

The *HAC1* Histone Acetyltransferase Promotes Leaf Senescence via Regulation of *ERF022*

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1 Abstract

2 Nutrient remobilization during leaf senescence nourishes the growing plant. Understanding the
3 regulation of this process is essential for reducing our dependence on nitrogen fertilizers and increasing
4 agricultural sustainability. Our lab is interested in chromatin changes that accompany the transition to
5 leaf senescence. Previously, darker green leaves were reported for *Arabidopsis thaliana hac1* mutants,
6 defective in a gene encoding a histone acetyltransferase in the CREB-binding protein family. Here, we
7 show that two *Arabidopsis hac1* alleles display delayed age-related developmental senescence, but have
8 normal dark-induced senescence. Using a combination of ChIP-seq for H3K9ac and RNA-seq for gene
9 expression, we identified 44 potential HAC1 targets during age-related developmental senescence.
10 Genetic analysis demonstrated that one of these potential targets, *ERF022*, is a positive regulator of leaf
11 senescence. *ERF022* is regulated additively by HAC1 and MED25, suggesting MED25 recruits HAC1 to the
12 *ERF022* promoter to increase its expression in older leaves.

13 Keywords: Leaf senescence, histone acetylation, HAC1, H3K9ac, ERF022, Mediator complex

14

15 Introduction

16 Plants continuously produce new organs. During vegetative growth, new leaves form from the shoot
17 apical meristem, and develop into protein-rich photosynthetic factories that export sugars. Eventually,
18 the older leaves enter senescence by catabolizing the photosynthetic apparatus and exporting nitrogen-
19 rich amino acids to support continuing growth (Himelblau and Amasino, 2001). Understanding the
20 regulation of leaf senescence could maximize nitrogen recycling thus producing more nutrient-rich
21 seeds and reducing the need for fertilizers.

22 The transition into leaf senescence is preceded (Kim et al., 2018a) and accompanied by changes in gene
23 expression (Buchanan-Wollaston et al., 2005; van der Graaff et al., 2006; Breeze et al., 2011). Lists of
24 senescence-associated genes (SAG) have been generated from these transcriptome analyses. Enriched
25 biological processes from Gene Ontology (GO) analyses include response to the hormones salicylic acid
26 (SA), jasmonic acid (JA), abscisic acid (ABA) and ethylene. Also, enrichment of GO terms autophagy,
27 immune response, defense response, and response to reactive oxygen species demonstrates a
28 molecular relationship between defense and leaf senescence. Additional GO terms highly represented in
29 SAGs from age-related developmental senescence include response to chitin and glucosinolate
30 biosynthesis (Bruslan et al., 2015). The consistent enrichment of the phosphorylation term among SAG
31 lists is likely a result of high expression of receptor-like kinase gene-family members, which also are
32 known to regulate defense (Antolín-Llovera et al., 2014).

33 Changes in chromatin structure are hypothesized to promote and/or maintain leaf senescence
34 (Humbeck, 2013). We have previously shown a correlation between histone 3, lysine 4, trimethylation
35 (H3K4me3) and histone 3, lysine 9 acetylation (H3K9ac) histone modifications and increased expression
36 of senescence up-regulated genes (SURGs). A similar correlation was seen between histone 3, lysine 27
37 trimethylation (H3K27me3) marks and decreased expression of senescence down-regulated genes
38 (SDRGs) (Bruslan et al., 2012; Bruslan et al., 2015). Genetic analysis suggests histone deacetylases
39 regulate leaf senescence. HDA19 is a negative regulator of senescence (Tian and Chen, 2001) while
40 HDA6 is a positive regulator of leaf senescence (Wu et al., 2008). HDA9 works with POWERDRESS to

41 reduce the expression of four putative negative regulators of leaf senescence (*NPX1*, *TMAC2*, *WRKY57*
42 and *APG9*), thus promoting leaf senescence (Chen et al., 2016).

43 Recently, two studies linked chromatin changes to leaf senescence. The Polycomb Repressive Complex 2
44 (PRC2) catalyzes H3K27me3 for long-term repression of ABA-induced SAGs (Liu et al., 2018). Double
45 mutants in two PRC2 subunits (*clf/swn*) retain high SAG expression even after these genes are repressed
46 in WT. H3K27me3-target genes that continue to be expressed in *clf/swn* mutants are significantly
47 enriched for leaf senescence-related GO terms, indicating that long-term dampening of SAG expression
48 is mediated by the H3K27me3 repressive mark. In the second study, the Jmj16 H3K4me3 demethylase
49 acts to keep SAGs repressed in younger leaves (Liu et al., 2019). In *jmj16* mutant alleles, both *WRKY53*
50 and *SAG201* were up-regulated and associated with higher levels of the H3K4me3 mark. Non-catalytic
51 forms of JMJ16 could bind to the promoter region, but only catalytically active forms could repress
52 *WRKY53* gene expression. This second study demonstrated that changes in H3K4me3 marks can regulate
53 SAGs.

