

Genetic diversity and hybridization in the two species *Inga ingoides* and *Inga edulis*: potential applications for agroforestry in the Peruvian Amazon

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Abstract

• **Key message** Slash and burn practices affect tropical forests. Our results showed strong introgression between *Inga ingoides* and *Inga edulis* in the species contact area. Interspecific hybridization could be sought to improve yield or tolerance to flooding and further increase the

economic potential of the poorly drained Amazonian soils and minimize deforestation.

• **Context** *Inga* species are important components of tropical American forests, as well as a local food source. Little is known about the genetic structure of these species; in particular the amount of introgression among species remains unknown.

• **Aims** We assessed the degree of genetic divergence and introgression among populations of *I. ingoides* (Rich.) Willd. and *I. edulis* Mart. (Fabaceae) from three Peruvian Amazon tributary rivers.

• **Methods** Using microsatellite markers we determined the genetic structure of populations using an analysis of molecular variance and a Bayesian analysis of population structure in areas affected by seasonal river fluctuations and in 'terra firme' forests.

• **Results** Overall genetic differentiation was weak. The degree of genetic variation was similar in the two species. A putatively strong introgression was detected between the two species and an intense gene flow was identified among

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Contribution of the co-authors A.R. was in charge of the study; B.L. supervised the writing of the article, supervised Alexandr Rollo, and coordinated the project; B.M. participated in the STRUCTURE analysis, and in the interpretation of the results; J.A. Chia Wong participated in tree sampling, and helped in the species identification; C.S. supervised the genotyping, and participated partially in the genotyping; R.C. supervised and organized the genotyping; C. Q.-S. participated in the AMOVA analysis, and in the interpretation of the results; M. M.R. performed data analysis (genetic diversity estimates), the interpretation of the results, participated in the paper writing, and co-supervised A.R. All authors reviewed and commented on successive drafts of the paper.

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39 populations. This indicates that an intense gene flow had hap-
 40 pened in the past, leading also to a small differentiation among
 41 populations within species.

42 • **Conclusion** Selection of natural hybrids or artificial hybrid-
 43 ization between *I. edulis* and *I. ingoides* could be applied to
 44 improve legume size and yield in the later species, while
 45 maintaining tolerance to flooding. Improved *I. ingoides* could
 46 be used in multipurpose agroforestry on open areas along the
 47 rivers, instead of using the usual slash and burn practice to
 48 create inland open areas.

49 **Keywords** Agroforestry · Biodiversity conservation ·
 50 Intgression · *Inga* · Peruvian Amazon · Microsatellites

51 **1 Introduction**

52 The Amazon drainage basin containing mainly lowland
 53 rainforest habitats is a major component of the Neotropical
 54 region, with more than 8 million km² and about 25 million
 55 people (Junk and Piedade 2011). The riparian forests in the
 56 rain forest cover about 1 million km², which corresponds to
 57 around 50 % of the basin's entire wetland area. The species-
 58 rich floodplain forests along the large Amazonian rivers are
 59 able to survive floods up to 10 m deep for as long as up to
 60 8 months per year (Junk and Piedade 2011, and references
 61 therein). Increasing population density and human activity
 62 are destroying the forest landscape and inflicting a loss of
 63 biological diversity (Oliveira et al. 2007). Today, due to the
 64 continuing massive pressure exerted by farmers, cattle
 65 ranchers, and logging companies on the forests, new manage-
 66 ment concepts are urgently required to avoid the destruction of
 67 this unique forest type (Junk and Piedade 2011). The Peruvian
 68 Amazon tropical area (ca. 661,000 km²) suffered disturbance
 69 and deforestation at the average rate of 647 km² per year from
 70 1999 to 2005: 75 % within legally sanctioned areas, 64 %
 71 concentrated around the Ucayali logging centre, and 1–2 %
 72 occurred within natural protected areas (Oliveira et al. 2007).

73 The genus *Inga* Mill. (Fabaceae) comprises ca. 300 species
 74 of trees restricted to tropical America. Each region has pre-
 75 ferred edible *Inga* species sold in large quantities in markets
 76 during the fruiting season (Pennington 1997). *Inga edulis*
 77 Mart., which occurs naturally on non-flooded or temporarily

flooded sites, is a widely distributed and highly valued species 78
 in the Amazon region: it has been improved by human selec- 79
 tion focusing on edible fruit, and cultivated as a fruit tree in 80
 Peru for millennia, and more recently in agroforestry systems 81
 (Pennington 1997). *Inga ingoides* (Rich.) Willd., a close rela- 82
 tive of *I. edulis*, is used frequently in gardens and pastures for 83
 its edible fruit, and has ecological adaptability with potential 84
 use in a wide range of locations with limited conditions due to 85
 flood or poor soil drainage (Pennington 1997). Biodiversity 86
 conservation in the Peruvian Amazon along the riverside 87
 zones, while maintaining land user benefits, could be achieved 88
 by using this underutilized crop for food and fodder, avoiding 89
 slash and burn practices (Lander and Monro 2015). The 90
 neglected *I. ingoides* species could be considered as a multi- 91
 purpose fruit tree species in agroforestry and other crop sys- 92
 tems practiced in areas affected by periodical flooding. 93
 Production of fruit and timber from this species near rivers 94
 would be less costly, more sustainable and more forest- 95
 friendly due to: (1) easy accessibility for humans, (2) economy 96
 of transport, (3) nutrient input provided by periodical 97
 flooding, and (4) cultivation in forest buffer zones avoiding 98
 new forest sites colonization. Thus, the use of *I. ingoides* in 99
 open areas affected by periodical flooding could be achieved 100
 by genetic improvement through selection of natural hybrids 101
 or artificial hybridization with *I. edulis* and backcrossing, 102
 selecting for tolerance to flooding, legume size and yield, 103
 similar to the type of breeding achieved in the genus 104
Eucalyptus (Potts and Dungey 2004). Interspecific hybrids 105
 of *Eucalyptus* have been used in forestry for decades, particu- 106
 larly in tropical and sub-tropical forestry, with plantations 107
 initially based on outstanding spontaneous hybrids. 108
 Selection was based on phenotype, followed afterwards by 109
 breeding programs based on manipulated hybrids (Potts and 110
 Dungey 2004). A similar approach, initiated with the selection 111
 of performing hybrids, could be applied to the *Inga* species 112
 under study. 113

114 Population genetic studies of tropical trees have shown that
 115 most of the species investigated are outcrossed and exhibit
 116 high levels of genetic diversity and gene flow, carrying much
 117 of the variation within, rather than among, populations
 118 (Finkeldey and Hattemer 2007, and references therein).
 119 Also, the specific evolutionary history of each species has
 120 played an important role in determining the level and

