



(12) **DEMANDE DE BREVET CANADIEN
CANADIAN PATENT APPLICATION**

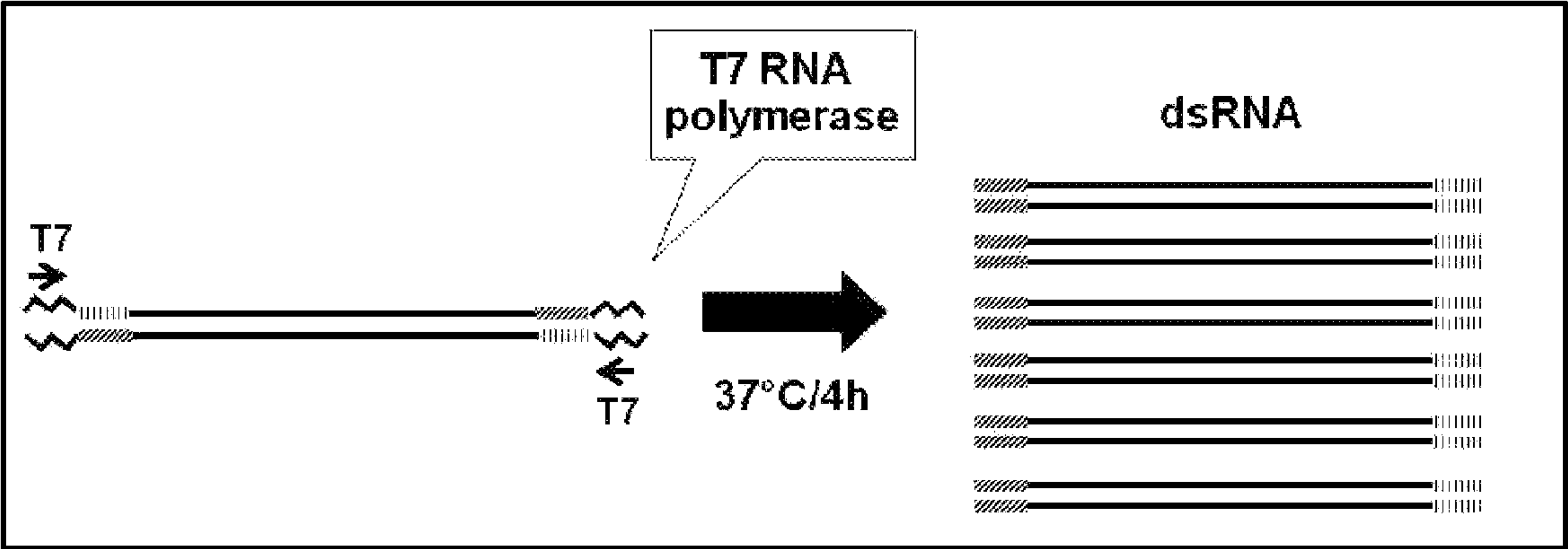
(13) **A1**

(86) Date de dépôt PCT/PCT Filing Date: 2016/10/28
(87) Date publication PCT/PCT Publication Date: 2017/05/11
(85) Entrée phase nationale/National Entry: 2018/04/24
(86) N° demande PCT/PCT Application No.: US 2016/059248
(87) N° publication PCT/PCT Publication No.: 2017/079036
(30) Priorité/Priority: 2015/11/02 (US62/249,463)

(51) Cl.Int./Int.Cl. *C12N 1/21* (2006.01),
A01N 63/00 (2006.01), *C12N 15/113* (2010.01)
(71) Demandeur/Applicant:
DOW AGROSCIENCES LCC, US
(72) Inventeurs/Inventors:
NARVA, KENNETH E., US;
FISHILEVICH, ELANE, US;
RANGASAMY, MURUGESAN, US;
FREY, MEGHAN L., US;
LO, WENDY, US;
WORDEN, SARAH E., US;
GANDRA, PREMCHAND, US
(74) Agent: SMART & BIGGAR

(54) Titre : MOLECULES D'ACIDE NUCLEIQUE RAB5 CONFERANT UNE RESISTANCE A DES COLEOPTERES ET A
DES HEMIPTERES NUISIBLES
(54) Title: RAB5 NUCLEIC ACID MOLECULES THAT CONFER RESISTANCE TO COLEOPTERAN AND HEMIPTERAN
PESTS

FIG. 1.
Generation of dsRNA from a single transcription template with a single pair of primers



(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**
This disclosed subject matter concerns nucleic acid molecules and methods of use thereof for control of coleopteran pests through RNA interference-mediated inhibition of target coding and transcribed non-coding sequences in coleopteran pests. The disclosure also concerns methods for making transgenic plants that express nucleic acid molecules useful for the control of coleopteran pests, and the plant cells and plants obtained thereby.

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau



(10) International Publication Number
WO 2017/079036 A1

(43) International Publication Date
11 May 2017 (11.05.2017)

(51) International Patent Classification:

C12N 1/21 (2006.01) *A01N 63/00* (2006.01)
C12N 15/113 (2010.01)

(21) International Application Number:

PCT/US2016/059248

(22) International Filing Date:

28 October 2016 (28.10.2016)

(25) Filing Language:

English

(26) Publication Language:

English

(30) Priority Data:

62/249,463 2 November 2015 (02.11.2015) US

(71) Applicant: **DOW AGROSCIENCES LLC** [US/US];
9330 Zionsville Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 (US).

(72) Inventors: **NARVA, Kenneth E.**; 9330 Zionsville Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 (US). **FISHILEVICH, Elane**; 9330 Zionsville Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 (US). **RAN-GASAMY, Murugesan**; 9330 Zionsville Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 (US). **FREY, Meghan L.**; 9330 Zionsville Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 (US). **LO, Wendy**; 9330 Zionsville Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 (US). **WORDEN, Sarah E.**; 9330 Zionsville Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 (US). **GANDRA, Premchand**; 9330 Zionsville Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 (US).

(74) Agent: **DALY, James**; Dow AgroSciences LLC, 9330 Zionsville Road, Indianapolis, Indiana 46268 (US).

(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM,

AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DJ, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IR, IS, JP, KE, KG, KN, KP, KR, KW, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SA, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, ST, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, KM, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Declarations under Rule 4.17:

— as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii))

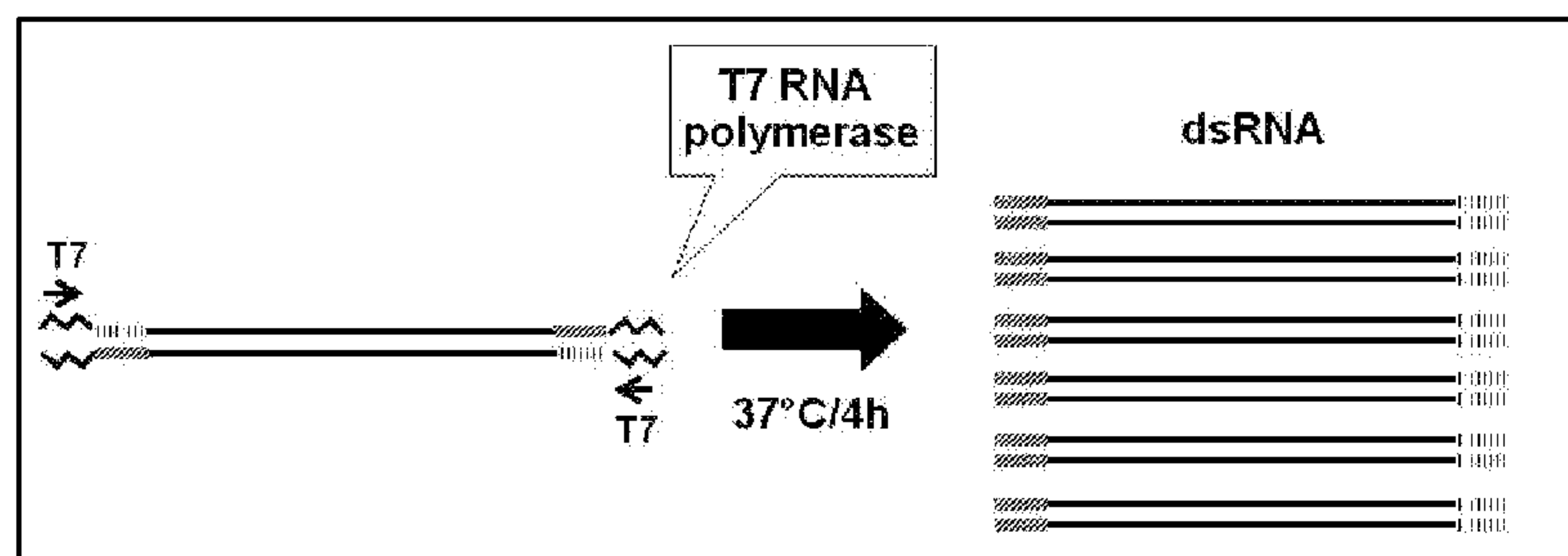
Published:

— with international search report (Art. 21(3))
— before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments (Rule 48.2(h))
— with sequence listing part of description (Rule 5.2(a))

(54) Title: *RAB5* NUCLEIC ACID MOLECULES THAT CONFER RESISTANCE TO COLEOPTERAN AND HEMIPTERAN PESTS

FIG. 1.

Generation of dsRNA from a single transcription template with a single pair of primers



(57) Abstract: This disclosed subject matter concerns nucleic acid molecules and methods of use thereof for control of coleopteran pests through RNA interference-mediated inhibition of target coding and transcribed non-coding sequences in coleopteran pests. The disclosure also concerns methods for making transgenic plants that express nucleic acid molecules useful for the control of coleopteran pests, and the plant cells and plants obtained thereby.

-1-

**RAB5 NUCLEIC ACID MOLECULES
THAT CONFER RESISTANCE TO COLEOPTERAN AND HEMIPTERAN PESTS**

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 62/249,463 filed on November 2, 2015, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by this reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0002] The present disclosure relates generally to genetic control of plant damage caused by coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests. In particular embodiments, the present disclosure relates to identification of target coding and non-coding sequences, and the use of recombinant DNA technologies for post-transcriptionally repressing or inhibiting expression of target coding and non-coding sequences in the cells of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest to provide a plant protective effect.

BACKGROUND

[0003] The western corn rootworm (WCR), *Diabrotica virgifera virgifera* LeConte, is one of the most devastating corn rootworm species in North America and is a particular concern in corn-growing areas of the Midwestern United States. The northern corn rootworm (NCR), *Diabrotica barberi* Smith and Lawrence, is a closely-related species that co-inhabits much of the same range as WCR. There are several other related subspecies of *Diabrotica* that are significant pests in the Americas: the Mexican corn rootworm (MCR), *D. virgifera zea* Krysan and Smith; the southern corn rootworm (SCR), *D. undecimpunctata howardi* Barber; *D. balteata* LeConte; *D. undecimpunctata tenella*; *D. speciosa* Germar; and *D. u. undecimpunctata* Mannerheim. The United States Department of Agriculture currently estimates that corn rootworms cause \$1 billion in lost revenue each year, including \$800 million in yield loss and \$200 million in treatment costs.

-2-

[0004] Both WCR and NCR eggs are deposited in the soil during the summer. The insects remain in the egg stage throughout the winter. The eggs are oblong, white, and less than 0.004 inches (0.010 cm) in length. The larvae hatch in late May or early June, with the precise timing of egg hatching varying from year to year due to temperature differences and location. The newly hatched larvae are white worms that are less than 0.125 inches (0.3175 cm) in length. Once hatched, the larvae begin to feed on corn roots. Corn rootworms go through three larval instars. After feeding for several weeks, the larvae molt into the pupal stage. They pupate in the soil, and then they emerge from the soil as adults in July and August. Adult rootworms are about 0.25 inches (0.635 cm) in length.

[0005] Corn rootworm larvae complete development on corn and several other species of grasses. Larvae reared on yellow foxtail emerge later and have a smaller head capsule size as adults than larvae reared on corn. Ellsbury *et al.* (2005) Environ. Entomol. 34:627-634. WCR adults feed on corn silk, pollen, and kernels on exposed ear tips. If WCR adults emerge before corn reproductive tissues are present, they may feed on leaf tissue, thereby slowing plant growth and occasionally killing the host plant. However, the adults will quickly shift to preferred silks and pollen when they become available. NCR adults also feed on reproductive tissues of the corn plant, but in contrast rarely feed on corn leaves.

