al., 2016; Stadler et al., 2005), the molecular weights of mobile proteins in
478 cucurbit and parasitic systems mainly ranged from 20 to 70 kDa (Figure 5C, 5D, and
479 Supplemental Figure 5A). The inter-plant mobile proteins were predicted to be mainly
480 localized in chloroplast, nucleus, cytoplasm, and mitochondrion (Figure 5E and Supplemental
481 Table 6), reminiscent of the subcellular location patterns of the mobile proteins detected
482 within plants (Batailler et al., 2012; Paultre et al., 2016). Furthermore, a small fraction of
483 mobile proteins were predicted to be located at ER or Golgi apparatus (Figure 5E and

484 Supplemental Table 6), providing new evidence arguing against the notion that proteins
485 targeted to ER and Golgi apparatus are unable to enter translocation stream (Paultre et al.,
486 2016), and this was also supported by the predicted subcellular locations of the phloem sap
487 proteins in cucurbits, in which ER- and Golgi apparatus-localized proteins were also
488 identified (Supplemental Figure 4B and Supplemental Table 6). MEME analysis on the large
489 number of inter-plant mobile proteins resulted in no enrichment of protein sequence motifs,
490 supporting the notion that proteins enter the phloem translocation stream by default, but not
491 by design (Paultre et al., 2016). However, the new finding that mRNAs harboring m⁵C
492 mRNA modifications are likely to be mobile (Yang et al., 2019) suggests that certain
493 post-translational modifications might contribute to protein mobility.

494

495 This study reveals that between hosts and dodder, large-scale inter-plant protein transfer may
496 play an important role in the host-dodder and host-dodder-host interaction and adaptation to
497 environmental factors as a whole, adding another means of inter-specific communications, in
498 addition to the previously identified transfer of mRNAs, small RNAs, secondary metabolites,
499 and systemic signals (Hettenhausen et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2014; Shahid et al., 2018). This
500 work also suggests that within a plant, extensive protein transfer likely occurs among
501 different cells, tissues, and organs, and this is probably intrinsically required for the delicate
502 orchestration of growth and development in response to environmental conditions. These data
503 also provide new insights into the mechanisms by which rootstocks influence scion
504 phenotypes (Warschefsky et al., 2016).

505

506 **METHODS**

507

508 **Plasmid construction and plant transformation**

509

510 The coding sequences of *eGFP-GUS* (AWH11767, AAF65404), *eGFP* (AWH11767), and
511 *LUC* (AFE85520) were cloned into the binary vector pCAMBIA3301 (containing a *PAT*
512 (*AFA36668*) gene) with two restriction endonucleases Nco I and BstE II. These three

513 constructs and the unmodified pCAMBIA3301, which contains a *GUS* (AAF65404) gene,
514 were transformed into agrobacterium (GV3101). A 3-kb Arabidopsis *AOS* (AT5G42650)
515 promoter fragment fused with the full-length coding sequence of *AOS-FLAG* was introduced
516 into the binary vector pCAMBIA2301. Arabidopsis (*Arabidopsis thaliana* Col-0) was
517 transformed with GV3101 carrying vectors indicated above as, following a floral dipping
518 method described by Clough and Bent (Clough and Bent, 1998). Transgenic Arabidopsis
519 seedlings were selected on 1/2 MS (Murashige and Skoog) medium supplemented with 50
520 mg/L glufosinate or kanamycin.

521

522 **Plant growth and sampling**

523

524 Arabidopsis plants (wild-type and transgenic lines) were cultivated on Jiffy peat pellets with
525 diameter of 3.5 cm and height of 4 cm (Jiffy; www.jiffygroup.com) under short day condition
526 (8 h light, 16 h dark) at 22 °C for one month and then individually transferred into pots (16
527 cm in diameter and 14 cm in height) in a glasshouse, under natural sunlight (~ 12 h light, 12 h
528 dark) at 18-24 °C. Soybean (*Glycine max* Williams 82) and wild tomato (*Solanum pennelli*)
529 were grown in another glasshouse under natural light (~ 12 h light, 12 h dark) at 22-28 °C.
530 Dodder (*Cuscuta australis*) seeds were immersed into sulfuric acid for 30 min, followed by
531 10 times of rinsing with water (Li et al., 2015). 4-day-old dodder seedlings were infested on
532 4-week-old wild tomato plants to obtain vigorously growing dodder stocks.

533

534 To investigate protein and mRNA trafficking between dodder and hosts, 7-day-bolted
535 Arabidopsis and 2-week-old soybean plants were each infected with a stem segment excised
536 from the dodder stocks. Three weeks after initiation of infestation, Arabidopsis stems,
537 soybean stems, and dodder proximal and distal stem segments were sampled for label-free
538 peptide quantitation proteome analyses. Arabidopsis, soybean, and dodder stems were
539 sampled for transcriptome analyses (the proximal and distal segments of dodder stem were
540 equally mixed). The dodder proximal stem segment was a 2-cm stem segment that was 1 cm
541 away from the attachment region. The dodder distal stem segment was a 4-cm segment that
542 was 8 cm away from the attachment region. Arabidopsis and soybean stems were 2-cm long

543 segments and 2 cm above the top of the attachment regions. Three replicates were used for
544 proteomic and transcriptomic analyses, each of which was pooled from at least 5 stem
545 segments.