54 *hac1* mutant alleles were reported to have darker green leaves (Li et al., 2014a). *HAC1* encodes a
55 histone acetyl transferase from the CREB Binding Protein family (Bordoli et al., 2001; Pandey et al.,
56 2001), which is known to acetylate histone H3 resulting in H3K9ac (Earley et al., 2007; An et al., 2017).
57 H3K9ac is associated with open chromatin and increased gene expression, and genes directly regulated
58 by *HAC1* are expected to be down-regulated in *hac1* mutants. *hac1* mutants are pleiotropic and display a
59 protruding gynoecium (Han et al., 2007). *HAC1* also regulates flowering, and *hac1* mutants flower late
60 due to increased *Flowering Locus C (FLC)* expression (Deng et al., 2007). *FLC* inhibits flowering, however
61 decreased expression of genes that negatively regulate *FLC* was not observed in *hac1* mutants. *HAC1*
62 may have other non-histone targets or an unknown negative regulator of *FLC* could be down-regulated
63 in late-flowering *hac1* mutants. In addition, *hac1/hac5* double mutant seedlings are hypersensitive to
64 ethylene (Li et al., 2014b) and display the triple response (short root, short and thick hypocotyl and
65 exaggerated apical hook) when grown in the dark in the absence of ACC, the non-gaseous precursor to
66 ethylene. Neither single (*hac1* or *hac5*) mutant displayed ethylene hypersensitivity.

67 *HAC1* also plays a role in the response to jasmonoyl-isoleucine (JA-ile), the active form of JA. *HAC1*
68 acetylates histones associated with *MYC2* target genes to promote their expression. The Mediator
69 Complex subunit, *MED25* interacts with *MYC2* and directly binds to and recruits *HAC1* to target genes
70 (An et al., 2017). Transcriptome data showed that genes induced by JA-ile were less responsive in a *hac1*
71 mutant. In addition, genes co-regulated by JA-ile and *HAC1* were enriched for many defense-related
72 biological process GO terms as well as leaf senescence.

73 Here we show that *hac1* mutants have delayed age-related developmental leaf senescence. Potential
74 *HAC1* targets are identified by RNA-seq and ChIP-seq utilizing WT and two *hac1* alleles. T-DNA insertion
75 mutants in three potential *HAC1* targets were tested for leaf senescence phenotypes, and an *erf022*
76 mutant disrupting the expression of *ERF022* showed delayed senescence. These findings implicate this
77 AP2/ERF transcription factor as a novel positive effector of leaf senescence regulated by histone
78 acetylation co-mediated by *HAC1* and *MED25*.

79

80 **Materials and Methods**

81 Plant Growth Conditions: *Arabidopsis thaliana* Col-0 ecotype plants were grow in Sunshine[®] Mix #1
82 Fafard[®]-1P RSi (Sungro Horticulture). The soil was treated with Gnatrol WDG (Valent Professional
83 Products) (0.3 g/500 ml H₂O) to inhibit the growth of fungus gnat larvae, and plants were sub-irrigated
84 with Gro-Power 4-8-2 (Gro-Power, Inc.) (10 ml per gallon). Plants were grown in Percival AR66L2X
85 growth chambers under a 20:4 light:dark diurnal cycle with a light intensity of 28 umoles photons m⁻²
86 sec⁻¹. The low light intensity prevents light stress in older leaves, which was evident as anthocyanin
87 accumulation at higher light intensities. To compensate for the reduced light intensity, the day length
88 was extended. Leaves were marked by tying threads around the petioles soon after emergence from the
89 meristem. Flowering time was determined when plants had 1 cm inflorescences (bolts). Leaf #5 from
90 three week old plants were used for dark-induced senescence, and floated on water in the dark for the
91 indicated number of days.

92 Genotype analysis: Genomic DNA was isolated from two-three leaves using Plant DNAzol Reagent
93 (ThermoFisher) following manufacturer's instructions. Pellets were dried at room temperature for at
94 least two hours, and resuspended in 30 uL TE (10 mM Tris, pH 8.0, 1 mM EDTA) overnight at 4°C. One
95 microliter of genomic DNA was used as a template in PCR reactions with primers listed in Supplemental
96 Table 2. All standard PCR reactions were performed with a 57°C annealing temperature using *Taq*
97 polymerase with Standard *Taq* Buffer (New England Biolabs).

98 Chlorophyll: One hole-punch was removed from each marked or detached leaf, and incubated in 800 µL
99 N,N-dimethyl formamide (DMF) overnight in the dark. 200 µL of sample was placed in a quartz
100 microplate (Molecular Devices) and readings were performed at 664 nm and 647 nm using a BioTek
101 Synergy H1 plate reader. Absorbance readings were used to determine chlorophyll concentration (Porra
102 et al., 1989). Chlorophyll was normalized to equal leaf area. For each genotype/condition, n =6.

103 Total Protein: One leaf hole-punch was ground in liquid nitrogen in a 1.5 ml microfuge tube using a blue
104 plastic pestle. 100 µL 0.1 M NaOH was added and the sample was ground for another 30 sec (Jones et
105 al., 1989). Samples were incubated at room temperature for 30 min, centrifuged at 14000 rpm for 5 min.
106 The Bradford protein assay (Bio-Rad Protein Assay Dye Reagent) was used to determine protein
107 concentration in each supernatant using a bovine serum albumin standard. For each
108 genotype/condition, n = 6.

109 Percent Nitrogen: Elemental analysis for % nitrogen was done by Midwest Microlab, Indianapolis, IN.
110 100 dried seeds from one individual plant were in each sample (n = 8 for each genotype).