[0006] Most of the rootworm damage in corn is caused by larval feeding. Newly hatched rootworms initially feed on fine corn root hairs and burrow into root tips. As the larvae grow larger, they feed on and burrow into primary roots. When corn rootworms are abundant, larval feeding often results in the pruning of roots all the way to the base of the corn stalk. Severe root injury interferes with the roots' ability to transport water and nutrients into the plant, reduces plant growth, and results in reduced grain production, thereby often drastically reducing overall yield. Severe root injury also often results in lodging of corn plants, which makes harvest more difficult and further decreases yield. Furthermore, feeding by adults on the corn reproductive tissues can result in pruning of silks at the ear tip. If this "silk clipping" is severe enough during pollen shed, pollination may be disrupted.

[0007] Control of corn rootworms may be attempted by crop rotation, chemical insecticides, biopesticides (*e.g.*, the spore-forming gram-positive bacterium, *Bacillus thuringiensis*), transgenic plants that express *Bt* toxins, or a combination thereof. Crop rotation suffers from the disadvantage of placing unwanted restrictions upon the use of farmland. Moreover, oviposition of

-3-

some rootworm species may occur in crop fields other than corn or extended diapause results in egg hatching over multiple years, thereby mitigating the effectiveness of crop rotation practiced with corn and soybean.

[0008] Chemical insecticides are the most heavily relied upon strategy for achieving corn rootworm control. Chemical insecticide use, though, is an imperfect corn rootworm control strategy; over \$1 billion may be lost in the United States each year due to corn rootworm when the costs of the chemical insecticides are added to the costs of the rootworm damage that may occur despite the use of the insecticides. High populations of larvae, heavy rains, and improper application of the insecticide(s) may all result in inadequate corn rootworm control. Furthermore, the continual use of insecticides may select for insecticide-resistant rootworm strains, as well as raise significant environmental concerns due to the toxicity of many of them to non-target species.

[0009] Stink bugs (Hemiptera; Pentatomidae) comprise another important agricultural pest complex. Worldwide over 50 closely related species of stink bugs are known to cause crop damage. McPherson & McPherson, R.M. (2000) *Stink bugs of economic importance in America north of Mexico* CRC Press. These insects are present in a large number of important crops including maize, soybean, fruit, vegetables, and cereals. The Neotropical brown stink bug, *Euschistus heros*, the red banded stink bug, *Piezodorus guildinii*, brown marmorated stink bug, *Halyomorpha halys*, and the Southern green stink bug, *Nezara viridula*, are of particular concern.

[0010] Stink bugs go through multiple nymph stages before reaching the adult stage. The time to develop from eggs to adults is about 30-40 days. Multiple generations occur in warm climates resulting in significant insect pressure.

[0011] Both nymphs and adults feed on sap from soft tissues into which they also inject digestive enzymes causing extra-oral tissue digestion and necrosis. Digested plant material and nutrients are then ingested. Depletion of water and nutrients from the plant vascular system results in plant tissue damage. Damage to developing grain and seeds is the most significant as yield and germination are significantly reduced.

[0012] Current management of stink bugs relies on insecticide treatment on an individual field basis. Therefore, alternative management strategies are urgently needed to minimize ongoing crop losses.

-4-

[0013] RNA interference (RNAi) is a process utilizing endogenous cellular pathways, whereby an interfering RNA (iRNA) molecule (*e.g.*, a dsRNA molecule) that is specific for all, or any portion of adequate size, of a target gene sequence results in the degradation of the mRNA encoded thereby. In recent years, RNAi has been used to perform gene "knockdown" in a number of species and experimental systems; for example, *Caenorhabditis elegans*, plants, insect embryos, and cells in tissue culture. *See, e.g.*, Fire *et al.* (1998) Nature 391:806-811; Martinez *et al.* (2002) Cell 110:563-574; McManus and Sharp (2002) Nature Rev. Genetics 3:737-747.

[0014] RNAi accomplishes degradation of mRNA through an endogenous pathway including the DICER protein complex. DICER cleaves long dsRNA molecules into short fragments of approximately 20 nucleotides, termed small interfering RNA (siRNA). The siRNA is unwound into two single-stranded RNAs: the passenger strand and the guide strand. The passenger strand is degraded, and the guide strand is incorporated into the RNA-induced silencing complex (RISC). Micro ribonucleic acid (miRNA) molecules may be similarly incorporated into RISC. Post-transcriptional gene silencing occurs when the guide strand binds specifically to a complementary sequence of an mRNA molecule and induces cleavage by Argonaute, the catalytic component of the RISC complex. This process is known to spread systemically throughout some eukaryotic organisms despite initially limited concentrations of siRNA and/or miRNA such as plants, nematodes, and some insects.

[0015] Only transcripts complementary to the siRNA and/or miRNA are cleaved and degraded, and thus the knock-down of mRNA expression is sequence-specific. In plants, several functional groups of DICER genes exist. The gene silencing effect of RNAi persists for days and, under experimental conditions, can lead to a decline in abundance of the targeted transcript of 90% or more, with consequent reduction in levels of the corresponding protein. In insects, there are at least two DICER genes, where DICER1 facilitates miRNA-directed degradation by Argonaute1. Lee *et al.* (2004) Cell 117 (1):69-81. DICER2 facilitates siRNA-directed degradation by Argonaute2.

[0016] U.S. Patent No. 7,612,194 and U.S. Patent Publication Nos. 2007/0050860, 2010/0192265, and 2011/0154545 disclose a library of 9112 expressed sequence tag (EST) sequences isolated from *D. v. virgifera* LeConte pupae. It is suggested in U.S. Patent No. 7,612,194 and U.S. Patent Publication No. 2007/0050860 to operably link to a promoter a nucleic acid molecule that is

-5-

complementary to one of several particular partial sequences of *D. v. virgifera* vacuolar-type H⁺-ATPase (V-ATPase) disclosed therein for the expression of anti-sense RNA in plant cells. U.S. Patent Publication No. 2010/0192265 suggests operably linking a promoter to a nucleic acid molecule that is complementary to a particular partial sequence of a *D. v. virgifera* gene of unknown and undisclosed function (the partial sequence is stated to be 58% identical to C56C10.3 gene product in *C. elegans*) for the expression of anti-sense RNA in plant cells. U.S. Patent Publication No. 2011/0154545 suggests operably linking a promoter to a nucleic acid molecule that is complementary to two particular partial sequences of *D. v. virgifera* coatomer beta subunit genes for the expression of anti-sense RNA in plant cells. Further, U.S. Patent No. 7,943,819 discloses a library of 906 expressed sequence tag (EST) sequences isolated from *D. v. virgifera* LeConte larvae, pupae, and dissected midguts, and suggests operably linking a promoter to a nucleic acid molecule that is complementary to a particular partial sequence of a *D. v. virgifera* charged multivesicular body protein 4b gene for the expression of double-stranded RNA in plant cells.

[0017] No further suggestion is provided in U.S. Patent No. 7,612,194, and U.S. Patent Publication Nos. 2007/0050860, 2010/0192265 and 2011/0154545 to use any particular sequence of the more than nine thousand sequences listed therein for RNA interference, other than the several particular partial sequences of V-ATPase and the particular partial sequences of genes of unknown function. Furthermore, none of U.S. Patent No. 7,612,194, and U.S. Patent Publication Nos. 2007/0050860 and 2010/0192265, and 2011/0154545 provides any guidance as to which other of the over nine thousand sequences provided would be lethal, or even otherwise useful, in species of corn rootworm when used as dsRNA or siRNA. U.S. Patent No. 7,943,819 provides no suggestion to use any particular sequence of the more than nine hundred sequences listed therein for RNA interference, other than the particular partial sequence of a charged multivesicular body protein 4b gene. Furthermore, U.S. Patent No. 7,943,819 provides no guidance as to which other of the over nine hundred sequences provided would be lethal, or even otherwise useful, in species of corn rootworm when used as dsRNA or siRNA. U.S. Patent Application Publication No. U.S. 2013/040173 and PCT Application Publication No. WO 2013/169923 describes the use of a sequence derived from a *Diabrotica virgifera* Snf7 gene for RNA interference in maize. (Also disclosed in Bolognesi *et al.* (2012) PLoS ONE 7(10): e47534. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0047534).

-6-

[0018] The overwhelming majority of sequences complementary to corn rootworm DNAs (such as the foregoing) are not lethal in species of corn rootworm when used as dsRNA or siRNA. For example, Baum *et al.* (2007, Nature Biotechnology 25:1322-1326), describe the effects of inhibiting several WCR gene targets by RNAi. These authors reported that the 8 of 26 target genes they tested were not able to provide experimentally significant coleopteran pest mortality at a very high iRNA (*e.g.*, dsRNA) concentration of more than 520 ng/cm². Accordingly, there exists a need to discover and identify novel iRNA (*e.g.*, dsRNA) sequences that effectively down regulate and inhibit genes in insect pests to prevent these plant pests from infesting and destroying crops.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0019] Disclosed herein are nucleic acid molecules (*e.g.*, target genes, DNAs, dsRNAs, siRNAs, shRNA, miRNAs, and hpRNAs), and methods of use thereof, for the control of coleopteran pests, including, for example, *D. v. virgifera* LeConte (western corn rootworm, "WCR"); *D. barberi* Smith and Lawrence (northern corn rootworm, "NCR"); *D. u. howardi* Barber (southern corn rootworm, "SCR"); *D. v. zea* Krysan and Smith (Mexican corn rootworm, "MCR"); *D. balteata* LeConte; *D. u. tenella*; *D. speciosa* Germar; and *D. u. undecimpunctata* Mannerheim and hemipteran pests, including, for example, *Euschistus heros* (Fabr.) (Neotropical Brown Stink Bug, "BSB"), *Nezara viridula* (L.) (Southern Green Stink Bug), *Piezodorus guildinii* (Westwood) (Red-banded Stink Bug), *Halyomorpha halys* (Stål) (Brown Marmorated Stink Bug), *Chinavia hilare* (Say) (Green Stink Bug), *Euschistus servus* (Say) (Brown Stink Bug), *Dichelops melacanthus* (Dallas), *Dichelops furcatus* (F.), *Edessa meditabunda* (F.), *Thyanta perditor* (F.) (Neotropical Red Shouldered Stink Bug), *Chinavia marginatum* (Palisot de Beauvois), *Horcias nobilellus* (Berg) (Cotton Bug), *Taedia stigma* (Berg), *Dysdercus peruvianus* (Guérin-Méneville), *Neomegalotomus parvus* (Westwood), *Leptoglossus zonatus* (Dallas), *Niesthrea sidae* (F.), *Lygus hesperus* (Knight) (Western Tarnished Plant Bug), and *Lygus lineolaris* (Palisot de Beauvois). In particular examples, exemplary nucleic acid molecules are disclosed that may be homologous to at least a portion of one or more native nucleic acid sequences in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest.

[0020] In these and further examples, the native nucleic acid sequence may be a target gene, the product of which may be, for example and without limitation: involved in a metabolic process or

-7-

involved in larval/ nymph development. In some examples, post-translational inhibition of the expression of a target gene by a nucleic acid molecule comprising a sequence homologous thereto may be lethal in coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests, or result in reduced growth and/or development. In specific examples, a gene belonging to the family of small Rab GTPases that control membrane trafficking within the cell and organelle identity (referred to herein as *rab5*) may be selected as a target gene for post-transcriptional silencing. In particular examples, a target gene useful for post-transcriptional inhibition is the novel gene referred to herein as *rab5*. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence of *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78); the complement of *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78); and fragments of any of the foregoing is therefore disclosed herein.

[0021] The transcribed ribonucleotide sequences are further included herein, isolated nucleic acid molecules comprising a nucleotide sequence of *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:98, SEQ ID NO:99, SEQ ID NO:100, SEQ ID NO:101, SEQ ID NO:102, SEQ ID NO:103, SEQ ID NO:104, and SEQ ID NO:105); the complement of *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:98, SEQ ID NO:99, SEQ ID NO:100, SEQ ID NO:101, SEQ ID NO:102, SEQ ID NO:103, SEQ ID NO:104, and SEQ ID NO:105); and fragments of any of the foregoing are disclosed. As such, the transcribed ribonucleotide sequences of *rab5*; SEQ ID NO:98, SEQ ID NO:99, SEQ ID NO:100, SEQ ID NO:101, SEQ ID NO:102, SEQ ID NO:103, SEQ ID NO:104, and SEQ ID NO:105 may be included in some embodiments as a sense RNA strand. Furthermore, the complementary sequences, antisense RNA strands, of these sequences are included herein and includes SEQ ID NO:106, SEQ ID NO:107, SEQ ID NO:108, SEQ ID NO:109, SEQ ID NO:110, SEQ ID NO:111, SEQ ID NO:112, and SEQ ID NO:113. These complementary sequences may be provided as individual sequences or bonded to form a double stranded RNA by binding to a sense RNA strand.