546

547 To study the protein transfer between different hosts through dodder connections,
548 7-day-bolted Arabidopsis and 2-week-old soybean plants were infected with stem segments
549 excised from dodder stocks. These dodder-infested Arabidopsis and soybean plants were
550 placed in pairs closely (~ 10 cm apart). The newly emerged and elongated dodder vines from
551 each Arabidopsis and soybean pair were used to parasitize each other. In two weeks,
552 Arabidopsis-dodder-soybean plant clusters were formed. The three youngest rosette leaves of
553 each Arabidopsis and the youngest trifoliolate of each soybean were sampled for proteome.
554 Three replicates were used for proteomic analyses, each of which was pooled from leaves
555 collected from at least five plants.

556

557 To obtain dodder and soybean seeds from soybean-dodder parasitization systems, 2-week-old
558 soybean plants were infected with young dodder segments excised from stocks to form
559 soybean-dodder parasitization system. This system was cultivated under normal glasshouse
560 conditions (~12h light, 12h dark) at 22-28 °C until both produced seeds. When the seeds were
561 mature enough, they were collected and dried in a desiccator, before being processed for
562 proteome and transcriptome sequencing. Three biological replicates were used for proteomic
563 and transcriptomic analysis, each of which was pooled from seeds collected from three
564 individual plants.

565

566 **Protein extraction and digestion for proteome**

567

568 Samples (each had three biological replicates) were grounded in liquid nitrogen. Lysis buffer
569 (7 M urea, 2 M thiourea, 0.1% CHAPS, protease inhibitor) were added into each sample, and
570 samples were vortexed and ultrasonically disrupted to extract the total proteins. Protein
571 concentrations were determined using the Bradford method (Bradford, 1976). Twenty
572 micrograms of protein of each sample was loaded onto sodium dodecyl sulfate

573 polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE) and stained with Coomassie blue. Protein
574 gels were destained until the backgrounds were totally clear, and each lane was divided into
575 three gel fractions according to the protein concentrations. Each gel fraction was further
576 sliced into 1-mm² pieces and were washed with the destaining buffer (50 mM NH₄HCO₃ :
577 ACN = 1 : 1). Next, the destained gel fraction pieces were digested with 0.01 µg/µL trypsin
578 working buffer (trypsin was dissolved in 25 mM NH₄HCO₃) overnight at 37 °C. Supernatants
579 were collected and frozen to dehydrate under a vacuum condition.

580

581 HPLC-MS

582

583 The dehydrated peptides were dissolved in 20 µL of 2% methanol containing 0.1% formic
584 acid, after centrifugation, 10 µL of these dissolved digested peptides were loaded onto the
585 ThermoFisher Scientific EASY-nLC 1000 System (Nano HPLC) with a loading pump at the
586 speed of 3 µL/min for 8 min. Then, peptide mixtures were separated with two mobile phases:
587 solution A (100% ultrapure water and 0.1% formic acid) and solution B (100% acetonitrile
588 and 0.1% formic acid) at a flow rate of 300 nL/min. The separation gradient was as follows:
589 3% solution B for 5 min, 8% for 102 min, 28% for 3 min, 80% for 10 min, and then back to
590 initial condition. The separated peptides were loaded into an Orbitrap Fusion mass
591 spectrometer (ThermoFisher Scientific) through a nano-ESI emitter with the spray voltage of
592 the ion source of 2.4 kV and the capillary temperature of 320 °C. Full-scan mass spectra were
593 acquired in the MS over 300-1500 m/z with a resolution of 120000, automatic gain control
594 (AGC) target was 2.0e4 and maximum injection time was set to 50 ms. All ions were selected
595 for high energy collision induced dissociation (HCD), the normalization collision energy was
596 set to 30%. HCD scans were collected at 30000 resolution, AGC target was set to 1.0e4, and
597 maximum injection time was 45 ms.

598

599 Data processing for proteomics

600

601 The MS raw data were processed using MaxQuant software. Parameters of MaxQuant
602 searches were set as follows: precursor ion mass tolerance was 15 ppm, fragment ion mass

603 tolerance was 20 mmu, and the max missed cleavages was 2. The processed MS data were
604 searched against the uniprot Arabidopsis and soybean database (<https://www.uniprot.org/>)
605 and dodder database (<http://www.dodderbase.org/>) to identify the proteins.

606

607 For each group of samples, only peptides that appeared in at least two out of three replicates
608 were chosen for further analyses. The sequences of identified peptides were mapped to the
609 dodder and host (Arabidopsis or soybean) genome, if any did not match either genome
610 (because of sequencing errors and posttranslational modifications, etc.), they were filtered
611 out. Mobile proteins were then filtered using the following criterion: According to the sample
612 origin, proteins that only matched the database of foreign plants, but did not match the
613 database of the original plant, were picked out as mobile proteins; proteins which matched
614 both the databases of original and foreign plants were considered to be the original proteins.