111 Gene Expression: Total RNA was isolated from the Indicated leaves using Trizol reagent. 1000 ng of
112 extracted RNA was used as a template for cDNA synthesis using MMLV-reverse transcriptase (New
113 England Biolabs) and random hexamers to prime cDNA synthesis. The cDNA was diluted 16-fold and
114 used as a template for real-time qPCR using either ABsolute QPCR Mix, SYBR Green, ROX (Thermo
115 Scientific) or qPCRBIO SyGreen Blue Mix Hi-Rox (PCR Biosystems), in Step One Plus or Quant Studio 6
116 Flex qPCR machines. All real-time qPCR reactions used a 61°C annealing temperature.

117 For chlorophyll, total protein, percent nitrogen and gene expression, significant differences were
118 determined using a t-test.

119 RNA-seq: Indicated leaves were harvested and stored in liquid nitrogen. RNA was extracted and RNA-seq
120 library production was performed using the breath adapter directional sequencing (BrAD-seq) method

121 (Townsend et al., 2015). Real-time qPCR using ACT2 primers was the initial quality test. Libraries were
122 sequenced at the Genome High-Throughput Facility (GHTF) at University of California, Irvine (UCI).

123 ChIP-seq; Nuclei preparation and ChIP was performed as described previously (Bruslan et al., 2012).
124 Libraries were produced and sequenced at the GHTF at UCI.

125 Bioinformatics: RNA-seq raw data reads were aligned to the Arabidopsis TAIR 10 genome using
126 Rsubread (Liao et al., 2013), and subject to quality control of count data and differential expression
127 using NOISeq (Tarazona et al., 2015). The values were FPKM normalized using Tmisc and HTSFilter
128 removed genes with low expression levels (Rau et al., 2013). A threshold value of $q = 0.8$ and a 2-fold
129 change as the cut-off point was used to determine DEGs. ChIP-seq data were analyzed by MACS (Zhang
130 et al., 2008) to find peaks of enrichment in comparison to input samples. MANorm (Shao et al., 2012)
131 identified regions of differential histone modification. TopGO performed GO Biological Process
132 enrichment and GAGE (Luo et al., 2009) performed pathway enrichment.

133

134 **Results and Discussion**

135 ***hac1* Mutants Show Delayed Senescence**

136 Two *Arabidopsis hac1* alleles [*hac1-1* (SALK_080380) and *hac1-2* (SALK_136314), Supplemental Figure 1]
137 displayed darker green leaves when compared to WT. Age-related chlorophyll loss is shown in Figure 1A.
138 At 28 days, total chlorophyll levels in leaf 7 were equal, but as the leaves aged, chlorophyll levels
139 decreased faster in WT than the two *hac1* alleles. A significant difference in chlorophyll levels was
140 detected between WT and both *hac1* alleles at day 48. The retention of chlorophyll was accompanied by
141 reduced mRNA levels for genes associated with leaf senescence (Figure 1B). *AtNAP* encodes a positive
142 regulator of leaf senescence associated with ABA synthesis (Liang et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2014). *NIT2*
143 encodes a nitrilase that is highly expressed in leaf senescence, and contributes to auxin synthesis
144 (Normanly et al., 2007) and glucosinolate catabolism (Vorwerk et al., 2001). *NYC1* encodes a chlorophyll
145 *b* reductase required for light harvesting complex disassembly (Kusaba et al., 2007). The chlorophyll and
146 gene expression data show that *hac1* alleles display delayed leaf senescence.

147 The reduction of total chlorophyll was also evaluated in detached leaves floated in water in the dark
148 (dark-induced senescence), and no difference was noted between WT and the two *hac1* alleles (Figure
149 1C). There are molecular differences in the signaling pathways between dark-induced and
150 developmental senescence; most prominent is the role of SA in developmental, but not in dark-induced
151 senescence (Buchanan-Wollaston et al., 2005; van der Graaff et al., 2006; Guo and Gan, 2012). Thus, it is
152 possible that alterations in the signaling of developmental senescence do not necessarily accompany
153 changes in dark-induced senescence. These results support a role for HAC1 as a promoter of age-
154 related, developmental leaf senescence.

155 A trending increase in total leaf protein concentration accompanied the significant increase in
156 chlorophyll levels in both *hac1* alleles (Figures 2A-B). However, the delayed senescence in the *hac1*
157 alleles did not result in greater percentage of seed nitrogen (Figure 2C). Delayed senescence in wheat
158 was reported to increase grain nitrogen concentration (Zhao et al., 2015), however the relationship
159 between percentage of seed nitrogen and leaf senescence is complex (Chardon et al., 2014; Havé et al.,
160 2017).