[0022] Also disclosed are nucleic acid molecules comprising a nucleotide sequence that encodes a polypeptide that is at least 85% identical to an amino acid sequence within a target gene product (for example, the product of a gene referred to as RAB5). For example, a nucleic acid molecule may comprise a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide that is at least 85% identical to an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:6, and SEQ ID NO:78 (RAB5 protein). In particular examples, a nucleic acid molecule comprises a nucleotide sequence

-8-

encoding a polypeptide that is at least 85% identical to an amino acid sequence within a product of RAB5. Further disclosed are nucleic acid molecules comprising a nucleotide sequence that is the reverse complement of a nucleotide sequence that encodes a polypeptide at least 85% identical to an amino acid sequence within a target gene product.

[0023] Also disclosed are cDNA sequences that may be used for the production of iRNA (*e.g.*, dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, miRNA, and hpRNA) molecules that are complementary to all or part of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest target gene, for example: *rab5*. In particular embodiments, dsRNAs, siRNAs, shRNA, miRNAs, and/or hpRNAs may be produced *in vitro*, or *in vivo* by a genetically-modified organism, such as a plant or bacterium. In particular examples, cDNA molecules are disclosed that may be used to produce iRNA molecules that are complementary to all or part of *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78).

[0024] In some embodiments, methods for controlling a population of a coleopteran pest comprises providing to the coleopteran pest an iRNA molecule that comprises all or part of a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of: SEQ ID NO:98; the complement of SEQ ID NO:98; SEQ ID NO:99; the complement of SEQ ID NO:99; SEQ ID NO:100; the complement of SEQ ID NO:100; SEQ ID NO:101; the complement of SEQ ID NO:101; SEQ ID NO:102; the complement of SEQ ID NO:102; SEQ ID NO:103; the complement of SEQ ID NO:103; SEQ ID NO:104; the complement of SEQ ID NO:104; SEQ ID NO:105; the complement of SEQ ID NO:105; a polynucleotide that hybridizes to a native *rab5* polynucleotide of a coleopteran pest (*e.g.*, WCR); the complement of a polynucleotide that hybridizes to a native *rab5* polynucleotide of a coleopteran pest.

[0025] Further disclosed are means for inhibiting expression of an essential gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, and means for protecting a plant from coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests. A means for inhibiting expression of an essential gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest is a single- or double-stranded RNA molecule consisting of at least one of SEQ ID NO:7 (*Diabrotica rab5* region 1, herein sometimes referred to as *rab5* reg1) or SEQ ID NO:8 (*Diabrotica rab5* region 2, herein sometimes referred to as *rab5* reg2), or SEQ ID NO:9 (*Diabrotica rab5* region 3, herein sometimes referred to as *rab5* reg3), or SEQ ID NO:10 (*Diabrotica rab5* version 1, herein sometimes referred to as *rab5* v1), or SEQ ID NO:80 (*Euschistus heros rab5* region 1, herein

sometimes referred to as BSB_*rab5* reg1), or SEQ ID NO:81 (*Euschistus heros rab5* version 1, herein sometimes referred to as BSB_*rab5* v1), or the complement thereof. Functional equivalents of means for inhibiting expression of an essential gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest include single- or double-stranded RNA molecules that are substantially homologous to all or part of a WCR or BSB gene comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78. A means for protecting a plant from coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests is a DNA molecule comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding a means for inhibiting expression of an essential gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest operably linked to a promoter, wherein the DNA molecule is capable of being integrated into the genome of a maize, soybean, and/or cotton plant.

[0026] Disclosed are methods for controlling a population of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, comprising providing to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest an iRNA (*e.g.*, dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, miRNA, and hpRNA) molecule that functions upon being taken up by the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest to inhibit a biological function within the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, wherein the iRNA molecule comprises all or part of a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of: SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:80, and SEQ ID NO:81; the complement of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:80, and SEQ ID NO:81; a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism (*e.g.*, WCR) or hemipteran organism (*e.g.* BSB) comprising all or part of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:80, and SEQ ID NO:81; the complement of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism or hemipteran organism comprising all or part of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:80, and SEQ ID NO:81; a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism or hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising all or part of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:80, and SEQ ID NO:81; and the complement of a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism or hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising all or part of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ

-10-

ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:80, and SEQ ID NO:81.

[0027] The subject disclosure provides a double stranded RNA (dsRNA) capable of down regulating the expression of a *rab5-1* gene of *D. v. virgifera* LeConte comprising a sense RNA strand and a complementary antisense RNA strand. In an aspect of this embodiment, the sense RNA strand includes a polynucleotide sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:95, SEQ ID NO:10, or any combination thereof including chimeric polynucleotides including any of the above described polynucleotide sequences (i.e., SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:95, SEQ ID NO:10). In another aspect of this embodiment, the antisense RNA strand includes a polynucleotide sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:90, SEQ ID NO:91, SEQ ID NO:92, SEQ ID NO:93, SEQ ID NO:94, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:96, or any combination thereof including chimeric polynucleotides including any of the above described polynucleotide sequences (i.e., SEQ ID NO:90, SEQ ID NO:91, SEQ ID NO:92, SEQ ID NO:93, SEQ ID NO:94, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:96). In a further aspect of this embodiment, the dsRNA comprises from 19 to 3710 nucleotides. In an embodiment, the *rab5* gene is selected from a *rab5-1*, *rab5-2*, or *rab5-3* gene. In additional embodiments, the dsRNA is expressed within a transgenic plant. Accordingly, the dsRNA causes post-transcriptional gene repression or inhibition of a *rab5* gene in *D. v. virgifera* LeConte when *D. v. virgifera* LeConte feeds on the transgenic plant. In a further embodiment, the dsRNA is formed from two separate complementary RNA sequences. In another embodiment, the dsRNA is formed from a single RNA sequence with internally complementary sequences.

[0028] The subject disclosure relates to a gene expression cassette capable of inhibiting or down regulating the expression of a *rab5* gene of *D. v. virgifera* LeConte, wherein the gene expression cassette comprises a promoter operably linked to a nucleic acid molecule encoding an RNA sequence that forms a double stranded RNA. In an aspect of this embodiment, the first nucleotide sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:95, SEQ ID NO:10 or a fragment thereof. In a further aspect of this embodiment, the second nucleotide sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to

-11-

a complementary sequence of SEQ ID NO:90, SEQ ID NO:91, SEQ ID NO:92, SEQ ID NO:93, SEQ ID NO:94, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:96 or a fragment thereof. In an additional aspect of this embodiment, the RNA transcribed from the gene expression cassette is comprised of a fragment spanning from 19 to 3,710 nucleotides. In an embodiment, the gene expression cassette is transformed into a plant. In another embodiment, the dsRNA expressed by the gene expression cassette causes post-transcriptional gene repression or inhibition of the *rab5* gene in *D. v. virgifera* LeConte when *D. v. virgifera* LeConte feeds on the plant. In other embodiments, the dsRNA is formed from two separate complementary RNA sequences. In a further embodiment, the dsRNA is formed from a single RNA sequence with internally complementary sequences. Accordingly, the single RNA sequence comprises a first, a second and a third RNA segment, wherein the first RNA segment comprises the polynucleotide, wherein the third RNA segment is linked to the first RNA segment by the second RNA segment, and wherein the third RNA segment is substantially the reverse complement of the first RNA segment, such that the first and the third RNA segments hybridize when transcribed into a ribonucleic acid to form the double-stranded RNA. In an additional embodiment, the *rab5* gene is selected from the group consisting of a *rab5-1*, *rab5-2*, or *rab5-3* gene.

[0029] The subject disclosure relates to a double stranded RNA (dsRNA) comprising a nucleic acid encoding a self-complementary RNA for silencing one or more target genes of a pest or pathogen of a plant, the self-complementary RNA comprising a double stranded region having a length of at least 19, 20, or 21 nucleotides, wherein one strand of said double stranded region is obtained from a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:95, or SEQ ID NO:10. In an embodiment the one or more target genes is a *rab5* gene. In an additional embodiment, the *rab5* gene is selected from the group consisting of a *rab5-1*, *rab5-2*, or *rab5-3* gene. In a further embodiment, the pest or pathogen of a plant is *D. v. virgifera* LeConte. In other embodiments, the dsRNA is expressed within a transgenic plant. Accordingly, the dsRNA causes post-transcriptional gene repression or inhibition of the *rab5* gene in *D. v. virgifera* LeConte when *D. v. virgifera* LeConte feeds on the transgenic plant. In an embodiment, the dsRNA comprises a first, a second and a third RNA segment, wherein the first RNA segment comprises the polynucleotide, wherein the third RNA segment is linked to the first RNA segment by the second RNA segment, and wherein the third RNA segment is substantially

-12-

the reverse complement of the first RNA segment, such that the first and the third RNA segments hybridize when transcribed into a ribonucleic acid to form the double-stranded RNA.

[0030] Also disclosed herein are methods wherein dsRNAs, siRNAs, shRNAs, miRNAs, and/or hpRNAs may be provided to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest in a diet-based assay, or in genetically-modified plant cells expressing the dsRNAs, siRNAs, shRNAs, miRNAs, and/or hpRNAs. In these and further examples, the dsRNAs, siRNAs, shRNAs, miRNAs, and/or hpRNAs may be ingested by coleopteran pest larvae and/or hemipteran pest nymph. Ingestion of dsRNAs, siRNA, shRNAs, miRNAs, and/or hpRNAs of the disclosure may then result in RNAi in the larvae, which in turn may result in silencing of a gene essential for viability of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest and leading ultimately to larval mortality. Thus, methods are disclosed wherein nucleic acid molecules comprising exemplary nucleic acid sequence(s) useful for control of coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests are provided to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In particular examples, the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest controlled by use of nucleic acid molecules of the disclosure may be WCR, NCR, SCR, MCR, *Euschistus heros*, *E. servus*, *Piezodorus guildinii*, *Halyomorpha halys*, *Nezara viridula*, *Chinavia hilare*, *C. marginatum*, *Dichelops melacanthus*, *D. furcatus*, *Edessa meditabunda*, *Thyanta perditor*, *Horcias nobilellus*, *Taedia stigmosa*, *Dysdercus peruvianus*, *Neomegalotomus parvus*, *Leptoglossus zonatus*, *Niesthrea sidae*, and/or *Lygus lineolaris*. The foregoing and other features will become more apparent from the following Detailed Description of several embodiments, which proceeds with reference to the accompanying **Figures 1 and 2**.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0031] **Figure 1** is a pictorial representation of a strategy for the generation of dsRNA from a single transcription template.

[0032] **Figure 2** is a pictorial representation of a strategy for the generation of dsRNA from two transcription templates.

SEQUENCE LISTING

-13-

[0033] The nucleic acid sequences listed in the accompanying sequence listing are shown using standard letter abbreviations for nucleotide bases, as defined in 37 C.F.R. § 1.822. Only one strand of each nucleic acid sequence is shown, but the complementary strand and reverse complementary strand are understood as included by any reference to the displayed strand. In the accompanying sequence listing:

[0034] SEQ ID NO:1 shows a DNA sequence comprising *rab5-1* from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

[0035] SEQ ID NO:2 shows an amino acid sequence of a RAB5-1 protein from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

[0036] SEQ ID NO:3 shows a DNA sequence comprising *rab5-2* from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

[0037] SEQ ID NO:4 shows an amino acid sequence of a RAB5-2 protein from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

[0038] SEQ ID NO:5 shows a DNA sequence comprising *rab5-3* from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

[0039] SEQ ID NO:6 shows an amino acid sequence of a RAB5-3 protein from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

[0040] SEQ ID NO:7 shows a DNA sequence of *rab5* reg1 (region 1) from *Diabrotica virgifera* that was used for *in vitro* dsRNA synthesis (T7 promoter sequences at 5' and 3' ends not shown).

[0041] SEQ ID NO:8 shows a DNA sequence of *rab5* reg2 (region 2) from *Diabrotica virgifera* that was used for *in vitro* dsRNA synthesis (T7 promoter sequences at 5' and 3' ends not shown).

[0042] SEQ ID NO:9 shows a DNA reverse complement sequence of *rab5* reg3 (region 3) from *Diabrotica virgifera* that was used for *in vitro* dsRNA synthesis (T7 promoter sequences at 5' and 3' ends not shown).