615

616 Venn diagram analyses were carried out using an online platform (<http://bioinfo.gp.cnb.csic.es/tools/venny/>). GO term enrichments were run on the RStudio
617 loaded with the GO package, and the false discovery rate (FDR) was set to 0.05. To estimate
618 the proportions of mobile proteins in a given proteome, the total precursor intensities (TPIs)
619 of mobile proteins were divided by the TPIs of all expressed proteins. Subcellular locations
620 of mobile proteins were predicted according to their sequence properties using an online
621 platform (<http://www.csbio.sjtu.edu.cn/bioinf/Cell-PLoc-2/>) in the Plant-mPLoc module.

622

623
624 To identify gene families in Arabidopsis, dodder, soybean, cucumber, and watermelon, we
625 first obtained protein sequences of those species. We obtained proteins of *Arabidopsis*
626 *thaliana* (TAIR10) from TAIR database (Lamesch et al., 2012), and proteins sequences of
627 *Cucumis sativus* L. var. sativus cv. 9930 (v2) and *Citrullus lanatus* subsp. vulgaris cv. 97103
628 (v1) from CuGenDB (Zheng et al., 2019). Proteins of *Cuscuta australis* (v1.1) were obtained
629 from (<http://dodderbase.org/>) (Sun et al., 2018), and proteins of *Glycine max* were retrieved
630 from Uniprot (UniProt Consortium, 2018). We then performed all-vs-all blast using
631 ncbi-blast+ (v2.2.28) (Altschul et al., 1990) with protein sequences from those five species.

632 Gene pairs with blast scores were converted into a graph and gene families were inferred
633 using OrthoFinder2 (v2.2.6) (Emms and Kelly, 2018) with inflation parameter set to 1.5.

634

635 **Transcriptome analysis**

636

637 Samples (each had three biological replicates) were grounded in liquid nitrogen. Each sample
638 was initially treated with Fruit-Mate for RNA purification (Takara) following the
639 manufacturer's instructions, and thereafter the total RNAs were isolated with TRIzol reagent
640 (ThermoFisher Scientific). Illumina TruSeq RNA Sample Prep Kit (Illumina, San Diego, CA,
641 USA) was used to build cDNA libraries. Generated cDNA libraries were sent to a
642 HiSeq2500-PE125 platform (Illumina) to acquire sequence reads. In soybean-dodder system,
643 more than 15.3, 18.9, 16.2 and 14.7 Gb clean aligned pairs were obtained from dodder stem,
644 soybean stem, dodder seed and soybean seed samples, respectively. In Arabidopsis-dodder
645 system, more than 14.9 and 20.6 Gb clean aligned pairs were obtained from dodder stem and
646 Arabidopsis stem samples, respectively. Raw data of soybean samples were mapped to
647 soybean genome first and the unmapped reads were matched against dodder genome. Thus,
648 the resulting dodder sequences were identified as mobile dodder mRNAs. Mobile
649 Arabidopsis and soybean mRNAs were similarly filtered. Mobile Arabidopsis, dodder, and
650 soybean mRNAs with more than four count numbers per transcript were picked up for future
651 analyses.

652

653 **Western blotting**

654

655 Plant tissues (~100 mg) were grounded in liquid nitrogen and 200 μ L of protein extraction
656 buffer (100 mM Hepes, pH 7.5, 5 mM EGTA, 5 mM EDTA, 10 mM DTT, 1 mM PMSF,
657 10% glycerol, Proteinase Inhibitor Cocktail (Sigma)) were added into each sample to extract
658 total proteins. Protein concentrations were determined using the Bradford method (Bradford,
659 1976). For the detection of eGFP, 5 μ g Arabidopsis and 15 μ g dodder total proteins were
660 used. For the detection of AOS-FLAG, 20 μ g of dodder total proteins were loaded. Proteins
661 were electroblotted onto a polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF) membrane using a wet blotting

662 method (Bio-Rad). The membrane was first stained with Ponceau S and scanned, and after
663 destaining, membrane was blocked 2 h with 5% not-fat milk, followed by 2 h of incubation
664 with rabbit polyclonal Anti-GFP antibody (1:1000, Abcam) and Anti-FLAG antibody
665 (1:1000, Sigma) and 2 h of incubation with secondary HRP antibody which was raised
666 against rabbit antibodies (ThermoFisher Scientific). Exactly the same amounts of proteins
667 were used for immuno-detection of actin using an anti-actin (Abmart) antibody. The imaging
668 was done on a chemiluminescence gel imager system (MicroChemi, DNR).

669

670 **LUC activity assay**

671

672 For imaging LUC activity, stem segments (~ 5 cm), which were the dodder attachment
673 regions, were excised from Arabidopsis WT and a transgenic line expressing LUC.

674 D-Luciferin (1 mM, in 0.1% Triton X-100) was sprayed to the Arabidopsis stem segments
675 and dodder stems. After 5 min, the whole Arabidopsis stem segment with dodder was placed
676 onto the imaging platform and the bright light and chemiluminescence images were taken on
677 a chemiluminescent imaging system (Tanon).

678

679 For quantitative analysis on the LUC activity, samples were grounded in liquid nitrogen and
680 LUC activity was measured using a Luciferase Assay System kit following the kit
681 instructions (Promega). Water was measured as the background.