161

162 ***hac1* Mutants Display Altered Levels of Histone Modifications and Changes in Gene Expression During**
163 **Leaf Senescence**

164 ChIP-seq was performed on the same tissue shown in Figure 2 to identify genes associated with a loss of
165 H3K9ac and/or H3K4me3 histone modifications in both *hac1* alleles. HAC1 catalyzes H3K9 acetylation,
166 and both H3K9ac and H3K4me3 are associated with active gene expression (Berr et al., 2011). As
167 expected, H3K9ac significantly decreased at 968 loci and increased at only 555 loci in both *hac1* alleles.
168 H3K4me3 modifications were similarly affected, with 548 loci showing a loss and only 33 loci showing a
169 gain of H3K4me3 marks. RNA-seq was used to identify differentially expressed genes (DEGs) between
170 WT and both *hac1* alleles. Accordingly, the number of up-regulated DEGs (12) was much smaller than
171 the number of down-regulated DEGs (143) in both *hac1* alleles. These 143 down-regulated DEGs were
172 subject to pathway enrichment analysis, and significant enrichment of glucosinolate biosynthesis, plant-
173 pathogen interaction, as well as glutathione and ascorbic acid metabolism were revealed. These
174 pathways are stress-related and their down-regulation in *hac1* likely slows the rate of leaf senescence.
175 One GO term enriched in the up-regulated DEGs in both *hac1* alleles is ribosome biogenesis, which
176 occurs during rapid protein synthesis, and would be important for anabolic growth, not catabolic
177 senescence. Cytokinin action delays dark-induced senescence, in part, by maintaining the expression of
178 genes associated with ribosome GO terms (Kim et al., 2018b).

179 The Venn diagram in Figure 3 shows the overlap of genes with reductions in H3K9ac and H3K4me3
180 marks, as well as decreased expression in both *hac1* alleles. Our analysis identified 44 genes
181 (Supplemental Table 2) with reductions in H3K9ac marks and gene expression. These potential HAC1
182 targets have enriched GO terms including response to chitin and response to abiotic stimulus. These GO
183 biological process terms have previously been associated with SAGs (Brusslan et al., 2015). Two of the
184 potential HAC1 targets, *IGMT1* and *CYP81F2* (green highlight in Supplemental Table 2), encode indole
185 glucosinolate biosynthetic enzymes, providing evidence that these secondary compounds are important
186 during leaf senescence and potentially regulated via histone acetylation. We also observed significant
187 reductions in H3K4me3 marks for these two genes in both *hac1* alleles, further bolstering the presence
188 of chromatin changes.

189

190 **Analysis of Leaf Senescence Phenotypes in Potential HAC1 Targets**

191 We measured leaf senescence in T-DNA insertion lines disrupting three regulatory genes from the list of
192 44 potential HAC1 targets (yellow highlights in Supplemental Table 2). These include *ERF022*, *MYB15*
193 and *TMAC2*. Two of these genes: *ERF022* and *TMAC2* also show a reduction in H3K4me3 marks. *ERF022*
194 and *MYB15* encode transcription factors while *TMAC2* plays a negative role in ABA response (Huang and
195 Wu, 2007). Flowering time, *NIT2* gene expression, and chlorophyll levels were quantified in these
196 mutants (Figure 4A-C). We also showed that full-length mRNAs spanning the T-DNA insertion were not
197 produced in each mutant allele (Figure 4D). The only line to show a consistent and strong significant
198 alteration in leaf senescence was *erf022*, with slightly later flowering (by about three days), and after
199 44d of growth, reduced *NIT2* expression (approximately 8-fold) and increased chlorophyll. These
200 phenotypes indicate a delay in leaf senescence and implicate *ERF022* as a positive regulator of leaf
201 senescence.

202 Our results suggest that H3K9 acetylation mediated by HAC1 occurs at *ERF022* during leaf aging, and is
203 accompanied by changes in H3K4me3 marks. Together, these two marks likely promote the expression
204 of *ERF022*, a positive regulator of leaf senescence. *ERF022* is a member of the drought-responsive
205 element-binding (DREB) subfamily of the AP2/ERF family (Nakano et al., 2006). Protoplast transfection
206 experiments show *ERF022* to be a positive regulator of the RD29A promoter (Wehner et al., 2011),
207 suggesting *ERF022* may mediate abiotic stress. Etiolated *erf022* mutant seedlings produce significantly
208 more ethylene, suggesting that *ERF022* attenuates ethylene synthesis early in development (Nowak et
209 al., 2015). *EIN2* encodes an essential component of the ethylene signaling pathway, and *ein2* mutants
210 delay leaf senescence (Oh et al., 1997), thus increased ethylene production would be expected to
211 accelerate senescence. If *ERF022* is acting similarly in seedlings and older leaves, increased ethylene
212 would be expected to promote senescence, however a delay was observed in *erf022*. It is possible that
213 *ERF022* plays different roles at different times in development. JA and a necrotrophic pathogen
214 stimulated *ERF022* expression (Mcgrath et al., 2005), indicating *ERF022* plays a role in defense. Defense
215 and senescence share many genes, as noted previously. Of interest, the ethylene hypersensitivity
216 previously observed in *hac1/hac5* double mutant seedlings may be due to reduced expression of
217 *ERF022*. *erf022* mutants overproduce ethylene, and mutations in *HAC1* and *HAC5* additively displayed a
218 constitutive triple response.

219

220 **MEDIATOR25 works additively with HAC1 to regulate *ERF022* expression**

221 The MED25 subunit of the Mediator Complex can interact with HAC1. We obtained *med25* mutants and
222 produced *hac1-1/med25* double mutants to evaluate genetic interaction. The longest delay in flowering
223 was observed for *med25* and *hac1-1/med25* (Figure 5A), but an additive effect in flowering phenotype
224 was not present. Chlorophyll levels were measured in leaf 7 in 45 day old plants, and higher chlorophyll
225 levels were observed in *hac1-1*, *med25* and the *hac1-1/med25* double mutants, and although all lines
226 were significantly greater than WT, none were significantly different from each other (Figure 5B). These
227 data suggest that *HAC1* and *MED25* do not have an additive effect, as loss of one or both show similar
228 delays in flowering and chlorophyll loss. The *erf022* mutant was also included in this experiment; it
229 bolted later and had more chlorophyll than WT, but it did not differ from the *hac1-1*, *med25* or *hac1-1-*
230 *1/med25* mutant lines.