[0043] SEQ ID NO:10 shows a DNA sequence of *rab5* v1 (version 1) from *Diabrotica virgifera* that was used for *in vitro* dsRNA synthesis (T7 promoter sequences at 5' and 3' ends not shown).

-14-

[0044] SEQ ID NO:11 shows a DNA sequence of a T7 phage promoter.

[0045] SEQ ID NO:12 shows a DNA sequence of a YFP coding region segment that was used for *in vitro* dsRNA synthesis (T7 promoter sequences at 5' and 3' ends not shown).

[0046] SEQ ID NOs:13 to 20 show primers used to amplify portions of a *rab5* subunit sequence from *Diabrotica virgifera* comprising *rab5* reg1, *rab5* reg2, and *rab5* reg3.

[0047] SEQ ID NO:21 shows an IDT Custom Oligo probe *rab5* PRB Set1, labeled with FAM and double quenched with Zen and Iowa Black quenchers.

[0048] SEQ ID NO:22 shows a DNA sequence of Annexin region 1.

[0049] SEQ ID NO:23 shows a DNA sequence of Annexin region 2.

[0050] SEQ ID NO:24 shows a DNA sequence of Beta spectrin 2 region 1.

[0051] SEQ ID NO:25 shows a DNA sequence of Beta spectrin 2 region 2.

[0052] SEQ ID NO:26 shows a DNA sequence of mtRP-L4 region 1.

[0053] SEQ ID NO:27 shows a DNA sequence of mtRP-L4 region 2.

[0054] SEQ ID NOs:28 to 55 show primers used to amplify gene regions of YFP, Annexin, Beta spectrin 2, and mtRP-L4 for dsRNA synthesis.

[0055] SEQ ID NO:56 shows a maize DNA sequence encoding a TIP41-like protein.

[0056] SEQ ID NO:57 shows a DNA sequence of oligonucleotide T20NV.

[0057] SEQ ID NOs:58 to 62 show sequences of primers and probes used to measure maize transcript levels.

[0058] SEQ ID NO:63 shows a DNA sequence of a portion of a SpecR coding region used for binary vector backbone detection.

[0059] SEQ ID NO:64 shows a DNA sequence of a portion of an AAD1 coding region used for genomic copy number analysis.

[0060] SEQ ID NO:65 shows a DNA sequence of a maize invertase gene.

[0061] SEQ ID NOs:66 to 74 show sequences of primers and probes used for gene copy number analyses.

[0062] SEQ ID NOs:75 to 77 show sequences of primers and probes used for maize expression analysis.

-15-

[0063] SEQ ID NO:78 shows an exemplary DNA sequence of BSB *rab5* transcript from a Neotropical Brown Stink Bug (*Euschistus heros*).

[0064] SEQ ID NO:79 shows an amino acid sequence of a from *Euschistus heros* RAB5 protein.

[0065] SEQ ID NO:80 shows a DNA sequence of BSB_*rab5* reg1 (region 1) from *Euschistus heros* that was used for *in vitro* dsRNA synthesis (T7 promoter sequences at 5' and 3' ends not shown).

[0066] SEQ ID NO:81 shows a DNA sequence of BSB_*rab5* v1 (version 1) from *Euschistus heros* that was used for *in vitro* dsRNA synthesis (T7 promoter sequences at 5' and 3' ends not shown).

[0067] SEQ ID NO:82-85 show primers used to amplify portions of a from *Euschistus heros rab5* sequence comprising BSB_*rab5* reg1 and BSB_*rab5* v1.

[0068] SEQ ID NO:86 is the sense strand of YFP-targeted dsRNA: YFPv2

[0069] SEQ ID NO:87-88 show primers used to amplify portions of a YFP-targeted dsRNA: YFPv2

[0070] SEQ ID NO:89 presents YFP hairpin sequence (YFP v2-1). Upper case bases are YFP sense strand (i.e., base pairs 1-123), lower case bases in italics font comprise an RTM1 intron, non-italics (i.e., base pairs 124-287), lower case bases are YFP antisense strand (i.e., base pairs 288-410). The YFP sense strand and the complementary YFP antisense strand are completely identical to one another.

ATGTCATCTGGAGCACTTCTCTTTCATGGGAAGATTCCTTACGTTGTGGAGATG
GAAGGGAATGTTGATGGCCACACCTTTAGCATACGTGGGAAAGGCTACGGAG
ATGCCTCAGTGGGAAAGtccggcaacatgtttgacgtttgttgacgttgtaagtctgattttgactcttcttttctccgt
cacaatttctacttccaactaaaatgctaagaacatggttataactttttttataacttaatatgtgatttgaccagcagatagagctca
ttactttccactgaggcatctccgtagcctttccacgtatgctaaaggtgtggccatcaacattcccttccatctccacaacgtaagga
atcttcccatgaaagagaagtgtccagatgacat

[0071] SEQ ID NO:90 shows a complementary DNA sequence comprising *rab5-1* (this sequence is the reverse complement to SEQ ID NO:1).

-16-

[0072] SEQ ID NO:91 shows a complementary DNA sequence of *rab5-2* (this sequence is the reverse complement to SEQ ID NO:3).

[0073] SEQ ID NO:92 shows a complementary DNA sequence of *rab5-3* (this sequence is the reverse complement to SEQ ID NO:5).

[0074] SEQ ID NO:93 shows a complementary DNA sequence of *rab5* Reg1 (this sequence is the reverse complement to SEQ ID NO:7).

[0075] SEQ ID NO:94 shows a complementary DNA sequence of *rab5* Reg2 (this sequence is the reverse complement to SEQ ID NO:8).

[0076] SEQ ID NO:95 shows a DNA sequence of *rab5* Reg3 (SEQ ID NO:9 is complementary to SEQ ID NO:95).

[0077] SEQ ID NO:96 shows a complementary DNA sequence of *rab5* v1 (this sequence is the reverse complement to SEQ ID NO:10).

[0078] SEQ ID NO:97 shows a complementary DNA sequence of *rab5* from *Euschistus heros* (this sequence is the reverse complement to SEQ ID NO:78).

[0079] SEQ ID NO:98 shows an RNA sequence comprising *rab5-1* from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

[0080] SEQ ID NO:99 shows an RNA sequence comprising *rab5-2* from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

[0081] SEQ ID NO:100 shows an RNA sequence comprising *rab5-3* from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

[0082] SEQ ID NO:101 shows an RNA sequence of *rab5* reg1 (region 1) from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

[0083] SEQ ID NO:102 shows an RNA sequence of *rab5* reg2 (region 2) from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

[0084] SEQ ID NO:103 shows an RNA reverse complement sequence of *rab5* reg3 (region 3) from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

[0085] SEQ ID NO:104 shows an RNA sequence of *rab5* v1 (version 1) from *Diabrotica virgifera*.

-17-

[0086] SEQ ID NO:105 shows an exemplary RNA sequence of BSB *rab5* from a Neotropical Brown Stink Bug (*Euschistus heros*).

[0087] SEQ ID NO:106 shows a complementary RNA sequence comprising *rab5-1*.

[0088] SEQ ID NO:107 shows a complementary RNA sequence of *rab5-2*.

[0089] SEQ ID NO:108 shows a complementary RNA sequence of *rab5-3*.

[0090] SEQ ID NO:109 shows a complementary RNA sequence of *rab5* Reg1.

[0091] SEQ ID NO:110 shows a complementary RNA sequence of *rab5* Reg2.

[0092] SEQ ID NO:111 shows an RNA sequence of *rab5* Reg3.

[0093] SEQ ID NO:112 shows a complementary RNA sequence of *rab5* v1.

[0094] SEQ ID NO:113 shows a complementary RNA sequence of *rab5* from *Euschistus heros*.

[0095] SEQ ID NO:114 shows a complementary RNA sequence of BSB_*rab5* reg1 (region 1) from *Euschistus heros*.

[0096] SEQ ID NO:115 shows a complementary RNA sequence of BSB_*rab5* v1 (version 1) from *Euschistus heros*.

[0097] SEQ ID NO:116 shows an exemplary linker polynucleotide, which forms a “loop” when transcribed in an RNA transcript to form a hairpin structure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

I. Overview of several embodiments

[0098] We developed RNA interference (RNAi) as a tool for insect pest management, using one of the most likely target pest species for transgenic plants that express dsRNA; the western corn rootworm. Herein, we describe RNAi-mediated knockdown of *rab5* in the exemplary insect pests, western corn rootworm and neotropical brown stink bug, which is shown to have a lethal phenotype when, for example, iRNA molecules are delivered *via* ingested or injected *rab5* dsRNA. In embodiments herein, the ability to deliver *rab5* dsRNA by feeding to insects confers a RNAi effect that is very useful for insect (*e.g.*, coleopteran and hemipteran) pest management. By combining *rab5*-mediated RNAi with other useful RNAi targets (*e.g.*, *ROP* RNAi targets, as described in U.S. Patent

-18-

Application No. 14/577,811, *RNA polymerase II* RNAi targets, as described in U.S. Patent Application No. 62/133,214, *RNA polymerase III40* RNAi targets, as described in U.S. Patent Application No. 14/577,854, *RNA polymerase II215* RNAi targets, as described in U.S. Patent Application No. 62/133,202, *RNA polymerase II33* RNAi targets, as described in U.S. Patent Application No. 62/133,210), *ncm* RNAi targets, as described in U.S. Patent Application No. 62/095487, and *Dre4* RNAi targets, as described in U.S. Patent Application No. 14/705,807), the potential to affect multiple target sequences, for example, in larval rootworms, may increase opportunities to develop sustainable approaches to insect pest management involving RNAi technologies.

[0099] Disclosed herein are methods and compositions for genetic control of coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest infestations. Methods for identifying one or more gene(s) essential to the lifecycle of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest for use as a target gene for RNAi-mediated control of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest population are also provided. DNA plasmid vectors encoding one or more dsRNA molecules may be designed to suppress one or more target gene(s) essential for growth, survival, development, and/or reproduction. In some embodiments, methods are provided for post-transcriptional repression of expression or inhibition of a target gene *via* nucleic acid molecules that are complementary to a coding or non-coding sequence of the target gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In these and further embodiments, a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest may ingest one or more dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, miRNA, and/or hpRNA molecules transcribed from all or a portion of a nucleic acid molecule that is complementary to a coding or non-coding sequence of a target gene, thereby providing a plant-protective effect.

[00100] Thus, some embodiments involve sequence-specific inhibition of expression of target gene products, using dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, miRNA and/or hpRNA that is complementary to coding and/or non-coding sequences of the target gene(s) to achieve at least partial control of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Disclosed is a set of isolated and purified nucleic acid molecules comprising a nucleotide sequence, for example, as set forth in any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:80, SEQ ID NO:81 and fragments thereof. In some embodiments, a stabilized dsRNA molecule may be expressed from this sequence, fragments thereof, or a gene comprising one of these

-19-

sequences, for the post-transcriptional silencing or inhibition of a target gene. In certain embodiments, isolated and purified nucleic acid molecules comprise all or part of SEQ ID NO:1. In other embodiments, isolated and purified nucleic acid molecules comprise all or part of SEQ ID NO:3. In still further embodiments, isolated and purified nucleic acid molecules comprise all or part of SEQ ID NO:5. In other embodiments, isolated and purified nucleic acid molecules comprise all or part of SEQ ID NO:7. In yet other embodiments, isolated and purified nucleic acid molecules comprise all or part of SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:80, or SEQ ID NO:81.

[00101] Some embodiments involve a recombinant host cell (*e.g.*, a plant cell) having in its genome at least one recombinant DNA sequence encoding at least one iRNA (*e.g.*, dsRNA) molecule(s). In particular embodiments, the dsRNA molecule(s) may be produced when ingested by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest to post-transcriptionally silence or inhibit the expression of a target gene in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. The recombinant DNA sequence may comprise, for example, one or more of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:80, or SEQ ID NO:81; fragments of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:80, or SEQ ID NO:81; or a partial sequence of a gene comprising one or more of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:80, or SEQ ID NO:81; or complements thereof.

[00102] Particular embodiments involve a recombinant host cell having in its genome a recombinant DNA sequence encoding at least one iRNA (*e.g.*, dsRNA) molecule(s) comprising all or part of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and/or SEQ ID NO:78. When ingested by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, the iRNA molecule(s) may silence or inhibit the expression of a target gene comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and/or SEQ ID NO:78, in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, and thereby result in cessation of growth, development, reproduction, and/or feeding in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest.

[00103] In some embodiments, a recombinant host cell having in its genome at least one recombinant DNA sequence encoding at least one dsRNA molecule may be a transformed plant cell.