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121 distribution of genetic diversity (Hamrick et al. 1992). In trop- 170
 122 ical forests, the levels of genetic diversity within populations 171
 123 vary considerably among species (Finkeldey and Hattemer 172
 124 2007), from $H_e=0.11$ in *Acer skutchii* Rehd. (Mexico) 173
 125 (Lara-Gomez et al. 2005) to $H_e=0.78$ in *Swietenia* 174
 126 *macrophylla* King (Brazil) (Lemes et al. 2003), with both 175
 127 studies using microsatellites. Genetic differentiation among 176
 128 populations is slightly higher for tropical forest tree species 177
 129 than for temperate forests tree species, probably due to higher 178
 130 fragmentation levels in tropical trees. Moreover, tropical tree 179
 131 species with abiotic seed dispersal show, on average, much 180
 132 higher differentiation among populations than biotic-seed dis- 181
 133 persed species. Seed dispersal by animals (zoochory) is usu- 182
 134 ally very efficient and results in low genetic differentiation 183
 135 among populations (Loveless 1992). In the genus *Inga*, few 184
 136 genetic diversity studies have been reported to date. Studies in 185
 137 *I. edulis* and *I. vera*, using microsatellite markers, compared 186
 138 natural vs. planted populations to understand habitat fragmen- 187
 139 tation and to clarify the impact of species domestication and 188
 140 possible diversity loss (Cruz-Neto et al. 2014; Hollingsworth 189
 141 et al. 2005; Dawson et al. 2008). The authors of the latter 190
 142 studies found that diversity was lower in planted compared 191
 143 to natural populations, but the values were still relatively high 192
 144 and the genetic diversity in planted stands can, to some extent, 193
 145 be restored by receiving pollen from natural populations. To 194
 146 the best of our knowledge, no studies about the genetic diver- 195
 147 sity in *I. ingoides* have been published. 196

148 The present study, using microsatellite markers, focused on 197
 149 two main objectives: firstly, we wanted to study the genetic 198
 150 structure of the populations of *I. ingoides* and *I. edulis*, and 199
 151 secondly, based on the obtained genetic structure, we wanted 200
 152 to infer the suitability of a hybridization program. The specific 201
 153 aims of the present study were: (1) to test if populations from 202
 154 three Peruvian Amazon tributary rivers, geographically sepa- 203
 155 rated, had diverged and accumulated substantial differentia- 204
 156 tion among populations within the *I. edulis* and *I. ingoides* 205
 157 species; (2) to compare the genetic diversity and divergence 206
 158 of three natural *I. ingoides* populations with those of nearby 207
 159 *I. edulis* natural populations; (3) to check for putative intro- 208
 160 gression between both species; and (4) to discuss the possibil- 209
 161 ity of the targeted hybridization between the two studied spe- 210
 162 cies, the transfer of the tolerance to flooding from *I. ingoides* 211
 163 to *I. edulis*, and the transfer of legume size and yield potential 212
 164 from the latter to *I. ingoides*.

165 2 Material and methods

166 2.1 Plant material and study site

167 The two sympatric *Inga* species were identified according to 214
 168 morphological aspects detailed in the online resource 215
 169 ESM_1.pdf (Pennington 1997). *Inga ingoides* is distributed 216

170 from the Lesser Antilles and tropical South America to 171
 172 Bolivia, including coastal Brazil to southern Minas Gerais. 173
 174 *Inga edulis* and *I. ingoides* are sympatric species with over- 175
 176 lapping distribution, but the former is more likely to be found 176
 177 in non-flooded sites since it can withstand only temporary 177
 178 floods. According to Pennington (1997), *I. ingoides* flowering 178
 179 season, from August to November, partially overlaps the 179
 180 *I. edulis* June–October flowering season. The *Inga* species 180
 181 has brush-type flowers with mainly nocturnal anthesis special- 181
 182 ized for hawkmoth (*Sphingidae*) and bat (*Phyllostomidae*) 182
 183 visits (Cruz-Neto et al. 2011, and references therein), yet di- 183
 184 urnal visits by hummingbirds (*Trochilidae*) and hawkmoths 184
 185 were also observed by Koptur (1984). 185

186 Plant material from 77 *I. ingoides* and 62 *I. edulis* individ- 186
 187 uals used in this study was collected in riparian situations 187
 188 along three Amazon River tributaries and in upland forests 188
 189 (Table 1; Fig. 1a, b) from 2009 to 2012. The RPI and RPE 189
 190 populations (hereafter, the first two letters of the population 190
 191 name are the initials derived from the site name, the third letter 191
 192 means I=*I. ingoides* and E=*I. edulis*) were sampled from 192
 193 original vegetation along the river Pacaya. The RSI and RSE 193
 194 populations were observed in original vegetation on the river 194
 195 Samiria springs. Both rivers belong to the protected area 195
 196 called Pacaya Samiria National Reserve (Fig. 1a). The RUI 196
 197 and RUE populations were sampled on secondary vegetation 197
 198 along the Utiquinia river from the San José village, situated on 198
 199 non-inundating terraces, to the periodically flooded and poorly 199
 200 drained sites heading downstream to the Ucayali river. The 200
 201 MAE population was sampled in the Macuya Experimental 201
 202 Forest, a ‘terra firme’ forest remnant, protected by the 202
 203 National University of Ucayali, surrounded by deforested 203
 204 logged areas close to the city of Von Humboldt. The SDE 204
 205 population was observed behind the Contamana city’s second- 205
 206 ary vegetation, which begins in undulated terrain and contin- 206
 207 ues to the original vegetation in the protected mountain 207
 208 range called Sierra del Divisor National Park. 208

209 The sampled trees were selected randomly and the mini- 209
 210 mum average distance between two sampled individuals from 210
 211 the same species was 200 m. Young leaves were collected 211
 212 from sexually mature trees and preserved in silica gel for fur- 212
 213 ther DNA extraction. Voucher specimens were archived in the 213
 214 Regional Herbarium of Ucayali IVITA-Pucallpa, Peru, with 214
 215 the code ARI-384. 215

216 2.2 DNA extraction and amplification

217 Total genomic DNA was extracted from dried young leaves 217
 218 with the Invitex, Invisorb® Spin Plant Mini Kit (<http://www.stratec.com>) according to the manufacture’s instructions. We 218
 219 used four microsatellite primers, one (*PeI5*) primer was 219
 220 developed for *Pithecellobium elegans* Ducke by Daynandan 220
 221 et al. (1997), and the remaining three primer pairs (*Inga03*, 221
 222 *Inga08* and *Inga33*) were developed by Hollingsworth et al. 222

t1.1 **Table 1** Geographic location,
 t1.2 sample size and study site where
 t1.3 the *Inga ingoides* and *Inga edulis*
 t1.4 populations were sampled. *N* is
 t1.5 sample size