231 Gene expression was also evaluated in these mutant lines. As expected, *ERF022* expression was
232 minimally detected in the *erf022* mutant. A strong additive effect was seen between *hac1-1* and *med25*
233 with much lower *ERF022* expression in the *hac1-1/med25* double mutant than in either single mutant
234 (Figure 5C). These data suggest that *MED25* guides *HAC1* to histones at the *ERF022* locus to direct
235 histone acetylation for increased chromatin accessibility. With respect to two other SAGs, *NIT2* and
236 *Lhcb2.4*, the *erf022* mutant showed the largest effect: minimal up-regulation of *NIT2* (Figure 5D) and
237 minimal down-regulation of *Lhcb2.4* (Figure 5E) as compared to *hac1-1*, *med25* and *hac1-1/med25*.
238 These data suggest that loss of *ERF022* has a more profound effect on the leaf senescence phenotype
239 than its down-regulation through loss of both *HAC1* and *MED25*. Although the *ERF022* transcript levels
240 were similar to the *hac1-1/med25* double mutant (Figure 5C), it is probable that the mRNA produced in
241 the *erf022* mutant is inefficiently translated due to the T-DNA insertion in the 3'-UTR and led to a
242 stronger phenotype in *erf022*. In addition, there are likely more genes mis-regulated in *hac1-1/med25*
243 and these may have compensating effects on leaf senescence.

244

245 **Conclusion**

246 *hac1* mutant alleles display a delay in leaf senescence implicating histone acetylation as a contributor to
247 the regulation of leaf senescence. A combined approach using ChIP-seq, RNA-seq and genetic analysis,
248 identified ERF022 as a novel positive effector of leaf senescence regulated by H3K9ac and H3K4me3
249 marks. *ERF022* is possibly a direct target of HAC1, which operates in concert with MED25 to allow full
250 expression of *ERF022* in older leaves.

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377 **Figure Legends**

378 **Figure 1.** Delayed age-related senescence in *hac1* alleles. A) To observe age-related developmental
379 senescence, total chlorophyll was measured from leaf 7 from plants that had grown 28, 38 or 48 days.
380 Significant differences from WT are indicated by asterisks (t-test, $p < 0.05$) and were observed for both
381 *hac1* alleles at 48 days. B) RNA was extracted from WT and the *hac1-1* allele at 48 days from leaf 6 of the
382 same plants shown in panel A, and gene expression for three SAGs was measured by real-time qPCR. C)
383 Leaf 5 was removed from plants grown for 21 days, and floated on water in the dark for the indicated
384 number of days to observe dark-induced senescence. One leaf disc was removed from each leaf and
385 chlorophyll was measured. No significant differences were observed. All error bars show the 95%
386 confidence interval.

387 **Figure 2.** Chlorophyll, protein and seed nitrogen content in *hac1* alleles. Plants were grown for 49 days
388 and chlorophyll (A) and total protein (B) were measured in hole-punch disks from leaves 12-14, $n = 8$.
389 Significant differences between WT were observed for chlorophyll, but not total protein (t-test, $p <$
390 0.05). Seeds were harvested from individual plants and batches of 100 dried seeds were subject to
391 elemental analysis (C). No significant differences in percent nitrogen were observed, $n = 8$. All error bars
392 show the 95% confidence interval.

393 **Figure 3:** The Venn diagram shows the overlap of genes with reductions in gene expression and histone
394 modifications. WT, *hac1-1* and *hac1-2* (49 days, leaf 12-14) were subject to RNA-seq and ChIP-seq using
395 H3K9ac and H3K3me3 antibodies. Genes that showed a significant reduction in both *hac1* alleles in
396 comparison to WT were considered to have lower expression (RNA-seq) or reduced histone marks (ChIP-
397 seq).

398 **Figure 4:** Senescence phenotypes in T-DNA insertion lines disrupting potential HAC1 target genes. Panel
399 A shows flowering time and error bars show the standard deviation of two separate trials. Panel B shows
400 *NIT2* gene expression and panel C shows total chlorophyll ($n = 6$ for all genotypes). One biological
401 replicate is shown, however similar results were obtained in a second biological replicate. Error bars for
402 panels B and C show the 95% confidence interval. A t-test was used to evaluate significant differences: *
403 = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$. Gene expression is measured as $40 - \Delta Ct$. The ΔCt value is the Ct
404 value of ACT2 – the Ct value of the gene of interest. Panel D shows that full-length mRNAs were not
405 produced in T-DNA insertion alleles. The cDNAs templates are shown above the PCR products and the
406 primers are shown below. Primer sequences are available in Supplemental Table 1.

407 **Figure 5:** Senescence phenotypes in *hac1-1/med25* double mutants. All lines were evaluated for
408 flowering time (panel A). At 45 days of growth, chlorophyll was measured in leaf 7 and RNA was
409 extracted from leaf 6. Total chlorophyll levels (μg per leaf disk) are shown in panel B. *ERF022* (panel C),
410 *NIT2* (panel D) and *Lhcb2.4* (panel E) mRNA levels are shown. A t-test was used to evaluate significant
411 differences: * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$. All error bars show the 95% confidence interval, $n = 6$
412 for all genotypes.)