-20-

Some embodiments involve transgenic plants comprising such a transformed plant cell. In addition to such transgenic plants, progeny plants of any transgenic plant generation, transgenic seeds, and transgenic plant products, are all provided, each of which comprises recombinant DNA sequence(s). In particular embodiments, a dsRNA molecule of the disclosure may be expressed in a transgenic plant cell. Therefore, in these and other embodiments, a dsRNA molecule of the disclosure may be isolated from a transgenic plant cell. In particular embodiments, the transgenic plant is a plant selected from the group comprising corn (*Zea mays*), soybean (*Glycine max*), and plants of the family *Poaceae*.

[00104] Some embodiments involve a method for modulating the expression of a target gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest cell. In these and other embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule may be provided, wherein the nucleic acid molecule comprises a nucleotide sequence encoding a dsRNA molecule. In particular embodiments, a nucleotide sequence encoding a dsRNA molecule may be operatively linked to a promoter, and may also be operatively linked to a transcription termination sequence. In particular embodiments, a method for modulating the expression of a target gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest cell may comprise: (a) transforming a plant cell with a vector comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a dsRNA molecule; (b) culturing the transformed plant cell under conditions sufficient to allow for development of a plant cell culture comprising a plurality of transformed plant cells; (c) selecting for a transformed plant cell that has integrated the vector into its genome; and (d) determining that the selected transformed plant cell comprises the dsRNA molecule encoded by the nucleotide sequence of the vector. A plant may be regenerated from a plant cell that has the vector integrated in its genome and comprises the dsRNA molecule encoded by the nucleotide sequence of the vector.

[00105] Thus, also disclosed is a transgenic plant comprising an integrated DNA from a vector having a nucleotide sequence encoding a dsRNA molecule integrated in its genome, wherein the transgenic plant comprises the dsRNA molecule encoded by the nucleotide sequence of the vector. In particular embodiments, expression of a dsRNA molecule in the plant is sufficient to modulate the expression of a target gene in a cell of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest that contacts the transformed plant or plant cell, for example, by feeding on the transformed plant, a part of the plant (*e.g.*, root) or plant cell. Transgenic plants disclosed herein may display resistance and/or enhanced

-21-

tolerance to coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest infestations. Particular transgenic plants may display resistance and/or enhanced tolerance to one or more coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests selected from the group consisting of: WCR, NCR, SCR, MCR, *D. balteata* LeConte, *D. u. tenella*, *D. u. undecimpunctata* Mannerheim, *Euschistus heros*, *Piezodorus guildinii*, *Halyomorpha halys*, *Nezara viridula*, *Acrosternum hilare*, and *Euschistus servus*.

[00106] Also disclosed herein are methods for delivery of control agents, such as an iRNA (e.g., dsRNA) molecule, to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Such control agents may cause, directly or indirectly result in cessation of growth, development, reproduction, and/or feeding in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. For example, the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest may experience impairment in the ability of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest to feed, grow or otherwise cause damage in a host as a consequence of being exposed to the control agents. In some embodiments, a method is provided comprising delivery of a stabilized dsRNA molecule to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest to suppress at least one target gene in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, thereby reducing or eliminating plant damage by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In some embodiments, a method of inhibiting expression of a target gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest may result in the cessation of growth, development, reproduction, and/or feeding in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In some embodiments, the method may eventually result in death of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest.

[00107] In some embodiments, compositions (e.g., a topical composition) are provided that comprise an iRNA (e.g., dsRNA) molecule of the disclosure for use in plants, animals, and/or the environment of a plant or animal to achieve the elimination or reduction of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest infestation. In particular embodiments, the composition may be a nutritional composition or food source to be fed to the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Some embodiments comprise making the nutritional composition or food source available to the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Ingestion of a composition comprising iRNA molecules may result in the uptake of the molecules by one or more cells of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, which may in turn result in the inhibition of expression of at least one target gene in cell(s) of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Ingestion of or damage to a plant or plant cell by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest may be limited or eliminated in or on any host tissue or environment in which the coleopteran and/or

-22-

hemipteran pest is present by providing one or more compositions comprising an iRNA molecule of the disclosure in the host of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest.

[00108] RNAi baits are formed when the dsRNA is mixed with food or an attractant or both. When the pests eat the bait, they also consume the dsRNA. Baits may take the form of granules, gels, flowable powders, liquids, or solids. In another embodiment, *rab5* may be incorporated into a bait formulation such as that described in U.S. Patent No. 8,530,440 which is hereby incorporated by reference. Generally, with baits, the baits are placed in or around the environment of the insect pest, for example, WCR can come into contact with, and/or be attracted to, the bait.

[00109] The compositions and methods disclosed herein may be used together in combinations with other methods and compositions for controlling damage by coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests. For example, an iRNA molecule as described herein for protecting plants from coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests may be used in a method comprising the additional use of one or more chemical agents effective against a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, biopesticides effective against a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, crop rotation, or recombinant genetic techniques that exhibit features different from the features of the RNAi-mediated methods and RNAi compositions of the disclosure (*e.g.*, recombinant production of proteins in plants that are harmful to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest (*e.g.*, Bt toxins)).

[00110] *II. Abbreviations*

[00111] dsRNA double-stranded ribonucleic acid

[00112] GI growth inhibition

[00113] NCBI National Center for Biotechnology Information

[00114] gDNA genomic Deoxyribonucleic Acid

[00115] iRNA inhibitory ribonucleic acid

[00116] ORF open reading frame

[00117] RNAi ribonucleic acid interference

[00118] miRNA micro inhibitory ribonucleic acid

[00119] shRNA small hairpin ribonucleic acid

[00120] siRNA small inhibitory ribonucleic acid

-23-

- [00121] hpRNA hairpin ribonucleic acid
- [00122] UTR untranslated region
- [00123] WCR western corn rootworm (*Diabrotica virgifera virgifera* LeConte)
- [00124] NCR northern corn rootworm (*Diabrotica barberi* Smith and Lawrence)
- [00125] MCR Mexican corn rootworm (*Diabrotica virgifera zea* Krysan and Smith)
- [00126] PCR Polymerase chain reaction
- [00127] RISC RNA-induced Silencing Complex
- [00128] SCR southern corn rootworm (*Diabrotica undecimpunctata howardi* Barber)
- [00129] BSB Neotropical brown stink bug (*Euschistus heros* Fabricius)
- [00130] YFP yellow fluorescent protein
- [00131] SEM standard error of the mean

[00132] **III. Terms**

[00133] In the description and tables which follow, a number of terms are used. In order to provide a clear and consistent understanding of the specification and claims, including the scope to be given such terms, the following definitions are provided:

[00134] Coleopteran pest: As used herein, the term "coleopteran pest" refers to insects of the genus *Diabrotica*, which feed upon corn and other true grasses. In particular examples, a coleopteran pest is selected from the list comprising *D. v. virgifera* LeConte (WCR); *D. barberi* Smith and Lawrence (NCR); *D. u. howardi* (SCR); *D. v. zea* (MCR); *D. balteata* LeConte; *D. u. tenella*; and *D. u. undecimpunctata* Mannerheim.

[00135] Hemipteran pest: As used herein, the term "hemipteran pest" refers to insects of the family Pentatomidae, which feed on wide range of host plants and have piercing and sucking mouth parts. In particular examples, a hemipteran pest is selected from the list comprising, *Euschistus heros* (Fabr.) (Neotropical brown stink bug), *Nezara viridula* (L.) (Southern Green Stink Bug), *Piezodorus guildinii* (Westwood) (Red-banded Stink Bug), *Halyomorpha halys* (Brown

-24-

Marmorated Stink Bug), *Acrosternum hilare* (Green Stink Bug), and *Euschistus servus* (Brown Stink Bug).

[00136] Contact (with an organism): As used herein, the term "contact with" or "uptake by" an organism (*e.g.*, a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest), with regard to a nucleic acid molecule, includes internalization of the nucleic acid molecule into the organism, for example and without limitation: ingestion of the molecule by the organism (*e.g.*, by feeding); contacting the organism with a composition comprising the nucleic acid molecule; and soaking of organisms with a solution comprising the nucleic acid molecule.

[00137] Contig: As used herein the term "contig" refers to a DNA sequence that is reconstructed from a set of overlapping DNA segments derived from a single genetic source.

[00138] Corn plant: As used herein, the term "corn plant" refers to a plant of the species, *Zea mays* (maize).

[00139] Encoding a dsRNA: As used herein, the term "encoding a dsRNA" includes a gene whose RNA transcription product is capable of forming an intramolecular dsRNA structure (*e.g.*, a hairpin) or intermolecular dsRNA structure (*e.g.*, by hybridizing to a target RNA molecule).

[00140] Expression: As used herein, "expression" of a coding sequence (for example, a gene or a transgene) refers to the process by which the coded information of a nucleic acid transcriptional unit (including, *e.g.*, genomic DNA or cDNA) is converted into an operational, non-operational, or structural part of a cell, often including the synthesis of a protein. Gene expression can be influenced by external signals; for example, exposure of a cell, tissue, or organism to an agent that increases or decreases gene expression. Expression of a gene can also be regulated anywhere in the pathway from DNA to RNA to protein. Regulation of gene expression occurs, for example, through controls acting on transcription, translation, RNA transport and processing, degradation of intermediary molecules such as mRNA, or through activation, inactivation, compartmentalization, or degradation of specific protein molecules after they have been made, or by combinations thereof. Gene expression can be measured at the RNA level or the protein level by any method known in the art, including, without limitation, northern (RNA) blot, RT-PCR, western (immuno-) blot, or *in vitro*, *in situ*, or *in vivo* protein activity assay(s).

-25-

[00141] Genetic material: As used herein, the term "genetic material" includes all genes and nucleic acid molecules, such as DNA and RNA.

[00142] Inhibition: As used herein, the term "inhibition", when used to describe an effect on a coding sequence (for example, a gene), refers to a measurable decrease in the cellular level of mRNA transcribed from the coding sequence and/or peptide, polypeptide, or protein product of the coding sequence. In some examples, expression of a coding sequence may be inhibited such that expression is approximately eliminated. "Specific inhibition" refers to the inhibition of a target coding sequence without consequently affecting expression of other coding sequences (*e.g.*, genes) in the cell wherein the specific inhibition is being accomplished.

[00143] Isolated: An "isolated" biological component (such as a nucleic acid or protein) has been substantially separated, produced apart from, or purified away from other biological components in the cell of the organism in which the component naturally occurs (*i.e.*, other chromosomal and extra-chromosomal DNA and RNA, and proteins). Nucleic acid molecules and proteins that have been "isolated" include nucleic acid molecules and proteins purified by standard purification methods. The term also embraces nucleic acids and proteins prepared by recombinant expression in a host cell, as well as chemically-synthesized nucleic acid molecules, proteins, and peptides.

[00144] Nucleic acid molecule: As used herein, the term "nucleic acid molecule" may refer to a polymeric form of nucleotides, which may include both sense and anti-sense strands of RNA, cDNA, genomic DNA, and synthetic forms and mixed polymers of the above. A nucleotide may refer to a ribonucleotide, deoxyribonucleotide, or a modified form of either type of nucleotide. A "nucleic acid molecule" as used herein is synonymous with "nucleic acid" and "polynucleotide." A nucleic acid molecule is usually at least 10 bases in length, unless otherwise specified. By convention, the nucleotide sequence of a nucleic acid molecule is read from the 5' to the 3' end of the molecule. The "complement" of a nucleotide sequence refers to the sequence, from 5' to 3', of the nucleobases which form base pairs with the nucleobases of the nucleotide sequence (*i.e.*, A-T/U, and G-C). The "reverse complement" of a nucleic acid sequence refers to the sequence, from 3' to 5', of the nucleobases which form base pairs with the nucleobases of the nucleotide sequence.

[00145] Some embodiments include nucleic acids comprising a template DNA that is transcribed into an RNA molecule that is the complement of an mRNA molecule. In these

-26-

embodiments, the complement of the nucleic acid transcribed into the mRNA molecule is present in the 5' to 3' orientation, such that RNA polymerase (which transcribes DNA in the 5' to 3' direction) will transcribe a nucleic acid from the complement that can hybridize to the mRNA molecule. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, or it is clear to be otherwise from the context, the term "complement" therefore refers to a polynucleotide having nucleobases, from 5' to 3', that may form base pairs with the nucleobases of a reference nucleic acid. Similarly, unless it is explicitly stated to be otherwise (or it is clear to be otherwise from the context), the "reverse complement" of a nucleic acid refers to the complement in reverse orientation. The foregoing is demonstrated in the following illustration:

ATGATGATG	polynucleotide
TACTACTAC	"complement" of the polynucleotide
CATCATCAT	"reverse complement" of the polynucleotide

Some embodiments of the disclosure may include hairpin RNA-forming RNAi molecules. In these RNAi molecules, both the complement of a nucleic acid to be targeted by RNA interference and the reverse complement may be found in the same molecule, such that the single-stranded RNA molecule may "fold over" and hybridize to itself over region comprising the complementary and reverse complementary polynucleotides.