Species	Site	Population	<i>N</i>	Latitude S	Longitude W	Altitude (m)
<i>I. ingoides</i>	Pacaya river	RPI	47	5° 24' 38.7858"	74° 34' 20.3952"	105–127
	Samiria river	RSI	16	5° 15' 12.2502"	75° 22' 2.949"	91–131
	Utiquinia river	RUI	14	8° 11' 42.2124"	74° 18' 39.999"	148–168
<i>I. edulis</i>	Pacaya river	RPE	12	5° 40' 38.6646"	74° 56' 40.7508"	110–131
	Samiria river	RSE	6	5° 14' 15.7668"	75° 28' 8.8998"	105–123
	Utiquinia river	RUE	12	8° 9' 47.5848"	74° 16' 46.9158"	150–160
	Macuya	MAE	27	8° 52' 51.4842"	75° 0' 29.1492"	216–233
	Sierra del Divisor	SDE	5	7° 12' 38.16"	74° 56' 51.5394"	196–231

221 (2005) for *I. edulis*. A fluorescent dye (6-FAM, NED or VIC)
 222 was added to the 5' end of each forward primer.

223 Loci were amplified individually in 10 µl reaction contain-
 224 ing: 20 ng template DNA, 5 µM forward and reverse primer,
 225 50 µM dNTPs, 2 mM MgCl₂, 2 µl 5x GoTaq Flexi Buffer
 226 (Promega, Madison, WI) and 1.0 U GoTaq® Flexi DNA
 227 Polymerase (Promega). Amplifications were undertaken in
 228 Biometra® T1 Thermocycler (<http://www.biometra.de/>)
 229 using the following profile: 95 °C for 2 min; 95 °C for 15 s,
 230 55 °C (*Inga03*) and 59 °C (*Inga08*, *Inga33* and *Pe15*) for 30 s,
 231 72 °C for 30 s, 30 cycles; 72 °C for 15 min. Completed

reactions were loaded onto an ABI PRISM 310 Genetic
 Analyzer (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA) and run
 according to the manufacturer's protocol. Allele sizes were
 determined using the ROX500 internal size standard and
 GeneMarker® v2.4 software (Applied Biosystems).

2.3 Data analysis

The diversity parameters comprised the number of alleles
 (*N_a*), the effective number of alleles (*N_e*), the observed hetero-
 zygosity (*H_o*), the expected heterozygosity (*H_e*) (Nei 1987),

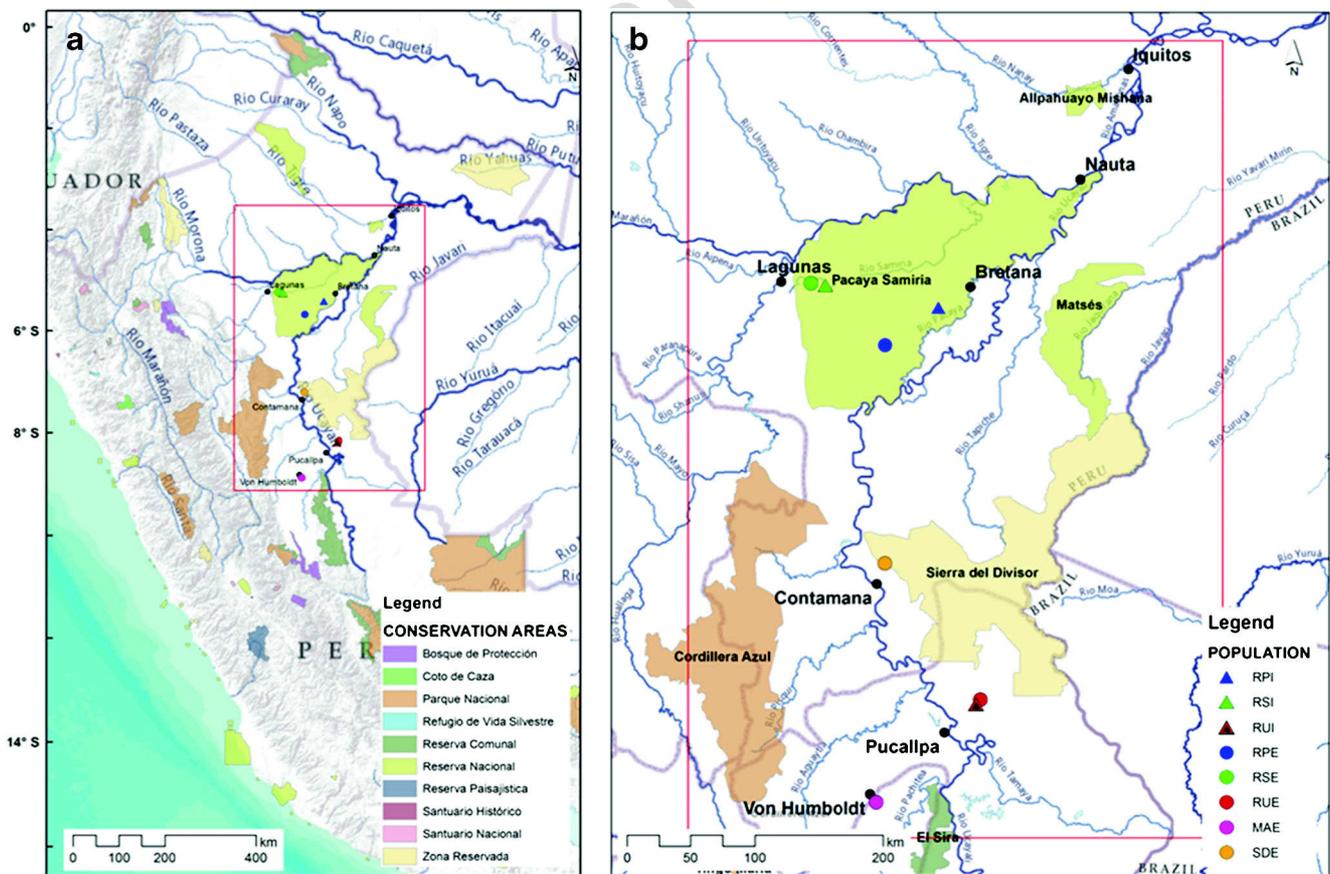


Fig. 1 a Map of South America highlighting the study area. b Map with the rivers location, conservation areas and sampled populations located in the Samiria (RSI and RSE), Pacaya (RPI and RPE), and Utiquinia (RUI and RUE) rivers, and, also, the MAE and the SDE populations

241 and the fixation index (F_{IS}) (Weir and Cockerham 1984). A
 242 principal coordinate analysis (PCoA) was computed based on
 243 the pairwise Nei's genetic distance matrix. The analyses were
 244 performed using GenAlEx 6.5 (Peakall and Smouse 2012),
 245 except for the allelic richness (A_R), which was computed using
 246 FSTAT 2.9.3 (Goudet 1995). Using the Genepop 4.3 software
 247 (Rousset 2008), the Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium (HWE) was
 248 tested for each population and locus (Markov-Chain method),
 249 the linkage disequilibria (LD) tests were done for all loci com-
 250 binations, and the average frequency of null alleles were com-
 251 puted per population.

