Plants must be able to adapt quickly to unfavorable changes in their environment to ensure survival. This adaptation is initiated by events at the molecular level that produce a rapid increase in the expression pattern of genes necessary to protect the plant from life-threatening environmental stresses. One such gene is Arabidopsis alcohol dehydrogenase, which increases expression with the onset of hypoxic conditions (Dolferus and Jacobs, 1991). The alcohol dehydrogenase gene contains a cis-acting promoter element, the G-box (5'-CCACGTGG-3') (Ferl and Laughner, 1989). When the G-box is mutated, alcohol dehydrogenase expression is reduced and in vitro protein binding is disrupted (McKendree and Ferl, 1992). The G-box also appears in the promoters of other stress-induced plant genes (Williams et al., 1992), including the light-regulated small subunit of Rubisco, Chl α/β-binding protein and chalcone synthase genes and the hormone-regulated early Met-labeled protein and the rub-16 family of genes.

A nuclear protein complex binds to the Arabidopsis G-box (McKendree et al., 1990), and genes encoding G-box binding factors have been cloned from Arabidopsis (Schindler et al., 1992). A monoclonal antibody (anti-GF14) generated against the partially purified G-box-binding protein complex was used to identify and isolate five cDNA clones of proteins associated with the G-box-binding complex (Lu et al., 1992). These five proteins, which do not directly bind to the G-box element, were designated GF14x, GF14w, GF14+, GF144, and GF14v (Lu et al., 1994a). These plant proteins were named GF14 because they exhibited greater than 60% identity with a highly conserved class of proteins known as 14-3-3 proteins that were found in yeast, plants, and animals. Mammalian brains also contain 14-3-3 homologs that function to activate Tyr and Trp hydroxylases.

**Table 1. Characteristics of three GRF genes from Arabidopsis**

| Organism: | Arabidopsis thaliana cv Columbia. |
| Location of Gene: | Nuclear genome. |
| Gene Products: | GF1 encodes the GF14x protein, GF2 encodes the GF14ω protein, and GF3 encodes the GF14ϕ protein. The GF14 proteins display 74% identity at the amino acid level. |
| Cloning and Sequencing Techniques: | The three genomic clones were isolated from an A. thaliana genomic library (Clontech) in λEMBL-3 Sp6/T7 by probing with the near full-length GF14x, GF14ω, and GF14ϕ cDNAs. Restriction fragments were subcloned into plasmid vectors and both strands were subjected to automated dideoxy sequencing. |
| Expression: | RNA transcripts of 1.2 kb were detected for all three genes in suspension cells. |
| Gene Copy Number: | Southern blot analysis of Arabidopsis genomic DNA indicated that GF14 was a small family of several genes. This was verified by western blot analysis, which detected five polypeptides using anti-GF14 antibody. |

**Features of Gene Structure:**

GF1-GF14x contains an open reading frame of 801 bp interrupted by three introns ranging from 76 to 799 bp. GF2-GF14ω contains an open reading frame of 777 bp interrupted by three introns ranging from 101 to 176 bp. GF3-GF14ϕ has an open reading frame of 765 bp and contains four introns ranging in size from 75 to 438 bp. The first intron of GF3-GF14ϕ occurs upstream of the start codon.

**Features of Gene Sequence:**

A total of 3250 bp composing the GF1-GF14x gene were sequenced, including 985 bp upstream and 495 bp downstream of the coding region. A total of 2250 bp composing the GF2-GF14ω gene were sequenced, including 583 bp upstream and 497 bp downstream of the coding region. A total of 2700 bp composing the GF3-GF14ϕ gene were sequenced, including 1247 bp upstream and 445 bp downstream of the coding region. No recognizable TATA box was observed in any of the three GF genes.

**Antibody:**

An anti-GF14 monoclonal antibody is available.
The cDNAs of three Arabidopsis GF14 proteins, GF14x, GF14w, and GF14\$, were used as probes to isolate genomic clones from an Arabidopsis genomic library. Three genes, GRF1-GF14x, GRF2-GF14w, and GRF3-GF14\$, were cloned and sequenced (Table I). To avoid confusion, the gene name was followed by the protein that it encodes. The GF14w protein encoded by the GRF2 gene was demonstrated to bind calcium (Lu et al., 1994b) and have potential protein kinase A and C phosphorylation sites (Lu et al., 1992). This would suggest that GF14 may be involved in a much more diverse role than being just a transcription factor, so the three genes were designated GRF.

Both the GRF1-GF14x and GRF2-GF14w genes contained four exons separated by three introns. The GRF3-GF14\$ gene contained four exons and three introns in the same location as the two other GRF genes, but it also contained an additional intron positioned between the transcriptional and the translational start site. Upstream of the coding region of the GRF1-GF14x, GRF2-GF14w, and GRF3-GF14\$ genes, 985, 583, and 1247 bp have been sequenced, respectively. There was no recognizable TATA box for any of the three GRF genes. There widespread distribution of the GRF-encoded GF14 homologs throughout the plant and animal kingdoms suggests an important evolutionarily conserved cellular function for these proteins.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Dr. Guihua Lu for providing the cDNA clones to serve as probes and Dr. Ernie Almira of the DNA Sequencing Core Laboratory of the Interdisciplinary Center for Biotechnology Research at the University of Florida for the automated sequencing of the GRF genes.

Received July 7, 1994; accepted July 15, 1994.

LITERATURE CITED