

Project Update: October 2013

Whilst studying *Betula megrelica* in Georgia, I collected samples of woody shoot material from six trees at a variety of altitudes and locations on Mt Jvari and Mt Migaria. Having returned to the UK, I immediately sent these samples to Nian Wang at Queen Mary University of London. He has analysed them using Flow Cytometry and confirmed that all six samples are dodecaploid. That is, they all have a chromosome count of $2n = 168$. This is the right ploidy level for *Betula megrelica*, whereas the closely related *Betula medwedewii* has a ploidy level of decaploid ($2n = 140$). This is good news as it confirms that the wild populations I found in Georgia are *Betula megrelica*. The university is also now studying the DNA from these samples, with the hope of identifying microsatellites that will show us the origins of this species.