682

683 **GUS staining and light microscopy**

684

685 Dodder stems that collected from eGFP-GUS and WT Arabidopsis were embedded into 3%
686 low-melting-point agarose, and cross sections were cut into 70-90 μm thickness on a
687 vibratome (Leica, VT1200S). Cross sections were stained with a GUS staining solution (1
688 mg/mL X-Gluc, 100 mM phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, 0.5 mM $\text{K}_3[\text{Fe}(\text{CN})_6]$, 0.5 mM $\text{K}_4[\text{Fe}(\text{CN})_6]$,
689 10 mM EDTA) at 37 °C overnight. Sections were washed three times with pure water
690 to remove GUS working solution, and images were taken on a light microscope (Leica,
691 DM55008).

692

693 GUS activity assay

694

695 Samples were grounded in liquid nitrogen and total proteins were extracted as described
696 above. Quantitative fluorometric GUS assays were carried out following a GUS assay
697 protocol that described by Jefferson et al. (Jefferson et al., 1987). Water was used in GUS
698 activity assay as the background.

699

700 Glufosinate tolerance of dodder stems

701

702 Didders were infested on WT and transgenic Arabidopsis which overexpressed PAT. Three
703 weeks after the infestation, dodder stems were painted with 0.72 g/L glufosinate solution
704 (containing 0.1% Triton X-100) with a soft paintbrush. Seven days after the treatment, these
705 dodder stems were collected and photographed.

706

707 Glyphosate tolerance of dodder seeds

708

709 Dodder seeds were harvested from WT soybean and soybean expressing EPSPS,
710 respectively. Seeds were scarified in concentrated sulphuric acid for 30 min and immediately
711 wash with water thoroughly. Thirty dodder seeds were treated with 5 mg/mL glyphosate
712 solution (containing 0.1% Triton X-100) or water, and the germination rates were recorded 5
713 days later.

714

715 RNA isolation and RT-PCR

716

717 To quantify the transcripts of *eGFP-GUS*, *GUS*, *LUC*, *eGFP*, and *PAT* in dodder, 50-100 mg
718 dodder stems that collected from dodder parasitizing on transgenic and WT Arabidopsis were
719 ground in liquid nitrogen. Total RNAs were isolated using TRIzol (ThermoFisher Scientific),
720 and 0.5 µg of total RNA from each sample was reverse transcribed using oligo(dT) and

721 Superscript II reverse transcriptase (ThermoFisher Scientific). PCRs were run in 35 cycles
722 and primers used are listed in Supplementary Table 7.

723

724 **Data availability**

725

726 The original sequencing data of transcriptome were available at the NCBI under the BioProject
727 PRJNA528603, PRJNA528604, PRJNA544568, and PRJNA544643.

728

729 **Author contributions**

730 Conceptualization, J.W.; Investigation, N.L., G.S., J.Z., S.L., J.L., C.Z., J.Q., and L.W.; Formal
731 Analysis, N.L., H.L., and Y.X.; Writing, N.L. and J.W.

732

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734

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743

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- 866

867 **FIGURE LEGENDS**

868

869 **Figure 1. Protein transfer between host and dodder stems.** (A and B) Schematics indicating
870 the experiment setup and the numbers of mobile proteins between dodder and Arabidopsis (A)
871 and dodder and soybean (B). HS, host stem; DS1, dodder stem proximal segment; DS2, dodder
872 stem distal segment. Red numbers are proteins from hosts; purple numbers are proteins from
873 dodder. (C) Venn diagrams indicating the common and specific host proteins detected in
874 proximal and distal segments of dodder stems whose hosts were Arabidopsis or soybean. (D)
875 Venn diagram analysis of the long-distance mobile proteins identified in Arabidopsis- and
876 soybean-dodder parasitization systems and the phloem sap proteins identified in cucurbit (Hu
877 et al., 2016). (E) The estimated percentages and estimated relative protein abundance (ERPA)
878 of foreign and native proteins in the total proteins of different plant stems. The percentages
879 were estimated based on total precursor intensities (TPIs). ERPA is based on the signal
880 intensities of peptides. Proteins identified in the Arabidopsis-dodder and soybean-dodder
881 systems are shown on the left and right, respectively. The percentages of native and foreign
882 proteins were shown in pie charts, and the ERPA was shown in box plots. The upper and lower
883 edges of box plots indicated the first and third quartiles and the bands and “×” in the boxes were
884 medians and means of data. The whiskers extended to 1.5 times interquartile ranges.