252 The grouping structure was further explored using a
 253 locus-by-locus analysis of molecular variance (AMOVA),
 254 implemented with the Arlequin 3.5 software (Excoffier and
 255 Lischer 2010). We estimated the variance components and
 256 genetic variation using a non-hierarchical and hierarchical
 257 analysis considering all of the populations or the two
 258 groups (species), respectively. The significance values
 259 were computed by a permutation test from 1,000 permuted
 260 matrices.

261 A Bayesian clustering method was carried out using the
 262 STRUCTURE version 2.3.3 software (Pritchard et al.
 263 2000) to estimate the number of genetic clusters (K) and
 264 to fractionally assign individuals of both *Inga* species to the
 265 inferred groups. We applied the model which allows popu-
 266 lation admixture and correlated allele frequency. The K was
 267 set from one to eight, and the simulation was run ten times
 268 at each K value to confirm the repeatability of the results.
 269 Each run comprised a burn-in period of 25,000, followed
 270 by 100,000 Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) steps.
 271 Afterwards, the STRUCTURE output data were parsed using
 272 the program Structure-sum (running under the R platform)
 273 (Ehrich et al. 2007), mainly to determine the optimal K
 274 value following Nordborg et al. (2005) and Evanno et al.
 275 (2005) methods. Therefore, we used the ΔK distribution
 276 statistic of Evanno et al. (2005) to determine the most ap-
 277 propriate number of genetic clusters through the detection
 278 of the second rate of change in LnP(D). In addition, the
 279 similarity coefficient between ten structure runs was com-
 280 puted, and for values higher than 0.9 we assumed that each
 281 run ended with a similar result. An alignment of cluster
 282 assignments across replicate analyses was then conducted
 283 in the CLUMPP 1.1.2 software (Jakobsson and Rosenberg
 284 2007), and subsequently visualized using DISTRUCT 1.1
 285 (Rosenberg 2004).

286 3 Results

287 3.1 Genetic diversity and inbreeding

288 The four simple sequence repeat (SSR) loci used in this study
 289 were very polymorphic, with a total of 66 alleles in *I. ingoides*

290 and 58 alleles in *I. edulis*. However, the higher number of 290
 291 alleles (N_a) could reflect the higher number of individuals 291
 292 (N) in some of the populations in both species: RPI ($N=47$; 292
 293 $N_a=13.3$) and MAE populations ($N=27$; $N_a=11$) (Table 2). 293
 294 The effective number of alleles (N_e) was higher in the 294
 295 *I. ingoides* southern population, RUI (6.1), and lower in the 295
 296 northern one, RSI (4.4). The *I. edulis* western population 296
 297 (MAE) held the highest N_e value (6), and the smallest value 297
 298 was found in the eastern SDE population (2.8) (Table 2). The 298
 299 rarefaction method displayed similar average allelic richness 299
 300 (A_R) values in both species (5.1) (Table 2), due to differences 300
 301 in sample size per population. 301

302 The expected heterozygosity (H_e) was also similar in 302
 303 both species (ca. 0.70), but the observed diversity (H_o) 303
 304 was lower for *I. ingoides* (0.54) compared with *I. edulis* 304
 305 (0.68), which leads to a positive inbreeding coefficient 305
 306 (F_{IS}) in the former (Table 2). All the *I. edulis* populations 306
 307 are in Hardy-Weinberg expectations (HWE), but not the 307
 308 *I. ingoides* populations (Table 2). High F_{IS} values—the loss 308
 309 of heterozygosity due to non-random mating of parents— 309
 310 reflected differences between observed and expected het- 310
 311 erozygosity. *I. ingoides* populations (RPI, RSI and RUI) 311
 312 departures from HWE showed significant ($P<0.001$) het- 312
 313 erozygote deficiency. On the contrary, the *I. edulis* popula- 313
 314 tions F_{IS} values were not significant. The average frequen- 314
 315 cy of null alleles was similar and low in both species. In 315
 316 addition, no linkage disequilibrium was detected between 316
 317 different genotypes with the Fisher exact test among the 317
 318 different loci ($P>0.05$), indicating that all four loci segre- 318
 319 gate independently of each other in both studied species. 319

320 The loci with higher N_a (18) were different in both spe- 320
 321 cies: *Pel5* in *I. edulis*, and *Inga03* and *Inga33* in *I. ingoides* 321
 322 (Table 3). The A_R per loci ranged from 4.2 (*Inga08*) to 11.5 322
 323 (*Inga33*) based on the minimum sample size of 14 individ- 323
 324 uals in *I. ingoides*, and from 3.3 (*Inga08*) to 7.14 (*Pel5*) 324
 325 based on the minimum sample size of 5 individuals in 325
 326 *I. edulis* (Table 3). The *Inga08* locus had the lowest H_e 326
 327 values in both species (0.24 and 0.47, in *I. ingoides* and 327
 328 *I. edulis*, respectively), and the *Pel5* locus had the highest 328
 329 value (ca. 0.90). 329