[00146] "Nucleic acid molecules" include single- and double-stranded forms of DNA; single-stranded forms of RNA; and double-stranded forms of RNA (dsRNA). The term "nucleotide sequence" or "nucleic acid sequence" refers to both the sense and antisense strands of a nucleic acid as either individual single strands or in the duplex. The term "ribonucleic acid" (RNA) is inclusive of iRNA (inhibitory RNA), dsRNA (double stranded RNA), siRNA (small interfering RNA), mRNA (messenger RNA), shRNA (small hairpin RNA), miRNA (micro-RNA), hpRNA (hairpin RNA), tRNA (transfer RNA, whether charged or discharged with a corresponding acylated amino acid), and cRNA (complementary RNA). The term "deoxyribonucleic acid" (DNA) is inclusive of cDNA, genomic DNA, and DNA-RNA hybrids. The terms "polynucleotide" and "nucleic acid" and "fragments" thereof, or more generally "segment", will be understood by those in the art as a functional term that includes both genomic sequences, ribosomal RNA sequences, transfer RNA

-27-

sequences, messenger RNA sequences, operon sequences, and smaller engineered nucleotide sequences that encode or may be adapted to encode, peptides, polypeptides, or proteins.

[00147] Oligonucleotide: An oligonucleotide is a short nucleic acid polymer. Oligonucleotides may be formed by cleavage of longer nucleic acid segments, or by polymerizing individual nucleotide precursors. Automated synthesizers allow the synthesis of oligonucleotides up to several hundred bases in length. Because oligonucleotides may bind to a complementary nucleotide sequence, they may be used as probes for detecting DNA or RNA. Oligonucleotides composed of DNA (oligodeoxyribonucleotides) may be used in PCR, a technique for the amplification of DNA and RNA (reverse transcribed into a cDNA) sequences. In PCR, the oligonucleotide is typically referred to as a "primer", which allows a DNA polymerase to extend the oligonucleotide and replicate the complementary strand.

[00148] A nucleic acid molecule may include either or both naturally occurring and modified nucleotides linked together by naturally occurring and/or non-naturally occurring nucleotide linkages. Nucleic acid molecules may be modified chemically or biochemically, or may contain non-natural or derivatized nucleotide bases, as will be readily appreciated by those of skill in the art. Such modifications include, for example, labels, methylation, substitution of one or more of the naturally occurring nucleotides with an analog, internucleotide modifications (*e.g.*, uncharged linkages: for example, methyl phosphonates, phosphotriesters, phosphoramidates, carbamates, *etc.*; charged linkages: for example, phosphorothioates, phosphorodithioates, *etc.*; pendent moieties: for example, peptides; intercalators: for example, acridine, psoralen, *etc.*; chelators; alkylators; and modified linkages: for example, alpha anomeric nucleic acids, *etc.*). The term "nucleic acid molecule" also includes any topological conformation, including single-stranded, double-stranded, partially duplexed, triplexed, hairpinned, circular, and padlocked conformations.

[00149] As used herein with respect to DNA, the term "coding sequence", "structural nucleotide sequence", or "structural nucleic acid molecule" refers to a nucleotide sequence that is ultimately translated into a polypeptide, *via* transcription and mRNA, when placed under the control of appropriate regulatory sequences. With respect to RNA, the term "coding polynucleotide" refers to a polynucleotide that is translated into a peptide, polypeptide, or protein. The boundaries of a coding sequence are determined by a translation start codon at the 5'-terminus and a translation stop

-28-

codon at the 3'-terminus. Coding polynucleotides include, but are not limited to: genomic DNA; cDNA; EST; and recombinant nucleotide sequences.

[00150] As used herein, "transcribed non-coding polynucleotide" refers to segments of mRNA molecules such as 5'UTR, 3'UTR and intron segments that are not translated into a peptide, polypeptide, or protein. Further, "transcribed non-coding polynucleotide" refers to a nucleic acid that is transcribed into an RNA that functions in the cell, for example, structural RNAs (*e.g.*, ribosomal RNA (rRNA) as exemplified by 5S rRNA, 5.8S rRNA, 16S rRNA, 18S rRNA, 23S rRNA, and 28S rRNA, and the like); transfer RNA (tRNA); and snRNAs such as U4, U5, U6, and the like. Transcribed non-coding polynucleotides also include, for example and without limitation, small RNAs (sRNA), which term is often used to describe small bacterial non-coding RNAs; small nucleolar RNAs (snoRNA); microRNAs; small interfering RNAs (siRNA); Piwi-interacting RNAs (piRNA); and long non-coding RNAs. Further still, "transcribed non-coding polynucleotide" refers to a polynucleotide that may natively exist as an intragenic "linker" in a nucleic acid and which is transcribed into an RNA molecule.

[00151] Genome: As used herein, the term "genome" refers to chromosomal DNA found within the nucleus of a cell, and also refers to organelle DNA found within subcellular components of the cell. In some embodiments of the disclosure, a DNA molecule may be introduced into a plant cell such that the DNA molecule is integrated into the genome of the plant cell. In these and further embodiments, the DNA molecule may be either integrated into the nuclear DNA of the plant cell, or integrated into the DNA of the chloroplast or mitochondrion of the plant cell. The term "genome" as it applies to bacteria refers to both the chromosome and plasmids within the bacterial cell. In some embodiments of the disclosure, a DNA molecule may be introduced into a bacterium such that the DNA molecule is integrated into the genome of the bacterium. In these and further embodiments, the DNA molecule may be either chromosomally-integrated or located as or in a stable plasmid.

[00152] Sequence identity: The term "sequence identity" or "identity", as used herein in the context of two nucleic acid or polypeptide sequences, refers to the residues in the two sequences that are the same when aligned for maximum correspondence over a specified comparison window.

[00153] As used herein, the term "percentage of sequence identity" may refer to the value determined by comparing two optimally aligned sequences (*e.g.*, nucleic acid sequences or

-29-

polypeptide sequences) over a comparison window, wherein the portion of the sequence in the comparison window may comprise additions or deletions (*i.e.*, gaps) as compared to the reference sequence (which does not comprise additions or deletions) for optimal alignment of the two sequences. The percentage is calculated by determining the number of positions at which the identical nucleotide or amino acid residue occurs in both sequences to yield the number of matched positions, dividing the number of matched positions by the total number of positions in the comparison window, and multiplying the result by 100 to yield the percentage of sequence identity. A sequence that is identical at every position in comparison to a reference sequence is said to be 100% identical to the reference sequence, and vice-versa.

[00154] Methods for aligning sequences for comparison are well-known in the art. Various programs and alignment algorithms are described in, for example: Smith and Waterman (1981) *Adv. Appl. Math.* 2:482; Needleman and Wunsch (1970) *J. Mol. Biol.* 48:443; Pearson and Lipman (1988) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* 85:2444; Higgins and Sharp (1988) *Gene* 73:237-244; Higgins and Sharp (1989) *CABIOS* 5:151-153; Corpet *et al.* (1988) *Nucleic Acids Res.* 16:10881-10890; Huang *et al.* (1992) *Comp. Appl. Biosci.* 8:155-165; Pearson *et al.* (1994) *Methods Mol. Biol.* 24:307-331; Tatiana *et al.* (1999) *FEMS Microbiol. Lett.* 174:247-250. A detailed consideration of sequence alignment methods and homology calculations can be found in, *e.g.*, Altschul *et al.* (1990) *J. Mol. Biol.* 215:403-410.

[00155] The National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) Basic Local Alignment Search Tool (BLAST™; Altschul *et al.* (1990)) is available from several sources, including the National Center for Biotechnology Information (Bethesda, MD), and on the internet, for use in connection with several sequence analysis programs. A description of how to determine sequence identity using this program is available on the internet under the "help" section for BLAST™. For comparisons of nucleic acid sequences, the "Blast 2 sequences" function of the BLAST™ (Blastn) program may be employed using the default BLOSUM62 matrix set to default parameters. Nucleic acid sequences with even greater similarity to the reference sequences will show increasing percentage identity when assessed by this method.

[00156] Specifically hybridizable/Specifically complementary: As used herein, the terms "Specifically hybridizable" and "Specifically complementary" are terms that indicate a sufficient

-30-

degree of complementarity such that stable and specific binding occurs between the nucleic acid molecule and a target nucleic acid molecule. Hybridization between two nucleic acid molecules involves the formation of an anti-parallel alignment between the nucleic acid sequences of the two nucleic acid molecules. The two molecules are then able to form hydrogen bonds with corresponding bases on the opposite strand to form a duplex molecule that, if it is sufficiently stable, is detectable using methods well known in the art. A nucleic acid molecule need not be 100% complementary to its target sequence to be specifically hybridizable. However, the amount of sequence complementarity that must exist for hybridization to be specific is a function of the hybridization conditions used.

[00157] Hybridization conditions resulting in particular degrees of stringency will vary depending upon the nature of the hybridization method of choice and the composition and length of the hybridizing nucleic acid sequences. Generally, the temperature of hybridization and the ionic strength (especially the Na^+ and/or Mg^{++} concentration) of the hybridization will determine the stringency of hybridization. The ionic strength of the wash buffer and the wash temperature also influence stringency. Calculations regarding hybridization conditions required for attaining particular degrees of stringency are known to those of ordinary skill in the art, and are discussed, for example, in Sambrook *et al.* (ed.) Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual, 2nd ed., vol. 1-3, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, Cold Spring Harbor, NY, 1989, chapters 9 and 11, and updates; and Hames and Higgins (eds.) Nucleic Acid Hybridization, IRL Press, Oxford, 1985. Further detailed instruction and guidance with regard to the hybridization of nucleic acids may be found, for example, in Tijssen, "Overview of principles of hybridization and the strategy of nucleic acid probe assays," in Laboratory Techniques in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology- Hybridization with Nucleic Acid Probes, Part I, Chapter 2, Elsevier, NY, 1993; and Ausubel *et al.*, Eds., Current Protocols in Molecular Biology, Chapter 2, Greene Publishing and Wiley-Interscience, NY, 1995, and updates.

[00158] As used herein, "stringent conditions" encompass conditions under which hybridization will occur only if there is more than 80% sequence match between the hybridization molecule and a homologous sequence within the target nucleic acid molecule. "Stringent conditions" include further particular levels of stringency. Thus, as used herein, "moderate stringency" conditions are those under which molecules with more than 80% sequence match (*i.e.*, having less than 20%

-31-

mismatch) will hybridize; conditions of "high stringency" are those under which sequences with more than 90% match (*i.e.* having less than 10% mismatch) will hybridize; and conditions of "very high stringency" are those under which sequences with more than 95% match (*i.e.*, having less than 5% mismatch) will hybridize.

[00159] The following are representative, non-limiting hybridization conditions.

[00160] High Stringency condition (detects sequences that share at least 90% sequence identity): Hybridization in 5x SSC buffer at 65°C for 16 hours; wash twice in 2x SSC buffer at room temperature for 15 minutes each; and wash twice in 0.5x SSC buffer at 65°C for 20 minutes each.

[00161] Moderate Stringency condition (detects sequences that share at least 80% sequence identity): Hybridization in 5x-6x SSC buffer at 65-70°C for 16-20 hours; wash twice in 2x SSC buffer at room temperature for 5-20 minutes each; and wash twice in 1x SSC buffer at 55-70°C for 30 minutes each.

[00162] Non-stringent control condition (sequences that share at least 50% sequence identity will hybridize): Hybridization in 6x SSC buffer at room temperature to 55°C for 16-20 hours; wash at least twice in 2x-3x SSC buffer at room temperature to 55°C for 20-30 minutes each.