885

886 **Figure 2. Translocation of transgenic proteins from Arabidopsis to dodder.** (A to B) GUS
887 staining of dodder stem cross sections. Dodder were infested on transgenic Arabidopsis
888 expressing eGFP-GUS (A) and wild-type (WT) Arabidopsis (B). Cross sections of dodders
889 were stained for visualizing GUS activity (blue spots, one of which is highlighted in a red
890 box). (C) GUS activity assay of dodder stems that grew on WT Arabidopsis and transgenic
891 Arabidopsis expressing GUS (denoted as WT and GUS, respectively). Black spots in box plot
892 represented the 9 biological replicates (each replicate was collected from three individual
893 plants). The maximum values, upper quartiles, median, lower quartiles, and minimum values
894 were shown in the box plot. Student's t-test; $n = 5$; ***, $p < 0.001$. (D) Chemiluminescence
895 and bright light images of dodder and hosts (Arabidopsis expressing LUC and WT
896 Arabidopsis, respectively). Red arrows denote LUC activity in dodder stem. (E) Western

897 blotting of eGFP protein in dodder and Arabidopsis host expressing eGFP. Lanes 1,
898 transgenic Arabidopsis expressing eGFP; 2, WT Arabidopsis; 3 and 4, proximal segment of
899 dodder stem parasitizing transgenic Arabidopsis expressing eGFP (3) or WT Arabidopsis (4);
900 5 and 6, distal segment of dodder stem parasitizing transgenic Arabidopsis expressing eGFP
901 (5) or WT Arabidopsis (6). Note: Five and 15 μ g of Arabidopsis and dodder proteins were
902 loaded, respectively. (F) Detection of AOS-FLAG in dodder parasitizing Arabidopsis
903 expressing AOS-FLAG. D1, D2, and D3: stems of three individual dodder plants parasitizing
904 transgenic Arabidopsis expressing AOS-FLAG; D control: dodder stems parasitizing WT
905 Arabidopsis. Note: 20 μ g of dodder proteins were loaded. Ponceau S staining of Rubisco
906 large subunit (for Arabidopsis) and western blotting of actin (for dodder) were performed as
907 loading reference in (E) and (F).

908

909 **Figure 3. Translocation of inter-plant proteins and mRNAs in soybean and dodder seeds.**

910 (A) Schematic indicating the experiment setup and the numbers of foreign proteins identified
911 in the soybean seeds (SS) and dodder seeds (DS). (B) The estimated percentages and
912 estimated relative protein abundance (ERPA) or count number (CN) of foreign and native
913 proteins and mRNAs in dodder and soybean seed proteome and transcriptome. DS, dodder
914 seeds; SS, soybean seeds. For proteins, calculation was based on the ratio between the total
915 precursor intensities of foreign and total proteins, ERPA was based on the signal intensity of
916 peptides; for mRNAs, calculation was based on the ratio between the reads mapped to the
917 foreign genome and total reads of those mapped to the foreign and native genome, CNs were
918 based on the count number of transcripts. The percentages were shown in pie charts, and the
919 ERPA and CNs were shown in box plots. The upper and lower edges of box plots showed the
920 first and third quartiles, the bands and “×” in the boxes were medians and means of data. The
921 whiskers extended to 1.5 times interquartile range. (C) Comparisons of foreign mRNAs and
922 proteins that were co-translocated into dodder and soybean seeds. (D) GUS staining of
923 dodder flowers that grew on transgenic GUS soybean and WT soybean, respectively. (E)
924 GUS activity in the seeds of dodder grown on transgenic GUS soybean and WT soybean.
925 Student’s t-test; $n = 6$; **, $p < 0.01$. (F) Germination rates of seeds of dodders harvested from

926 WT and transgenic soybean expressing EPSPS. Student's t-test; $n = 5$; ***, $p < 0.001$ (each
 927 group of seeds were from five individual plants, at least 30 seeds were used for each plant).
 928 In (E) and (F), black spots in box plots represented the 5-6 biological replicates, and the
 929 maximum values, upper quartiles, median, lower quartiles, and minimum values were shown
 930 in box plots.