330 Private alleles (P_a) were identified for each *I. ingoides* pop- 330
 331 ulation, the highest P_a per population was found in the RPI 331
 332 population (3.5 across loci) and the lowest value in the RSI 332
 333 (0.75). The locus *Inga03* had the highest P_a (2.7 across all 333
 334 populations) and *Inga33* had the lowest (1.33) in this species 334
 335 (ESM_2.pdf). P_a were identified in four *I. edulis* populations 335
 336 and the RPE had the highest P_a (1.25 across loci). The SDE 336
 337 population had no private allele, probably due to the low N . 337
 338 Only two alleles are common to the RPI/E pair, in the other 338
 339 pairs there are no common private alleles. The populations 339
 340 RUI and RSE hold the highest N/NP_a ratio, i.e., they have 340
 341 the highest number of private alleles compared to the popula- 341
 342 tion size (ESM_2.pdf). 342

t2.1 **Table 2** Diversity parameters per population obtained with the four simple sequence repeat (SSR) polymorphic loci after genotyping the *I. ingoides* and *I. edulis* individuals. *N* Sample size, *N_a* number of alleles per locus, *N_e* effective number of alleles, *A_R* allelic richness, *H_e* expected heterozygosity, *H_o* observed heterozygosity, *F_{IS}* fixation index. *F-null* refers to the average estimate of null frequency. Standard errors in brackets

t2.2	Species	Population	<i>N</i>	<i>N_a</i>	<i>A_R</i>	<i>N_e</i>	<i>H_o</i>	<i>H_e</i>	<i>F_{IS}</i>	Significance	<i>F-null</i>
t2.3	<i>I. ingoides</i>	RPI	47	13.25	5.23	5.82 (1.61)	0.58 (0.14)	0.72 (0.15)	0.14 (0.15)	***	0.08
t2.4		RSI	16	7.50	4.53	4.39 (1.34)	0.47 (0.19)	0.66 (0.16)	0.27 (0.18)	***	0.10
t2.5		RUI	14	9.75	5.59	6.06 (1.94)	0.58 (0.13)	0.73 (0.16)	0.14 (0.11)	***	0.09
t2.6		Mean	77 ^a	10.17	5.12	5.42 (1.63)	0.54 (0.16)	0.70 (0.16)	0.18 (0.15)		0.09
t2.7	<i>I. edulis</i>	RPE	12	8.25	5.23	5.06 (1.17)	0.63 (0.17)	0.72 (0.13)	0.09 (0.18)	NS	0.06
t2.8		RSE	6	6.50	5.82	5.32 (1.37)	0.75 (0.08)	0.79 (0.13)	-0.08 (0.09)	NS	0.00
t2.9		RUE	12	7.25	5.15	4.58 (1.15)	0.67 (0.14)	0.76 (0.07)	0.11 (0.17)	NS	0.06
t2.10		MAE	27	11.00	5.41	5.98 (1.99)	0.66 (0.16)	0.75 (0.12)	0.12 (0.10)	NS	0.06
t2.11		SDE	5	4.00	4.00	2.77 (0.94)	0.70 (0.13)	0.60 (0.11)	-0.30 (0.07)	NS	0.00
t2.12		Mean	62 ^a	7.40	5.12	4.74 (0.64)	0.68 (0.06)	0.72 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.06)		0.06

^a Sum

****P* < 0.001; NS not significant [from Hardy-Weinberg expectations (HWE) test after Bonferroni correction]

343 **3.2 Population differentiation and Bayesian cluster**
344 **analysis**

345 The PCoA analysis reveals populations' weak grouping
346 (Fig. 2), with the first and the second factor explaining 68 %
347 and 15 % of the total variation, respectively. The AMOVA
348 revealed an overall low among population variation
349 ($\Phi_{ST}=0.05$; $P<0.0001$), and the highest variation of the data
350 set was found within populations (94 %) (Table 4).
351 Undoubtedly, group (A), including all the *I. edulis* popula-
352 tions, clustered separately from group (B), the three
353 *I. ingoides* populations (Fig. 2). Furthermore, the AMOVA
354 confirmed a low, yet significant ($P<0.02$) differentiation be-
355 tween the two *Inga* species $\Phi_{CT}=0.036$ (Table 4). The
356 *I. ingoides* populations at the three different rivers were clearly
357 separated, as observed in Fig. 2, widely separated along the
358 second axis, although only explaining a small part of the varia-
359 tion. Indeed, the variation among populations within species
360 was weak, $\Phi_{SC}=0.027$ (Table 4).

STRUCTURE distinguished clusters and the mean likeli-
hood indicated two peaks at $K=2$ and $K=4$ (ESM_3A.docx).
Additionally, we found that the mean similarity coefficient,
the similarity between the ten runs, was consistently higher
for $K=2$ (ESM_3C.docx). Considering $K=2$, the clusters
corresponded to the two species groups, which had a biolog-
ically meaningful result: a clear introgression between species
(Fig 3a).

Using the delta K criterion, the Bayesian clustering
suggests the most probable presence of four groups
(ESM_3B.docx), yet all individuals with mixed ancestry.
Thus, the genetic clusters uncover extensive gene flow
among populations. The mixed ancestry was particularly
evident in the close population pairs along the rivers,
with the more isolated *I. edulis* MAE and SDE popula-
tions clearly less mixed (Fig. 3a,b). The RUI/RUE popu-
lations seem to be the most mixed pair. The genetic
clusters did not correspond closely to the morphological
species, which suggest that gene flow has occurred

t3.1 **Table 3** Diversity parameters per
t3.2 locus obtained with the 4 SSR
polymorphic loci after genotyping
t3.3 the *I. ingoides* and *I. edulis*
t3.4 individuals. See Table 2 for
t3.5 definitions

Species	Locus	<i>N_a</i>	<i>A_R</i>	<i>N_e</i>	<i>H_o</i>	<i>H_e</i>	<i>F_{IS}</i>
<i>I. ingoides</i>	<i>Inga03</i>	18	8.61	5.31 (1.20)	0.63 (0.09)	0.81 (0.06)	0.21 (0.10)
	<i>Inga08</i>	13	4.21	1.31 (0.05)	0.24 (0.06)	0.24 (0.03)	0.03 (0.13)
	<i>Inga33</i>	18	11.49	6.60 (0.93)	0.39 (0.08)	0.87 (0.02)	0.54 (0.11)
	<i>Pel5</i>	17	11.26	8.47 (1.13)	0.92 (0.05)	0.90 (0.02)	-0.05 (0.07)
	Mean	17	8.89	4.77 (0.79)	0.48 (0.08)	0.67 (0.07)	0.26 (0.08)
<i>I. edulis</i>	<i>Inga03</i>	16	6.30	5.56 (0.91)	0.86 (0.03)	0.83 (0.06)	-0.13 (0.09)
	<i>Inga08</i>	11	3.30	1.86 (0.21)	0.51 (0.08)	0.47 (0.05)	-0.15 (0.10)
	<i>Inga33</i>	13	4.90	3.58 (0.88)	0.46 (0.11)	0.68 (0.09)	0.28 (0.16)
	<i>Pel5</i>	18	7.14	7.97 (0.98)	0.90 (0.03)	0.92 (0.01)	-0.04 (0.05)
	Mean	16	5.41	4.74 (0.64)	0.68 (0.56)	0.72 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.06)