[00163] As used herein, the term "substantially homologous" or "substantial homology", with regard to a contiguous nucleic acid sequence, refers to contiguous nucleotide sequences that are borne by nucleic acid molecules that hybridize under stringent conditions to a nucleic acid molecule having the reference nucleic acid sequence. For example, nucleic acid molecules having sequences that are substantially homologous to a reference nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 are those nucleic acid molecules that hybridize under stringent conditions (*e.g.*, the Moderate Stringency conditions set forth, *supra*) to nucleic acid molecules having the reference nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1. Substantially homologous sequences may have at least 80% sequence identity. For example, substantially homologous sequences may have from about 80% to 100% sequence identity, such as about 81%; about 82%; about 83%; about 84%; about 85%; about 86%; about 87%; about 88%; about 89%; about 90%; about 91%; about 92%; about 93%; about 94% about 95%; about 96%; about 97%; about 98%; about 98.5%; about 99%; about 99.5%; and about 100%. The property of substantial homology is closely related to specific hybridization. For example, a nucleic acid molecule is specifically hybridizable when there is a sufficient degree of complementarity to avoid

-32-

non-specific binding of the nucleic acid to non-target sequences under conditions where specific binding is desired, for example, under stringent hybridization conditions.

[00164] As used herein, the term "ortholog" refers to a gene in two or more species that has evolved from a common ancestral nucleotide sequence, and may retain the same function in the two or more species.

[00165] As used herein, two nucleic acid sequence molecules are said to exhibit "complete complementarity" when every nucleotide of a sequence read in the 5' to 3' direction is complementary to every nucleotide of the other sequence when read in the 3' to 5' direction. A nucleotide sequence that is complementary to a reference nucleotide sequence will exhibit a sequence identical to the reverse complement sequence of the reference nucleotide sequence. These terms and descriptions are well defined in the art and are easily understood by those of ordinary skill in the art.

[00166] Operably linked: A first nucleotide sequence is operably linked with a second nucleic acid sequence when the first nucleic acid sequence is in a functional relationship with the second nucleic acid sequence. When recombinantly produced, operably linked nucleic acid sequences are generally contiguous, and, where necessary, two protein-coding regions may be joined in the same reading frame (*e.g.*, in a translationally fused ORF). However, nucleic acids need not be contiguous to be operably linked.

[00167] The term, "operably linked", when used in reference to a regulatory sequence and a coding sequence, means that the regulatory sequence affects the expression of the linked coding sequence. "Regulatory sequences", or "control elements", refer to nucleotide sequences that influence the timing and level/amount of transcription, RNA processing or stability, or translation of the associated coding sequence. Regulatory sequences may include promoters; translation leader sequences; introns; enhancers; stem-loop structures; repressor binding sequences; termination sequences; polyadenylation recognition sequences; *etc.* Particular regulatory sequences may be located upstream and/or downstream of a coding sequence operably linked thereto. Also, particular regulatory sequences operably linked to a coding sequence may be located on the associated complementary strand of a double-stranded nucleic acid molecule.

[00168] Promoter: As used herein, the term "promoter" refers to a region of DNA that may be upstream from the start of transcription, and that may be involved in recognition and binding of

-33-

RNA polymerase and other proteins to initiate transcription. A promoter may be operably linked to a coding sequence for expression in a cell, or a promoter may be operably linked to a nucleotide sequence encoding a signal sequence which may be operably linked to a coding sequence for expression in a cell. A "plant promoter" may be a promoter capable of initiating transcription in plant cells. Examples of promoters under developmental control include promoters that preferentially initiate transcription in certain tissues, such as leaves, roots, seeds, fibers, xylem vessels, tracheids, or sclerenchyma. Such promoters are referred to as "tissue-preferred". Promoters which initiate transcription only in certain tissues are referred to as "tissue-specific". A "cell type-specific" promoter primarily drives expression in certain cell types in one or more organs, for example, vascular cells in roots or leaves. An "inducible" promoter may be a promoter which may be under environmental control. Examples of environmental conditions that may initiate transcription by inducible promoters include anaerobic conditions and the presence of light. Tissue-specific, tissue-preferred, cell type specific, and inducible promoters constitute the class of "non-constitutive" promoters. A "constitutive" promoter is a promoter which may be active under most environmental conditions or in most tissue or cell types.

[00169] Any inducible promoter can be used in some embodiments of the disclosure. See Ward *et al.* (1993) Plant Mol. Biol. 22:361-366. With an inducible promoter, the rate of transcription increases in response to an inducing agent. Exemplary inducible promoters include, but are not limited to: Promoters from the ACEI system that respond to copper; *In2* gene from maize that responds to benzenesulfonamide herbicide safeners; Tet repressor from Tn10; and the inducible promoter from a steroid hormone gene, the transcriptional activity of which may be induced by a glucocorticosteroid hormone (Schena *et al.* (1991) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 88:10421-10425).

[00170] Exemplary constitutive promoters include, but are not limited to: Promoters from plant viruses, such as the 35S promoter from Cauliflower Mosaic Virus (CaMV); promoters from rice actin genes; ubiquitin promoters; pEMU; MAS; maize H3 histone promoter; and the ALS promoter, *XbaI/NcoI* fragment 5' to the *Brassica napus* *ALS3* structural gene (or a nucleotide sequence similar to said *XbaI/NcoI* fragment) (U.S. Patent No. 5,659,026).

[00171] Additionally, any tissue-specific or tissue-preferred promoter may be utilized in some embodiments of the disclosure. Plants transformed with a nucleic acid molecule comprising a

-34-

coding sequence operably linked to a tissue-specific promoter may produce the product of the coding sequence exclusively, or preferentially, in a specific tissue. Exemplary tissue-specific or tissue-preferred promoters include, but are not limited to: A seed-preferred promoter, such as that from the phaseolin gene; a leaf-specific and light-induced promoter such as that from *cab* or *rubisco*; an anther-specific promoter such as that from *LAT52*; a pollen-specific promoter such as that from *Zm13*; and a microspore-preferred promoter such as that from *apg*.

[00172] Soybean plant: As used herein, the term "soybean plant" refers to a plant of the species *Glycine*; for example, *Glycine max*.

[00173] Transformation: As used herein, the term "transformation" or "transduction" refers to the transfer of one or more nucleic acid molecule(s) into a cell. A cell is "transformed" by a nucleic acid molecule transduced into the cell when the nucleic acid molecule becomes stably replicated by the cell, either by incorporation of the nucleic acid molecule into the cellular genome, or by episomal replication. As used herein, the term "transformation" encompasses all techniques by which a nucleic acid molecule can be introduced into such a cell. Examples include, but are not limited to: transfection with viral vectors; transformation with plasmid vectors; electroporation (Fromm *et al.* (1986) *Nature* 319:791-793); lipofection (Felgner *et al.* (1987) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 84:7413-7417); microinjection (Mueller *et al.* (1978) *Cell* 15:579-585); *Agrobacterium*-mediated transfer (Fraley *et al.* (1983) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 80:4803-4807); direct DNA uptake; and microprojectile bombardment (Klein *et al.* (1987) *Nature* 327:70).

[00174] Transgene: An exogenous nucleic acid sequence. In some examples, a transgene may be a sequence that encodes one or both strand(s) of a dsRNA molecule that comprises a nucleotide sequence that is complementary to a nucleic acid molecule found in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In further examples, a transgene may be an antisense nucleic acid sequence, wherein expression of the antisense nucleic acid sequence inhibits expression of a target nucleic acid sequence. In still further examples, a transgene may be a gene sequence (*e.g.*, a herbicide-resistance gene), a gene encoding an industrially or pharmaceutically useful compound, or a gene encoding a desirable agricultural trait. In these and other examples, a transgene may contain regulatory sequences operably linked to a coding sequence of the transgene (*e.g.*, a promoter).

-35-

[00175] Vector: A nucleic acid molecule as introduced into a cell, for example, to produce a transformed cell. A vector may include nucleic acid sequences that permit it to replicate in the host cell, such as an origin of replication. Examples of vectors include, but are not limited to: a plasmid; cosmid; bacteriophage; or virus that carries exogenous DNA into a cell. A vector may also be an RNA molecule. A vector may also include one or more genes, antisense sequences, and/or selectable marker genes and other genetic elements known in the art. A vector may transduce, transform, or infect a cell, thereby causing the cell to express the nucleic acid molecules and/or proteins encoded by the vector. A vector optionally includes materials to aid in achieving entry of the nucleic acid molecule into the cell (*e.g.*, a liposome, protein coating, *etc.*).

[00176] Yield: A stabilized yield of about 100% or greater relative to the yield of check varieties in the same growing location growing at the same time and under the same conditions. In particular embodiments, "improved yield" or "improving yield" means a cultivar having a stabilized yield of 105% to 115% or greater relative to the yield of check varieties in the same growing location containing significant densities of coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests that are injurious to that crop growing at the same time and under the same conditions.

[00177] Unless specifically indicated or implied, the terms "a", "an", and "the" signify "at least one" as used herein.

[00178] Unless otherwise specifically explained, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by those of ordinary skill in the art to which this disclosure belongs. Definitions of common terms in molecular biology can be found in, for example, Lewin's Genes X, Jones & Bartlett Publishers, 2009 (ISBN 10 0763766321); Krebs *et al.* (eds.), The Encyclopedia of Molecular Biology, Blackwell Science Ltd., 1994 (ISBN 0-632-02182-9); and Meyers R.A. (ed.), Molecular Biology and Biotechnology: A Comprehensive Desk Reference, VCH Publishers, Inc., 1995 (ISBN 1-56081-569-8). All percentages are by weight and all solvent mixture proportions are by volume unless otherwise noted. All temperatures are in degrees Celsius.

[00179] ***IV. Nucleic Acid Molecules Comprising a Coleopteran and/or Hemipteran Pest Sequence***

[00180] A. Overview

[00181] Described herein are nucleic acid molecules useful for the control of coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests. Described nucleic acid molecules include target sequences (*e.g.*, native genes, and non-coding sequences), dsRNAs, siRNAs, hpRNAs, shRNA, and miRNAs. For example, dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, miRNA and/or hpRNA molecules are described in some embodiments that may be specifically complementary to all or part of one or more native nucleic acid sequences in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In these and further embodiments, the native nucleic acid sequence(s) may be one or more target gene(s), the product of which may be, for example and without limitation: involved in a metabolic process; involved in a reproductive process; or involved in larval development. Nucleic acid molecules described herein, when introduced into a cell comprising at least one native nucleic acid sequence(s) to which the nucleic acid molecules are specifically complementary, may initiate RNAi in the cell, and consequently reduce or eliminate expression of the native nucleic acid sequence(s). In some examples, reduction or elimination of the expression of a target gene by a nucleic acid molecule comprising a sequence specifically complementary thereto may be lethal in coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests, or result in reduced growth and/or reproduction.

[00182] In some embodiments, at least one target gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest may be selected, wherein the target gene comprises a nucleotide sequence comprising *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78). In particular examples, a target gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest is selected, wherein the target gene comprises a novel nucleotide sequence comprising *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78).

[00183] In some embodiments, a target gene may be a nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence that encodes a polypeptide comprising a contiguous amino acid sequence that is at least 85% identical (*e.g.*, about 90%, about 95%, about 96%, about 97%, about 98%, about 99%, about 100%, or 100% identical) to the amino acid sequence of a protein product of *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78). A target gene may be any nucleic acid sequence in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, the post-transcriptional inhibition of which has a deleterious effect on the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, or provides a protective benefit against the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest to a plant. In particular examples, a target gene is a nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence that encodes a polypeptide comprising a contiguous

-37-

amino acid sequence that is at least 85% identical, about 90% identical, about 95% identical, about 96% identical, about 97% identical, about 98% identical, about 99% identical, about 100% identical, or 100% identical to the amino acid sequence of a protein product of novel nucleotide sequence SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78.

[00184] Provided according to the disclosure are nucleotide sequences, the expression of which results in an RNA molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence that is specifically complementary to all or part of a native RNA molecule that is encoded by a coding sequence in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In some embodiments, after ingestion of the expressed RNA molecule by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, down-regulation of the coding sequence in cells of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest may be obtained. In particular embodiments, down-regulation of the coding sequence in cells of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest may result in a deleterious effect on the growth, viability, proliferation, and/or reproduction of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest.

[00185] In some embodiments, target sequences include transcribed non-coding RNA sequences, such as 5'UTRs; 3'UTRs; spliced leader sequences; intron sequences; outtron sequences (*e.g.*, 5'UTR RNA subsequently modified in trans splicing); donatron sequences (*e.g.*, non-coding RNA required to provide donor sequences for trans splicing); and other non-coding transcribed RNA of target coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest genes. Such sequences may be derived from both mono-cistronic and poly-cistronic genes.