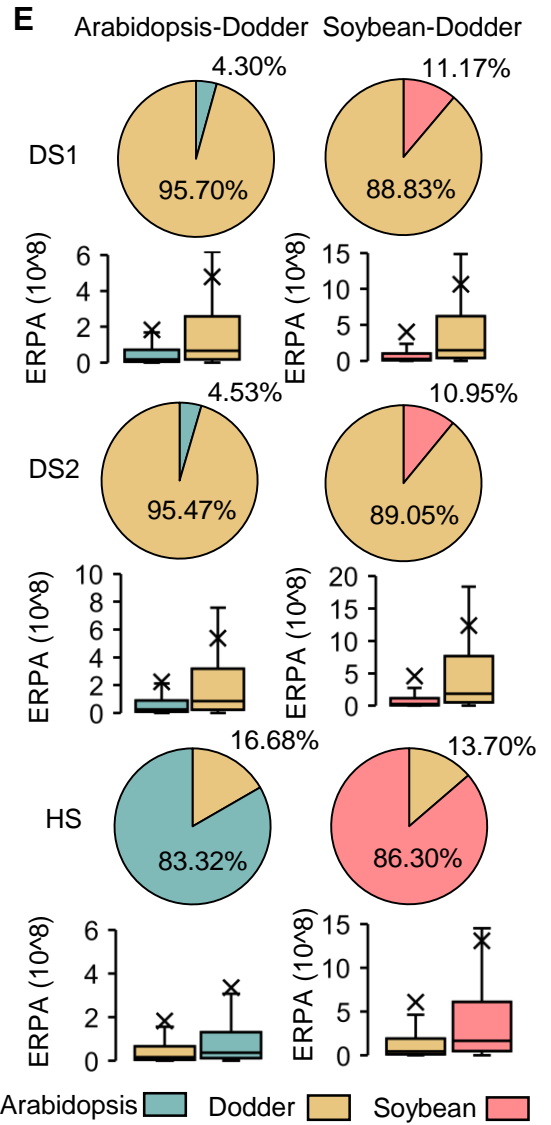
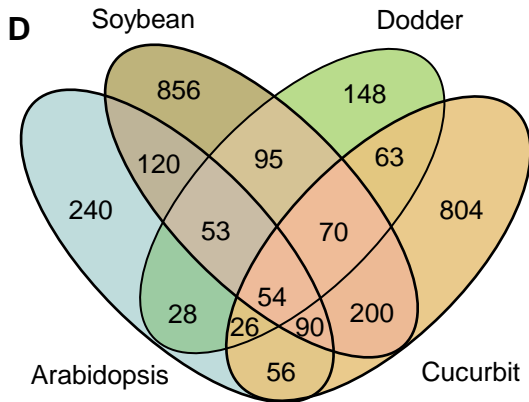
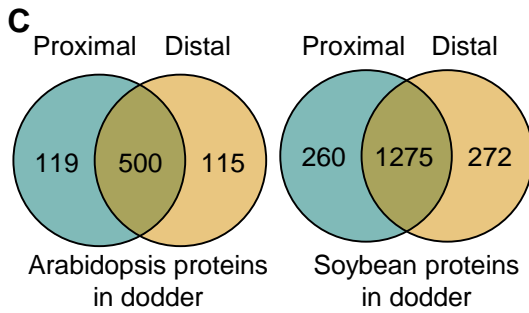
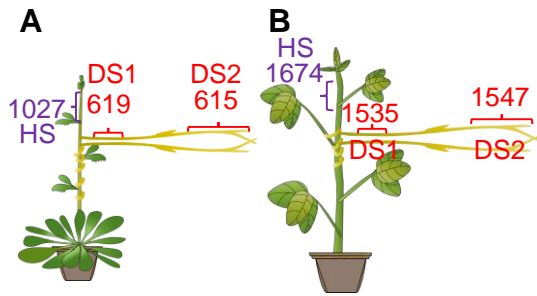
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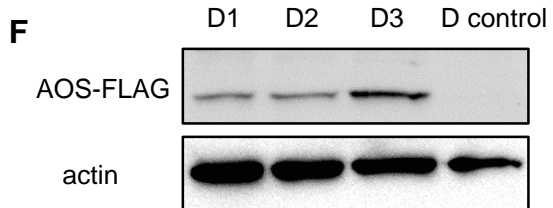
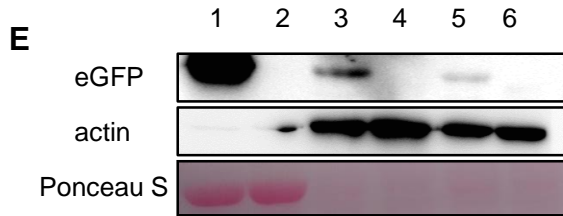
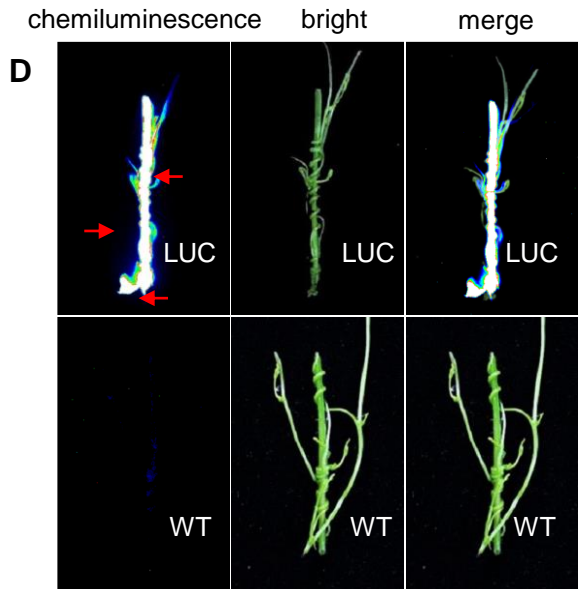
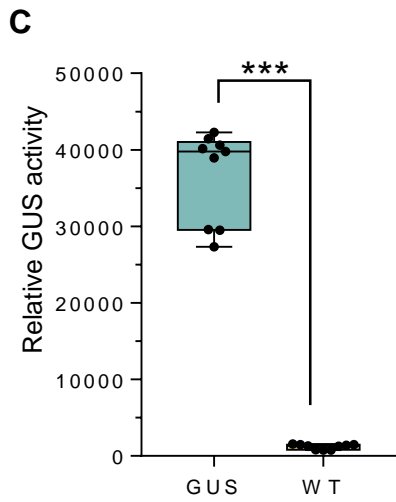
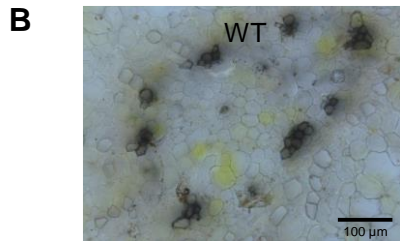
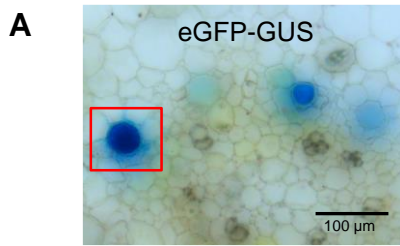
932 **Figure 4. Dodder-mediated inter-host protein transfer.** (A) Schematic indicating the
 933 experiment setup and the numbers of inter-plant mobile proteins detected in Arabidopsis and
 934 soybean leaves. AL, Arabidopsis leaves; SL, soybean leaves. (B) The percentages and
 935 estimated relative protein abundance (ERPA) of foreign host proteins in AL and SL. The
 936 percentages were shown in pie charts, and the ERPA was shown in box plots. The upper and
 937 lower edges of box plots showed the first and third quartiles, the bands and "×" in the boxes
 938 were medians and means of data. The whiskers extended to 1.5 times interquartile range. (C)
 939 Venn diagram indicating the orthology of the inter-host mobile soybean and Arabidopsis
 940 proteins. (D) GUS activity in dodder stems and soybean leaves. Soybean was connected with
 941 transgenic Arabidopsis expressing eGFP-GUS or with wild-type (WT) Arabidopsis by dodder
 942 bridges. Asterisks indicate statistical significance between the two
 943 Arabidopsis-dodder-soybean parasitization systems in which Arabidopsis plants expressed
 944 eGFP-GUS or were WT. Student's t-test; $n = 6$; ***, $p < 0.001$. Black spots in box plot
 945 represented the 6 biological replicates (each replicate was collected from three individual
 946 plants), and the maximum values, upper quartiles, median, lower quartiles, and minimum
 947 values were shown in the box plot. (E) Photograph of the inflorescence of a *dde2-2* mutant
 948 that was bridge connected with a soybean plant by dodder and whose mutant phenotypes
 949 were rescued.