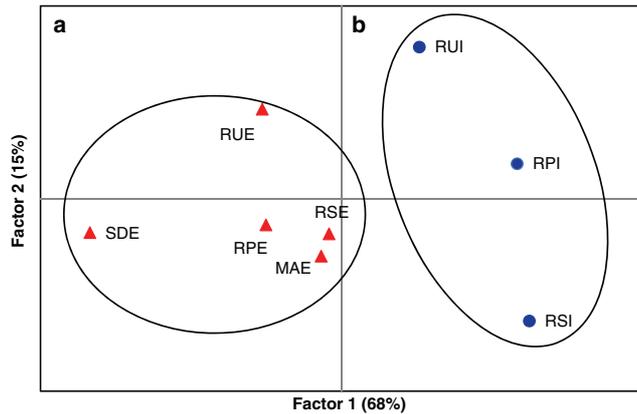


Fig. 2 Principal coordinates analysis (PCoA) based on the Nei's pairwise genetic distances of *Inga edulis* (filled triangles) and of *Inga ingoides* populations (filled circles). Group A and group B, included populations from both species along the Pacaya, Samiria and Utiquinia rivers, respectively. The population SDE is an outlier

380 between the species. The three *I. ingoides* populations
 381 seem to have the highest proportion of genotype affin-
 382 ities (or proportion of genotype membership) to both
 383 cluster 1 and 3, whereas *I. edulis* predominant propor-
 384 tion of genotype membership arises from cluster 2, in
 385 particular for the MAE and SDE populations (Fig. 3b).
 386 For $K=2$, the mean introgression was higher for
 387 *I. ingoides* (25 %) than for *I. edulis* (18 %), considering
 388 the number of individuals with more than 50 % proba-
 389 bility as belonging to the other species ($q > 50\%$); how-
 390 ever the species introgression appears to be bidirectional
 391 (Fig. 3a). Nevertheless, if we consider only the popula-
 392 tions along the rivers (RPE, RSE and RUE) the average
 393 introgression sums up to 28 % in *I. edulis*, and the
 394 MAE and SDE populations have negligible values.
 395 The RUI population has the highest introgression degree
 396 (36 %), almost twice the other *I. ingoides* populations
 397 (Fig. 3a).

4 Discussion 398

4.1 Genetic diversity 399

400 All populations displayed high values of expected heterozy-
 401 gosity (mean $H_e \sim 0.70$, $A_R = 5.1$). These estimates were slight-
 402 ly lower than estimates in natural populations of tropical trees
 403 *I. vera* ($H_e = 0.87$; $A_R = 7.7$) (Cruz-Neto et al. 2014),
 404 *Symphonia globulifera* L. ($H_e = 0.89$) (Dick and Heuertz
 405 2008) and *Swietenia macrophylla* King ($H_e = 0.78$) (Lemes
 406 et al. 2003), but were very similar to the expected heterozy-
 407 gosity estimated for *I. edulis* by Hollingsworth et al. (2005)
 408 in the same region (Peruvian Amazon) ($H_e = 66\%$). Normally,
 409 high levels of genetic diversity are maintained by high levels
 410 of gene flow facilitated by efficient pollen movement and the
 411 widespread occurrence of efficient self-incompatibility mech-
 412 anisms (Dick et al. 2008). Some studies have demonstrated
 413 that some *Inga* species are obligate outcrossers, dependent on
 414 cross pollination to set fruits and seeds (Koptur 1984; Cruz-
 415 Neto et al. 2014) (see following section).

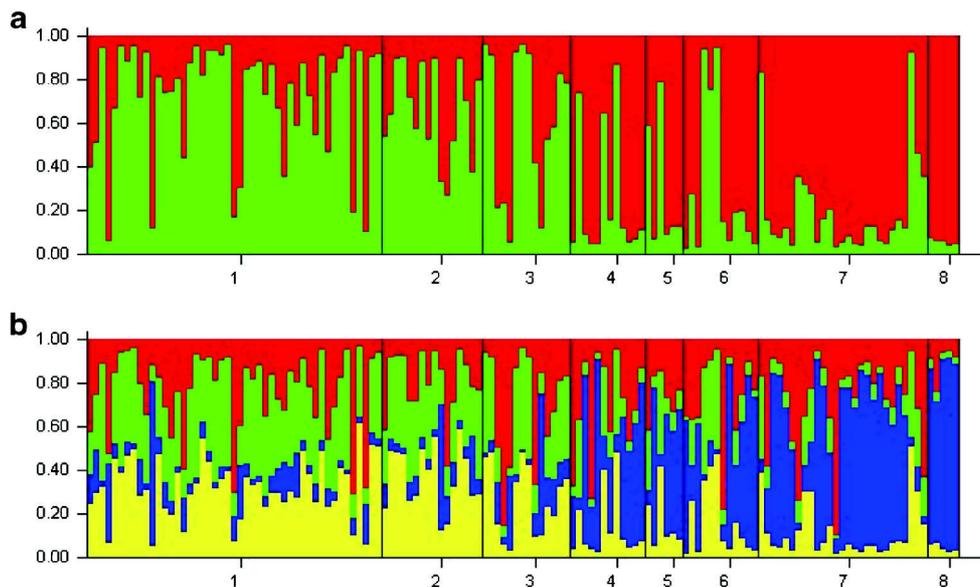
416 Inbreeding values differed in both species. Whereas
 417 *I. edulis* fits the low inbreeding values found in the *I. vera*
 418 natural populations' study using the same set of molecular
 419 markers (Cruz-Neto et al. 2014), our analyses revealed that
 420 the heterozygote frequencies in *I. ingoides* depart from the
 421 HWE, indicating either the existence of population substruc-
 422 ture (due to the presence of genetically isolated groups, in-
 423 breeding, and/or spatial genetic structure) or null alleles.
 424 Since the estimated average frequency of null alleles is similar
 425 in both *I. edulis* and *I. ingoides*, we hypothesize that these
 426 differences could be explained by demography characteristics
 427 due to habitat preferences. The observed results may reflect
 428 *I. ingoides*'s pioneer ability. This species rapidly colonizes the
 429 forest gaps opened by the seasonal river fluctuation, which
 430 results in populations being formed by patches of related in-
 431 dividuals with a highly significant deficiency in heterozygotes

t4.1 **Table 4** Analysis of molecular
 t4.2 variance (AMOVA) of the *Inga*
 t4.3 populations, considering the
 t4.4 whole data set and clustered in the
 t4.5 two species (*I. edulis* and
 t4.6 *I. ingoides*) according to the
 t4.7 principal coordinates analysis
 t4.8 (PCoA) analysis (see Fig. 2)