413

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419

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421 performed the research. JAB designed and performed the research, analyzed data and wrote the paper.
422 All authors greatly contributed to editing.

423

424 **Supplemental Data files**

425 Supplemental Figure 1: Full-length mRNAs are not produced in *hac1* alleles.

426 Supplemental Table 1: Primers

427 Supplemental Table 2: Genes with decreased H3K9ac and mRNA in both *hac1* alleles

428 RNA-seq and CHIP-seq data files are in the process of being added to the NCBI GEO database.

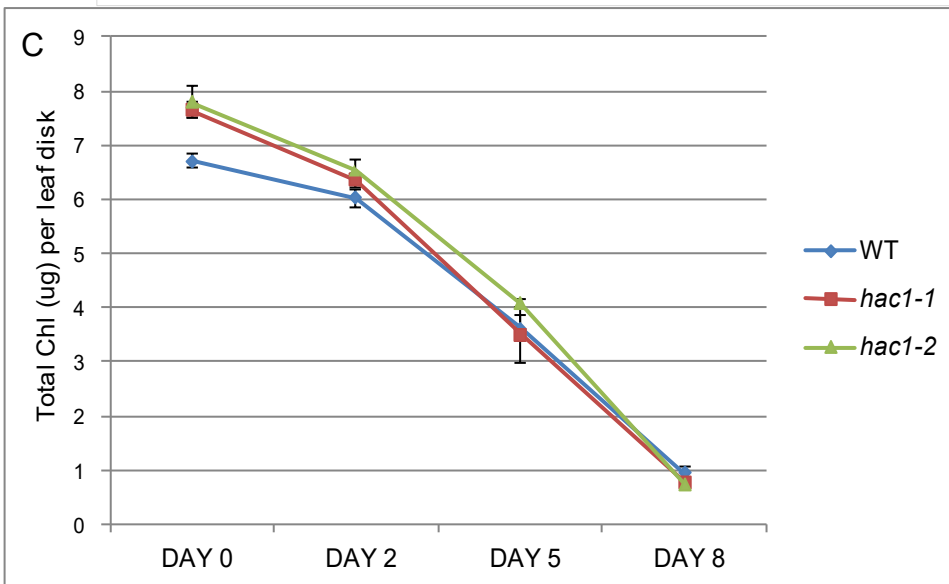
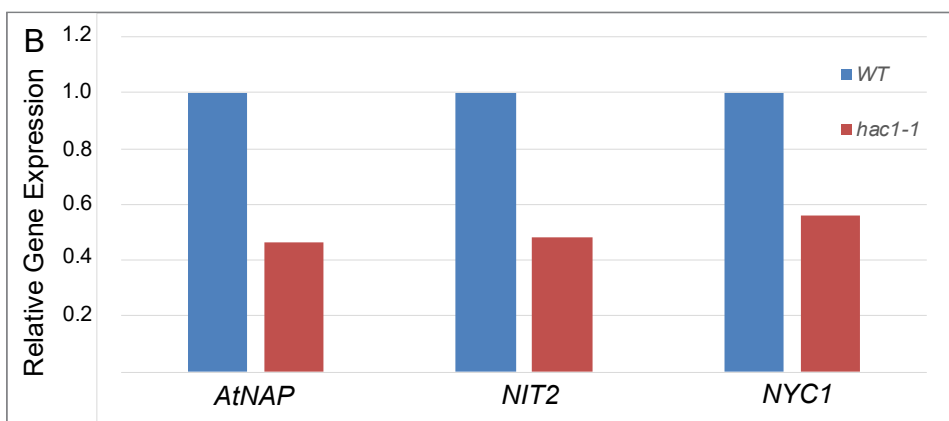
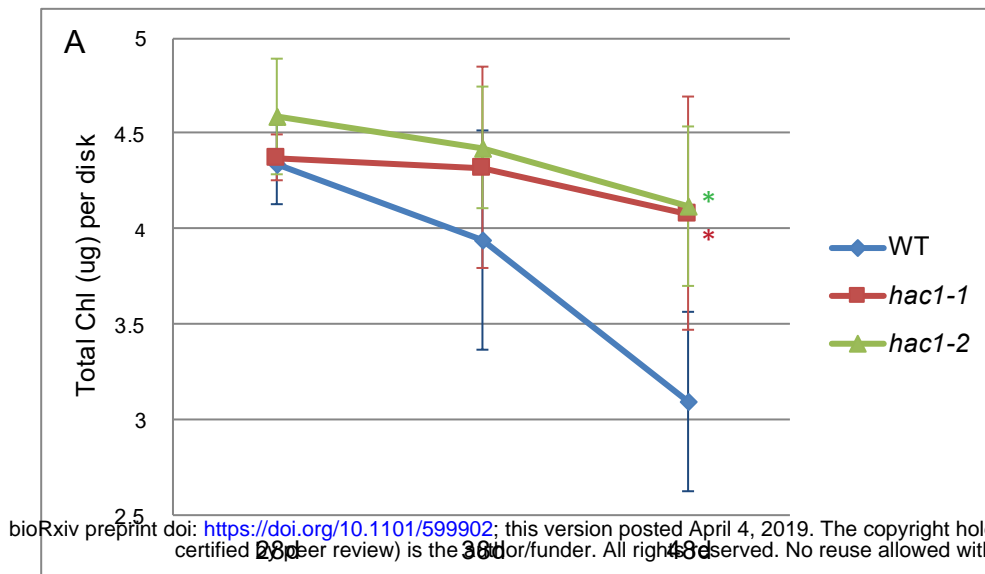


