

# Molecular analysis of *Broussonetia papyrifera* (L.) Vent. (Magnoliophyta: Urticales) from the Pacific, based on ribosomal sequences of nuclear DNA

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*Broussonetia papyrifera* (L.) Vent. (Magnoliophyta: Urticales), or paper mulberry, is a species of Asian origin dispersed by humans throughout the Pacific. Our aim is to evaluate the genetic variability of this plant in order to determine its potential as a commensal species for studying the mobility and/or migratory movements of the people that carried it. For this study, we analysed the non-coding transcribed spacer sequences (ITS) of ribosomal nuclear DNA found in samples of *B. papyrifera* collected in Remote Oceania and Taiwan. Our results show three genotypes: the Pacific samples form a distinct and homogenous subgroup, while the Taiwanese accessions present two genotypes. We discuss the relevance of these results in the context of the dispersal of *B. papyrifera* in the Pacific and its association with Austronesian migration history. © 2011 The Royal Society of New Zealand.