Source of variation	df	SS	Variance components	% of total variance	Φ statistics	P
<i>All populations</i>						
Among populations	7	25.996	0.07204	4.87	$\Phi_{ST} = 0.05$	<0.0001
Within populations	270	379.763	1.40653	95.13		
Total	277	405.759	1.47856			
<i>I. edulis vs. I. ingoides</i>						
Between species	1	10.84	0.05	3.64	$\Phi_{CT} = 0.036$	<0.02
Among populations within species	6	15.15	0.04	2.57	$\Phi_{SC} = 0.027$	<0.0001
Within populations	270	379.76	1.41	93.79	$\Phi_{ST} = 0.062$	<0.0001
Total	277	405.76	1.50			

SS = sum of squared deviation, df = degrees of freedom, P = level of probability of obtaining a more extreme component estimate by chance alone

Fig. 3 a,b Proportion of genotype membership q (y-axis) based on Bayesian cluster analysis. Each individual is represented by a single vertical line that is partitioned in different colors based on its genotype affinities to each cluster (K). *Grey lines* indicate the division between populations. Populations: 1 RPI, 2 RSI, 3 RUI, 4 RPE, 5 RSE, 6 RUE, 7 MAE, 8 SDE. **a** Plots of proportional group membership for the 139 trees for $K=2$. *Green* Cluster 2, *red* cluster 1. **b** Plots of proportional group membership for the 139 trees for $K=4$. *Yellow* Cluster 1, *blue* cluster 2, *green* cluster 3, *red* cluster 4



432 due to recurrent biparental inbreeding. Thus, the heterozy- 466
 433 gotes deficiency could lead to lower competition ability, possi- 467
 434 bly explaining why this species is rarely found outside the 468
 435 riparian zone. In *Acacia senegal* (L.) Willd., Omondi et al. 469
 436 (2010) found that the only population with positive F_{IS} was 470
 437 even-sized, suggesting the existence of one or few cohorts, 471
 438 possibly established together as a result of some disturbance 472
 439 event, and they argued that the area was prone to flooding,
 440 which could provide a mechanism for non-random seed dis-
 441 persal. Indeed, seeds dispersed downstream could help to ex-
 442 plain the departure from HWE in *I. ingoides*, though this hy-
 443 pothesis ought to be tested using a similar approach found in
 444 the study made with *Calycophyllum spruceanum* in the
 445 Peruvian Amazon (Russell et al. 1999).

446 The differences found in *I. ingoides* N_e , a slightly higher 473
 447 value in the southern (RUI) population compared to the lower 474
 448 value in the northern population (RSI), may reflect altitudinal 475
 449 and flood pulse intensity differences, but may also reflect the 476
 450 high inbreeding value in RSI (whether the latter reason is the 477
 451 cause or the consequence will be difficult to disentangle). 478
 452 Indeed, *I. ingoides* tend to have a higher effective population 479
 453 size in less flooded southern areas than in those with higher 480
 454 river seasonal fluctuation, despite the species' tolerance to 481
 455 flooding, possibly due to lower biparental inbreeding. In the 482
 456 case of *I. edulis*, the highest N_e value was found in the western 483
 457 MAE population, and the lowest in the eastern SDE popula- 484
 458 tion. The former population, situated closer to the Andean 485
 459 slopes, has a more favorable location than lesser elevated east- 486
 460 ern sites prone to flooding, but a lower value in the latter 487
 461 population is probably due to differences in the number of 488
 462 sampled individuals. 489

463 The number of private alleles in *I. ingoides* across loci was 490
 464 almost twice as high as in *I. edulis* for a similar number of 491
 465 sampled individuals (N), which may indicate the presence of 492

466 more intense gene flow in the latter species, in agreement with 467
 468 negligible inbreeding values. Within species, the number of 469
 469 private alleles seems to reflect N to a certain extent. Yet again, 470
 470 RUI has more than twice the P_a than RSI, for comparable N ; 471
 471 this might be the result of a higher inbreeding value due to 472
 472 putative higher parental inbreeding and consanguinity in the 473

4.2 Genetic structure and putative species introgression 473

474 The partition of genetic variance in our studied species (94 % 475
 475 of the variance is observed within populations and a low ge- 476
 476 netic structure is detected among populations, 2.6 %), is very 477
 477 common in tropical forest tree species with high outcrossing 478
 478 rates, and among populations with high levels of gene flow 479
 479 (Finkeldey and Hattermer 2007). In a previous study, similar 480
 480 results were found with individuals showing mixed ancestry 481
 481 and low differentiation among populations, reflecting strong 482
 482 gene flow of Kenyan populations of *Acacia senegal* (Omondi 483
 483 et al. 2010). Within the genus *Inga*, Cruz-Neto et al. (2014) 484
 484 uncovered a similar pattern in the *I. vera* species. 485

485 Weak population genetic structure may be a consequence 486
 486 of the pollination system and also outcrossing in the popula- 487
 487 tions under study. The majority of *Inga* species can be consid- 488
 488 ered hawkmoth-pollinated, despite occasional visitation by 489
 489 bats and hummingbirds during the day (Cruz-Neto et al. 490
 490 2014, and references therein). Hawkmoths, bats and hum- 491
 491 mingbirds can fly across large areas, ca. 15 km, during their 492
 492 foraging routes, carrying pollen grains to distant individuals 493
 493 (Koptur 1984). Pollen flow between distant individuals in 494
 494 different populations, due to pollinator behavior, contributed 495
 495 to high outcrossing rate and weak population substructure 496
 496 found in, e.g., *I. vera* natural populations (Cruz-Neto et al. 497
 497 2014). Additionally, natural seed dispersal is performed by

498 mammals and possibly birds that eat the sarcotesta and drop
499 seeds elsewhere (Koptur 1984). Indeed, in a broad study with
500 tropical tree species with abiotic seed dispersal (gravity dis-
501 persed and wind dispersed) showed, on average, much higher
502 differentiation among population ($G_{ST}=0.138$) than animal
503 dispersed species ($G_{ST}=0.050$) (Loveless 1992).

504 The weak population genetic structure together with the
505 lack of isolation-by-distance (data not shown) suggests that
506 species ecology, such as pollen and seed dispersal, and demo-
507 graphic history (impacted by flood) is a strong driver of popu-
508 lation structure in the studied *I. edulis* and *I. ingoides* popu-
509 lations, as in the case of *Acacia senegal* (Omondi et al. 2010).

510 The Bayesian approach identified two to four clusters of
511 genetically mixed individuals in both species, with higher ad-
512 mixture in those places where the two species were sympatric.
513 Thus, we could assume that the populations were not repro-
514 ductively isolated, and, probably, not well separated taxonom-
515 ically. Nevertheless, some authors claim that some species of
516 the *Inga* genus are cross-incompatible (e.g., Koptur 1984), but
517 the data they presented does not support that conclusion, since
518 the fruit set from hand cross-pollinated trees is clearly superior
519 to the control.