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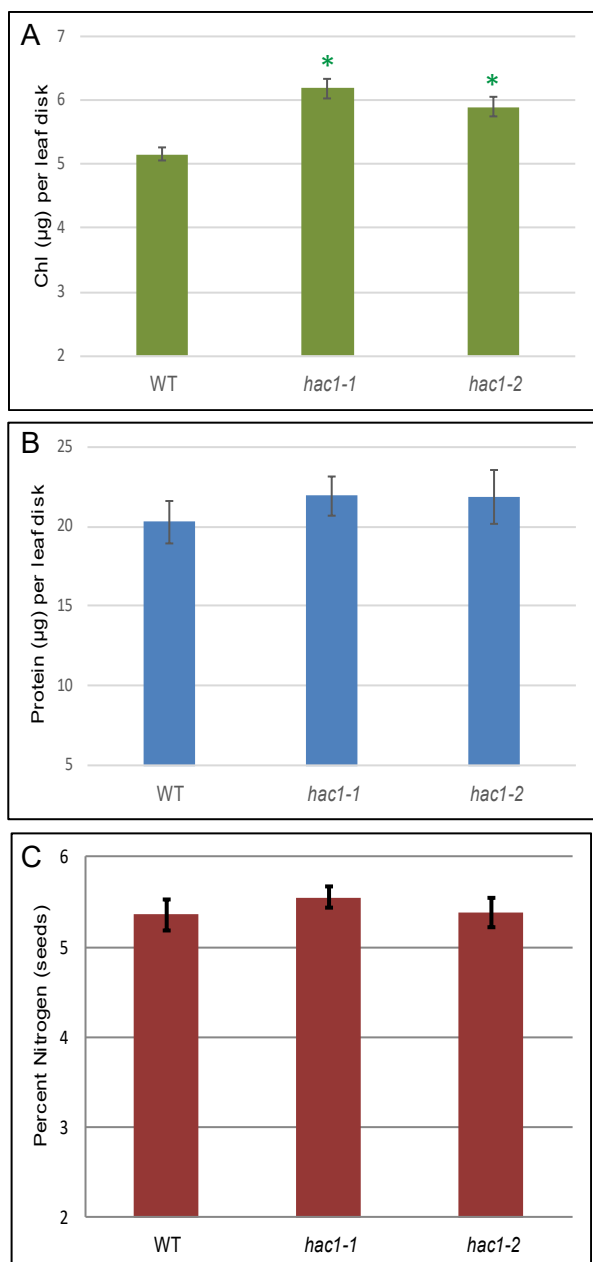


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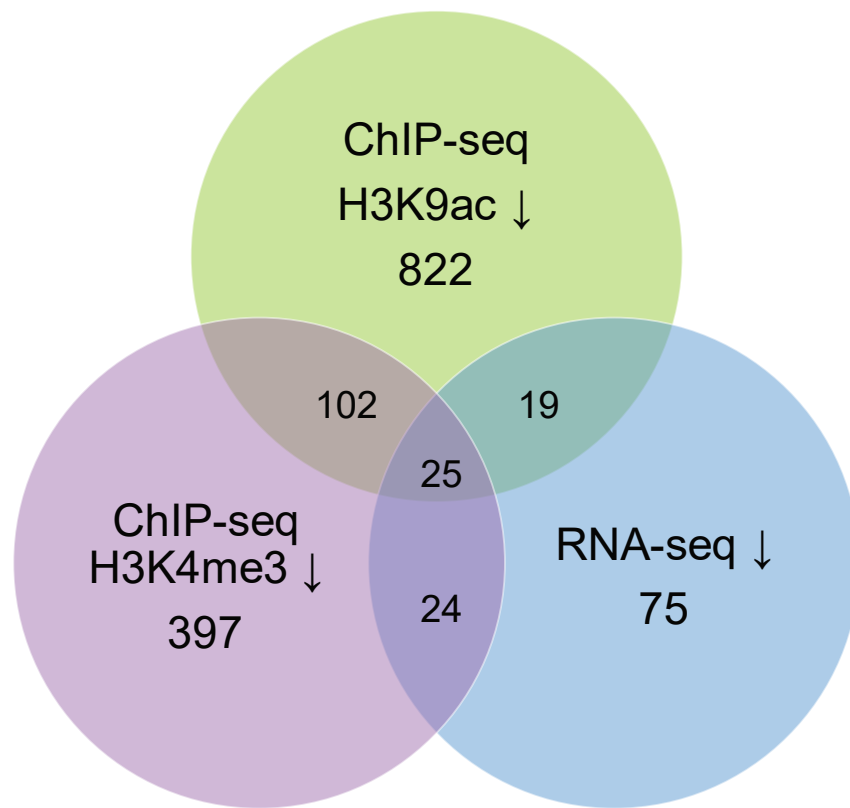