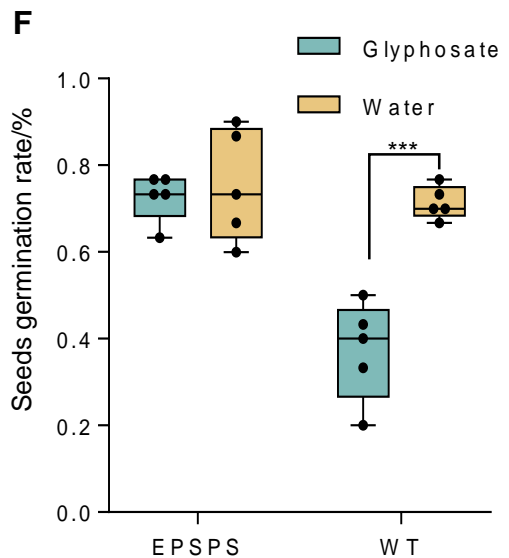
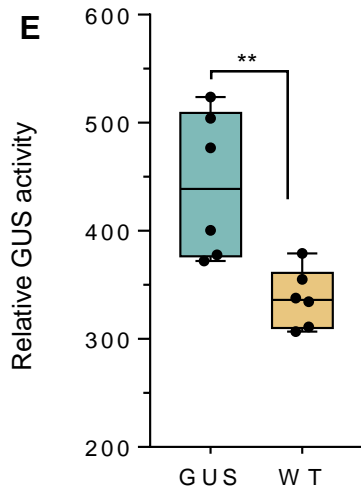
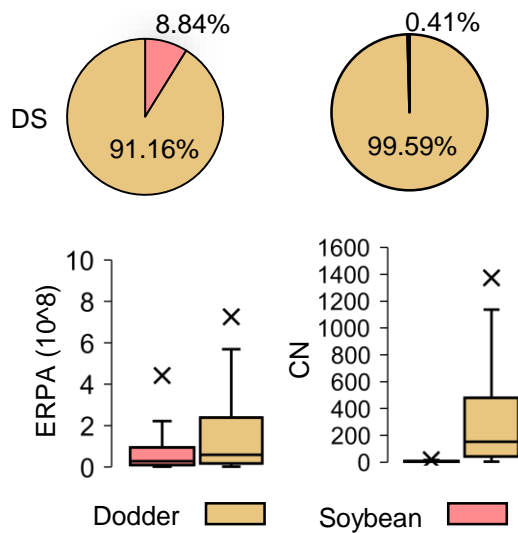
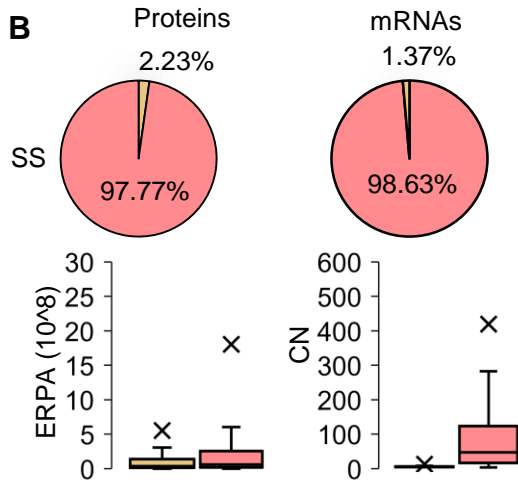
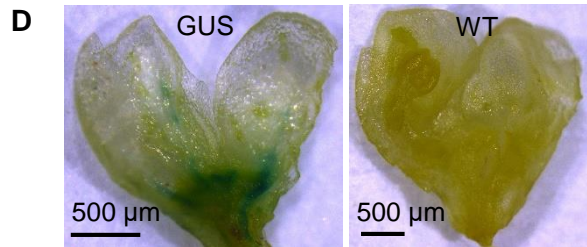
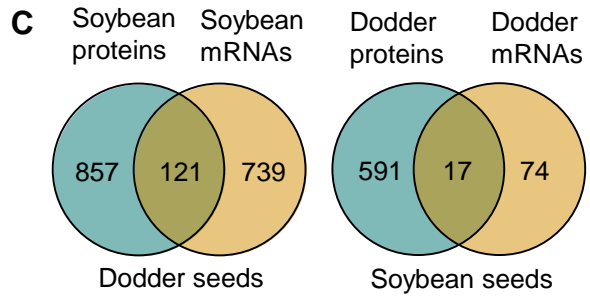
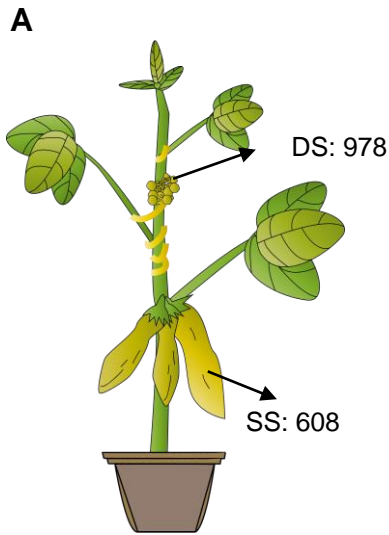
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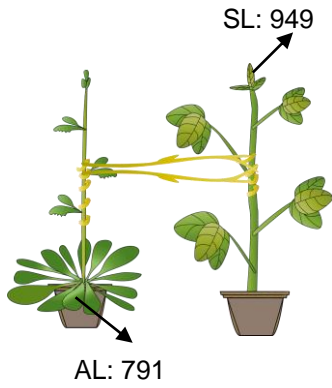
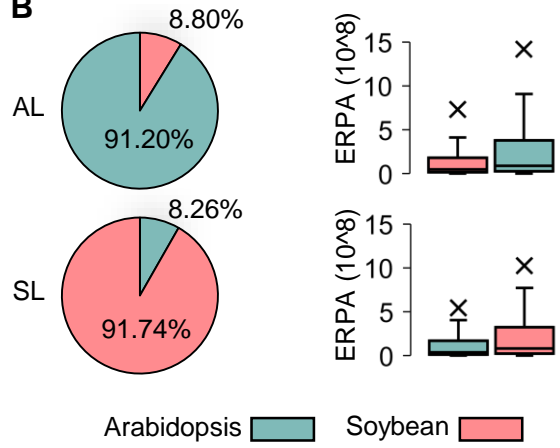
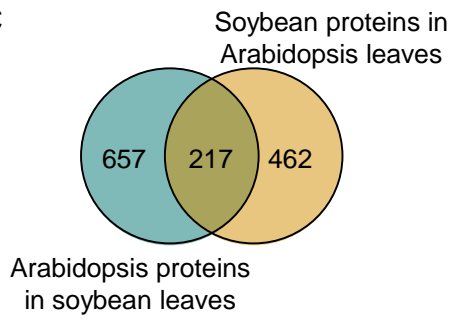
951 **Figure 5. The general properties of mobile proteins.** (A) Signal intensities of the proteins
 952 in foreign and original stems. Arabidopsis (F) and (O) denote Arabidopsis proteins in foreign
 953 (dodder)/original (Arabidopsis) stems, respectively; soybean (F) and (O) denote soybean
 954 proteins in foreign (dodder)/original (soybean) stems, respectively; dodder (F) and (O) denote
 955 dodder proteins in foreign (Arabidopsis and soybean)/original (dodder) stems, respectively.

956 The upper and lower edges of box plots showed the first and third quartiles, the bands and “×”
957 in the boxes were medians and means of data. The whiskers extended to 1.5 times
958 interquartile range. **(B)** Distributions of inter-plant mobile and non-mobile proteins’
959 intensities in source plants. Data are from Figure 1A and 1B. **(C to D)** Size distribution of the
960 native (N) proteins and the proteins trafficked to foreign plants (F) detected in
961 Arabidopsis-dodder **(C)** and soybean-dodder **(D)** system. Medians were shown as vertical
962 bars. *p*-value showed the significant difference between the size distribution pattern of
963 foreign and native proteomes (Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test). **(E)** Percentages of the mobile
964 proteins predicted to be located in different subcellular locations. Data are from Figure 1A
965 and 1B.







A**B****C****E****D**