520 Petit et al. (2004) reviewed the hybridization between two
521 widespread and largely sympatric European oak species
522 [*Quercus petraea* (Matt.) Liebl. and *Q. robur* L.]. They indi-
523 cate that the parental taxa remain distinct, despite regular
524 levels of gene flow between them, and emphasize the low
525 differentiation found between both species. Yet, nuclear
526 markers show more or less important differences in allelic
527 frequencies between species. In another study, Moran et al.
528 (2012) indicate that hybridization is pervasive in many plant
529 taxa, with consequences for species taxonomy and local ad-
530 aptation. They also indicate that oaks (*Quercus* spp.) are a
531 paradigmatic case, since they are thought to hybridize readily
532 yet retain distinct traits, drawing into question the biological
533 species concept for such taxa, but the true extent of gene flow
534 is controversial. Such reasoning could be extended to the *Inga*
535 genus.

536 We should clarify that the morphological identification of
537 all the individuals of the current study were rechecked with the
538 key species identification clues according to morphology and
539 no ambiguities were found. Selection against hybrids could
540 hamper speciation in the *Inga* genus, but at least the past gene
541 flow should be present in the individuals/populations in con-
542 tact areas, which is the case of populations' species pairs: RUI/
543 RUE, RPI/RPE and RSI/RSE, except in the more isolated
544 *I. edulis* MAE and SDE populations. Introgression may be
545 facilitated when species co-occur in areas where no interme-
546 diate habitats exist between the species ranges (Moran et al.
547 2012, and references therein). In our studied species, it seems
548 that the opportunity for introgression should be close to the
549 riverside, since *I. edulis* is relatively flood tolerant, and
550 *I. ingoides* is probably more shade intolerant, or at least less

551 competitive in this very harsh and competitive environment.
552 Clearly the populations of *I. edulis* close to the rivers, where
553 the two species overlap, suffer higher introgression, which is
554 predictable due to the fact that the *I. ingoides* habitat is mainly
555 found there. Endara and Jaramillo (2011) developed a study
556 on the influence of microtopography on the distribution of
557 *Inga* species. These authors indicate that one of the main fac-
558 tors explaining the distribution of the *Inga* species is the soil
559 water content. Out the 16 more frequent *Inga* sympatric spe-
560 cies they analyzed, 9 had a significant preference for one type
561 of microtopography: "slope" and "ridge" (well drained) or
562 "valley" (poorly drained soils). This fact indicates the impor-
563 tance of microhabitat to the sympatric species coexistence in
564 the *Inga* species, and that edaphic specialization among spe-
565 cies may create more available niches. Similarly, also in oaks,
566 *Q. robur* appears to be more tolerant to soil anoxia than
567 *Q. petraea*, and in mixed stands, succession towards the latter
568 would be the rule, except under permanently humid condi-
569 tions (Petit et al. 2004). Indeed, dynamic speciation through
570 disruptive selection is also a hypothesis to be considered for
571 the *Inga* species we studied.

572 In summary, we hypothesize that the opportunity for hy-
573 bridization exists in the two *Inga* species studied here. Firstly,
574 the natural distribution of the two species overlaps, although
575 in our study the differences in habitat reflected the location of
576 the sampled individuals of both species, with *I. edulis* found
577 mainly in non-flooded terraces or temporarily flooded sites,
578 and with *I. ingoides* found predominantly in periodically
579 flooded areas (Pennington 1997). Secondly, in some studies
580 based on *I. ingoides* and *I. edulis*, flowering phenology obser-
581 vations indicate synchronous flowering, which is also com-
582 mon in other *Inga* species (Pennington 1997; Cruz-Neto et al.
583 2011; Koptur 1984). Thirdly, the putative introgression be-
584 tween both species is also supported by low differentiation
585 in microsatellite allele frequencies between the two co-
586 occurring species (3.6 %), suggesting at least past gene flow
587 (Moran et al. 2012). Lastly, both species are closely related
588 from the genotypic point of view, which is also supported by
589 the phylogenetic study done by Dexter et al. (2010), where
590 they are found in the same node with 99 % support. In addi-
591 tion, speciation in the *Inga* genus is recent, and it is considered
592 a classic example of a recent radiation with evidence for many
593 species arising within the last 10 million years, some of them
594 as recently as 2 million years ago (Richardson et al. 2001).
595 Actually, due to a rapid and recent burst of diversification
596 from the most recent common ancestor of the extant species,
597 they found a poorly resolved phylogeny.

598 4.3 Suitability of a hybridization program

599 The use of wild hybrids and the establishment of a breeding
600 program making use of the two species could bring important
601 economical income to the periodically flooded arable lands in

602 the Amazon basin with limited commercial use, with their
 603 potential incorporation into agroforestry systems. The ability
 604 of “pioneer” light-demanding species to grow in open spaces
 605 and inhospitable lands, could bring those species into the fore-
 606 front of our concerns, by making flooded sites usable by
 607 flood-resistant and performing hybrids. Natural hybrids occur
 608 and are common in the species contact areas, according to our
 609 results, which are also indicative that artificial hybrids are
 610 possible in practice. Thus, natural hybrids’ selection and/or
 611 artificial hybridization between *I. edulis* and *I. ingoides* could
 612 be applied to improve legume size and yield in the latter spe-
 613 cies, while maintaining tolerance to flooding. The success of
 614 the hybrids, and the development of these hybrids for com-
 615 mercial deployment, is dependent on two very important as-
 616 pects. Firstly, hybrid variation and therefore selection within
 617 hybrids is dependent on the diversity of the parent species
 618 involved. Secondly, successful hybrid utilization is dependent
 619 largely on the vegetative propagation ability of the species
 620 (Potts and Dungey 2004). Our study revealed a high genetic
 621 diversity in both species, but care should be taken in avoiding
 622 related trees, particularly in the case of *I. ingoides*. We advise
 623 that future studies on hybridization and introgression in both
 624 species should be done together with flooding tolerance abil-
 625 ity and legume and yield in hybrids testing, and wild hybrids
 626 could be procured by making use of today’s available ap-
 627 proaches, e.g., with tools developed specially for this genus
 628 by Dexter et al. (2010), which include both morphological and
 629 molecular approaches, and by Subashini et al. (2014) and
 630 Larcombe et al. (2014) in *Eucalyptus*. Also, vegetative prop-
 631 agation could be used to propagate hybrids, since *Inga* species
 632 can be propagated easily from semi-ripe branch cuttings, and,
 633 for example, *I. edulis* is considered an easy-to-root species
 634 (Pennington 1998).

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644 **Compliance with ethical standard**

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