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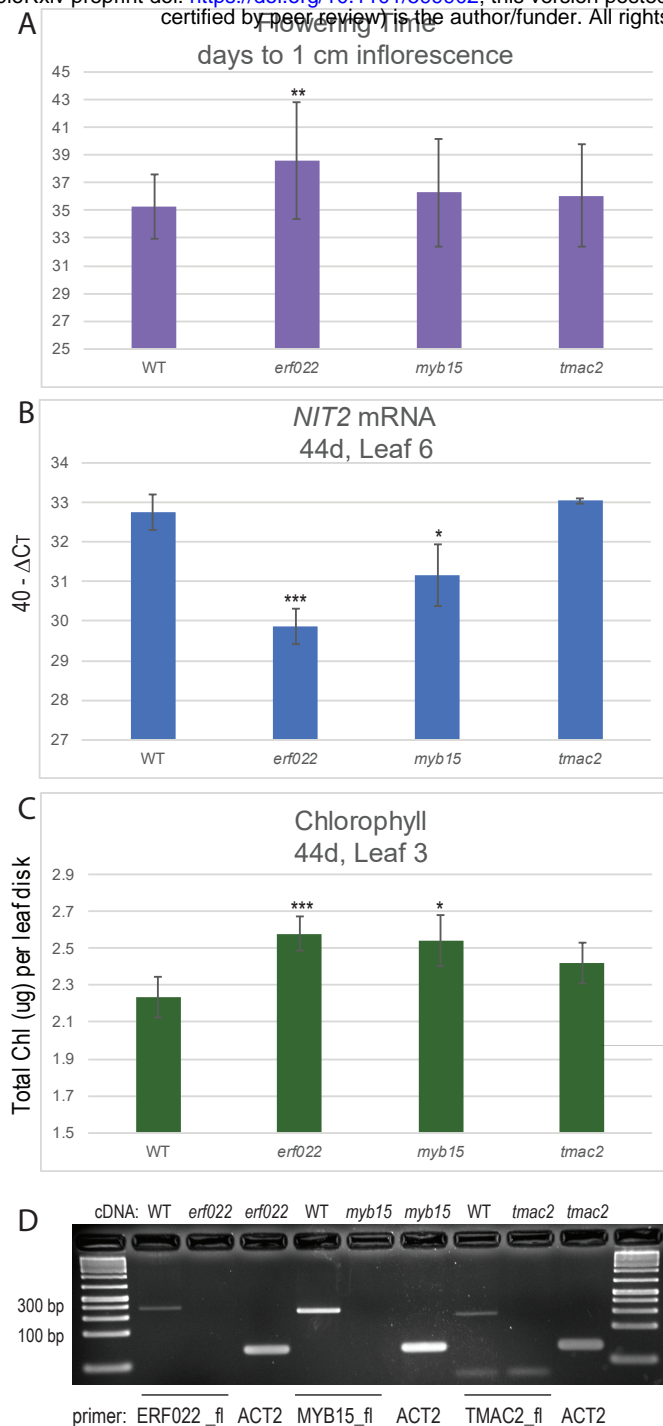


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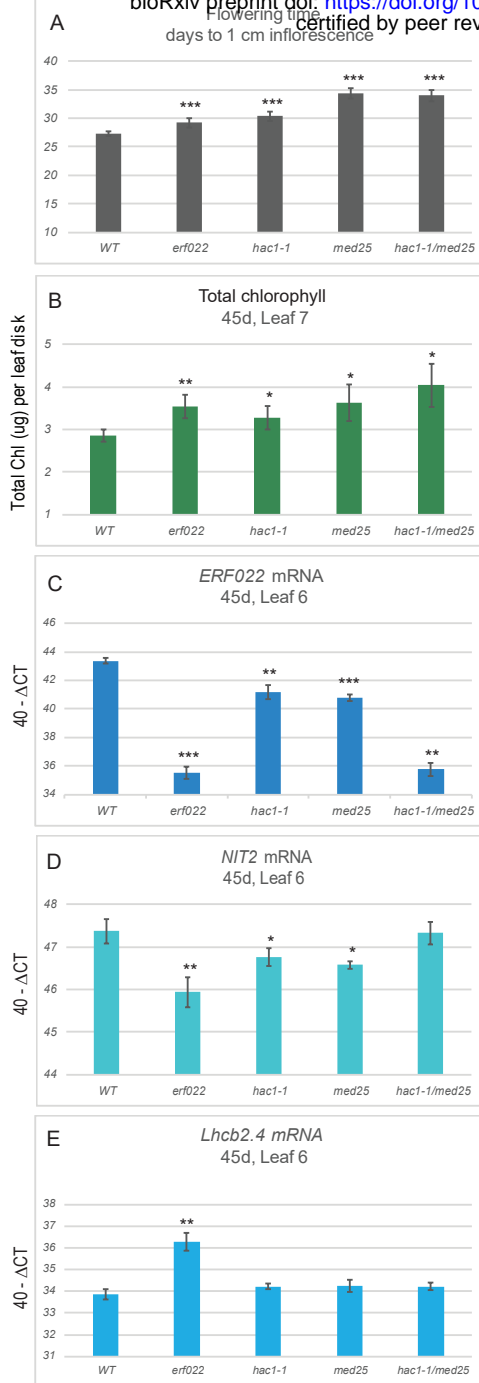


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