[00186] Thus, also described herein in connection with some embodiments are iRNA molecules (*e.g.*, dsRNAs, siRNAs, shRNA, miRNAs and hpRNAs) that comprise at least one nucleotide sequence that is specifically complementary to all or part of a target sequence in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In some embodiments an iRNA molecule may comprise nucleotide sequence(s) that are complementary to all or part of a plurality of target sequences; for example, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, or more target sequences. In particular embodiments, an iRNA molecule may be produced *in vitro*, or *in vivo* by a genetically-modified organism, such as a plant or bacterium. Also disclosed are cDNA sequences that may be used for the production of dsRNA molecules, siRNA molecules, shRNA molecules, miRNA molecules and/or hpRNA molecules that are specifically complementary to all or part of a target sequence in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran

-38-

pest. Further described are recombinant DNA constructs for use in achieving stable transformation of particular host targets. Transformed host targets may express effective levels of dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, miRNA and/or hpRNA molecules from the recombinant DNA constructs. Therefore, also described is a plant transformation vector comprising at least one nucleotide sequence operably linked to a heterologous promoter functional in a plant cell, wherein expression of the nucleotide sequence(s) results in an RNA molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence that is specifically complementary to all or part of a target sequence in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest.

[00187] In some embodiments, nucleic acid molecules useful for the control of coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests may include: all or part of a native nucleic acid sequence isolated from *Diabrotica* or a hemipteran comprising *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78); nucleotide sequences that when expressed result in an RNA molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence that is specifically complementary to all or part of a native RNA molecule that is encoded by *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78); iRNA molecules (*e.g.*, dsRNAs, siRNAs, shRNA, miRNAs and hpRNAs) that comprise at least one nucleotide sequence that is specifically complementary to all or part of *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78); cDNA sequences that may be used for the production of dsRNA molecules, siRNA molecules, shRNA molecules, miRNA and/or hpRNA molecules that are specifically complementary to all or part of *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78); and recombinant DNA constructs for use in achieving stable transformation of particular host targets, wherein a transformed host target comprises one or more of the foregoing nucleic acid molecules.

[00188] B. Nucleic Acid Molecules

[00189] The present disclosure provides, *inter alia*, iRNA (*e.g.*, dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, miRNA and hpRNA) molecules that inhibit target gene expression in a cell, tissue, or organ of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest; and DNA molecules capable of being expressed as an iRNA molecule in a cell or microorganism to inhibit target gene expression in a cell, tissue, or organ of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest.

[00190] Some embodiments of the disclosure provide an isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising at least one (*e.g.*, one, two, three, or more) nucleotide sequence(s) selected from the group

-39-

consisting of: SEQ ID NO:1; the complement of SEQ ID NO:1; SEQ ID NO:3; the complement of SEQ ID NO:3; SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of SEQ ID NO:5; SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides (*e.g.*, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 or more contiguous nucleotides) of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78; a native coding sequence of a coleopteran or hemipteran organism (*e.g.*, WCR and BSB) comprising all or part of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a native coding sequence of a coleopteran or hemipteran organism comprising all or part of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78; a native non-coding sequence of a coleopteran or hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising all or part of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a native non-coding sequence of a coleopteran or hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising all or part of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a coleopteran or hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising all or part of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a coleopteran or hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising all or part of any of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a coleopteran or hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a coleopteran or hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78. In particular embodiments, contact with or uptake by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest of the isolated nucleic acid sequence inhibits the growth, development, reproduction and/or feeding of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest.

-40-

[00191] In some embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule of the disclosure may comprise at least one (*e.g.*, one, two, three, or more) DNA sequence(s) capable of being expressed as an iRNA molecule in a cell or microorganism to inhibit target gene expression in a cell, tissue, or organ of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Such DNA sequence(s) may be operably linked to a promoter sequence that functions in a cell comprising the DNA molecule to initiate or enhance the transcription of the encoded RNA capable of forming a dsRNA molecule(s). In one embodiment, the at least one (*e.g.*, one, two, three, or more) DNA sequence(s) may be derived from a polynucleotide(s) selected from the group consisting of: SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, and SEQ ID NO:78. Derivatives of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78 include fragments of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78. In some embodiments, such a fragment may comprise, for example, at least about 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78, or a complement thereof. Thus, such a fragment may comprise, for example, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200 or more contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78, or a complement thereof. In these and further embodiments, such a fragment may comprise, for example, more than about 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78, or a complement thereof. Thus, a fragment of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78 may comprise, for example, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, about 25, (*e.g.*, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29), about 30, about 40, (*e.g.*, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45), about 50, about 60, about 70, about 80, about 90, about 100, about 110, about 120, about 130, about 140, about 150, about 160, about 170, about 180, about 190, about 200 or more contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:78, or a complement thereof.

[00192] Some embodiments comprise introducing partial- or fully-stabilized dsRNA molecules into a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest to inhibit expression of a target gene in a cell, tissue, or organ of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. When expressed as an iRNA molecule (*e.g.*, dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, miRNA, and hpRNA) and taken up by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, nucleic acid sequences comprising one or more fragments of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78 may cause one or more of death, growth inhibition,

-41-

change in sex ratio, reduction in brood size, cessation of infection, and/or cessation of feeding by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. For example, in some embodiments, a dsRNA molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence including about 15 to about 300 or about 19 to about 300 nucleotides that are substantially homologous to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest target gene sequence and comprising one or more fragments of a nucleotide sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78 is provided. Expression of such a dsRNA molecule may, for example, lead to mortality and/or growth inhibition in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest that takes up the dsRNA molecule.

[00193] In certain embodiments, dsRNA molecules provided by the disclosure comprise nucleotide sequences complementary to a target gene comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78 and/or nucleotide sequences complementary to a fragment of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78, the inhibition of which target gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest results in the reduction or removal of a protein or nucleotide sequence agent that is essential for the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest's growth, development, or other biological function. A selected nucleotide sequence may exhibit from about 80% to about 100% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78, a contiguous fragment of the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78, or the complement of either of the foregoing. For example, a selected nucleotide sequence may exhibit about 81%; about 82%; about 83%; about 84%; about 85%; about 86%; about 87%; about 88%; about 89%; about 90%; about 91%; about 92%; about 93%; about 94% about 95%; about 96%; about 97%; about 98%; about 98.5%; about 99%; about 99.5%; or about 100% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78, a contiguous fragment of the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78, or the complement of either of the foregoing.

[00194] In some embodiments, a DNA molecule capable of being expressed as an iRNA molecule in a cell or microorganism to inhibit target gene expression may comprise a single nucleotide sequence that is specifically complementary to all or part of a native nucleic acid sequence found in one or more target coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest species, or the DNA molecule can be constructed as a chimera from a plurality of such specifically complementary sequences.

-42-

[00195] In some embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule may comprise a first and a second nucleotide sequence separated by a "spacer sequence". A spacer sequence may be a region comprising any sequence of nucleotides that facilitates secondary structure formation between the first and second nucleotide sequences, where this is desired. In one embodiment, the spacer sequence is part of a sense or antisense coding sequence for mRNA. The spacer sequence may alternatively comprise any combination of nucleotides or homologues thereof that are capable of being linked covalently to a nucleic acid molecule.

[00196] For example, in some embodiments, the DNA molecule may comprise a nucleotide sequence coding for one or more different RNA molecules, wherein each of the different RNA molecules comprises a first nucleotide sequence and a second nucleotide sequence, wherein the first and second nucleotide sequences are complementary to each other. The first and second nucleotide sequences may be connected within an RNA molecule by a spacer sequence. The spacer sequence may constitute part of the first nucleotide sequence or the second nucleotide sequence. Expression of an RNA molecule comprising the first and second nucleotide sequences may lead to the formation of a dsRNA molecule of the present disclosure, by specific base-pairing of the first and second nucleotide sequences. The first nucleotide sequence or the second nucleotide sequence may be substantially identical to a nucleic acid sequence native to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest (*e.g.*, a target gene, or transcribed non-coding sequence), a derivative thereof, or a complementary sequence thereto.

[00197] dsRNA nucleic acid molecules comprise double strands of polymerized ribonucleotide sequences, and may include modifications to either the phosphate-sugar backbone or the nucleoside. Modifications in RNA structure may be tailored to allow specific inhibition. In one embodiment, dsRNA molecules may be modified through a ubiquitous enzymatic process so that siRNA molecules may be generated. This enzymatic process may utilize an RNase III enzyme, such as DICER in eukaryotes, either *in vitro* or *in vivo*. See Elbashir *et al.* (2001) Nature 411:494-498; and Hamilton and Baulcombe (1999) Science 286(5441):950-952. DICER or functionally-equivalent RNase III enzymes cleave larger dsRNA strands and/or hpRNA molecules into smaller oligonucleotides (*e.g.*, siRNAs), each of which is about 19-25 nucleotides in length. The siRNA molecules produced by these enzymes have 2 to 3 nucleotide 3' overhangs, and 5' phosphate and 3'

-43-

hydroxyl termini. The siRNA molecules generated by RNase III enzymes are unwound and separated into single-stranded RNA in the cell. The siRNA molecules then specifically hybridize with RNA sequences transcribed from a target gene, and both RNA molecules are subsequently degraded by an inherent cellular RNA-degrading mechanism. This process may result in the effective degradation or removal of the RNA sequence encoded by the target gene in the target organism. The outcome is the post-transcriptional silencing of the targeted gene. In some embodiments, siRNA molecules produced by endogenous RNase III enzymes from heterologous nucleic acid molecules may efficiently mediate the down-regulation of target genes in coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests.

[00198] In some embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule of the disclosure may include at least one non-naturally occurring nucleotide sequence that can be transcribed into a single-stranded RNA molecule capable of forming a dsRNA molecule *in vivo* through intermolecular hybridization. Such dsRNA sequences typically self-assemble, and can be provided to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest (for example, in the nutrition source of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest) to achieve the post-transcriptional inhibition of a target gene. In embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule of the disclosure may comprise at least one non-naturally occurring nucleotide sequence, which is specifically complementary to a target gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. When such a nucleic acid molecule is provided as a dsRNA molecule to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, the dsRNA molecule inhibits the expression of the target gene in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In these and further embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule of the disclosure may comprise two different non-naturally occurring nucleotide sequences, each of which is specifically complementary to a different target gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. When such a nucleic acid molecule is provided as a dsRNA molecule to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, the dsRNA molecule inhibits the expression of at least two different target genes in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest.

[00199] C. Obtaining Nucleic Acid Molecules

[00200] A variety of native sequences in coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests may be used as target sequences for the design of nucleic acid molecules of the disclosure, such as iRNAs and DNA molecules encoding iRNAs. Selection of native sequences is not, however, a straight-forward process. Only a small number of native sequences in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest will be effective targets. For example, it cannot be predicted with certainty whether a particular native

-44-

sequence can be effectively down-regulated by nucleic acid molecules of the disclosure, or whether down-regulation of a particular native sequence will have a detrimental effect on the growth, viability, proliferation, and/or reproduction of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. The vast majority of native coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest sequences, such as ESTs isolated therefrom (for example, as listed in U.S. Patent No. 7,612,194 and U.S. Patent. No. 7,943,819), do not have a detrimental effect on the growth, viability, proliferation, and/or reproduction of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, such as WCR, NCR, SCR, BSB, *Nezara viridula*, *Piezodorus guildinii*, *Halyomorpha halys*, *Chinavia hilare*, *Euschistus servus*, *Dichelops melacanthus*, *Dichelops furcatus*, *Edessa meditabunda*, *Thyanta perditor*, *Chinavia marginatum*, *Horcias nobilellus*, *Taedia stigmosa*, *Dysdercus peruvianus*, *Neomegalotomus parvus*, *Leptoglossus zonatus*, *Niesthrea sidae*, *Lygus hesperus*, and *Lygus lineolaris*.

[00201] Neither is it predictable which of the native sequences which may have a detrimental effect on a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest are able to be used in recombinant techniques for expressing nucleic acid molecules complementary to such native sequences in a host plant and providing the detrimental effect on the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest upon feeding without causing harm to the host plant.

[00202] In some embodiments, nucleic acid molecules of the disclosure (*e.g.*, dsRNA molecules to be provided in the host plant of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest) are selected to target cDNA sequences that encode proteins or parts of proteins essential for coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest survival, such as amino acid sequences involved in metabolic or catabolic biochemical pathways, cell division, reproduction, energy metabolism, digestion, host plant recognition, and the like. Provided within the disclosure is the delivery of compositions containing one or more dsRNAs, at least one segment of which is specifically complementary to at least a substantially identical segment of RNA produced in the cells of the target pest organism, to a target organism, thereby resulting in the death or other inhibition of the target organism. As described herein, ingestion of compositions by a target organism containing one or more dsRNAs, at least one segment of which is specifically complementary to at least a substantially identical segment of RNA produced in the cells of the target pest organism, can result in the death or other inhibition of the target. A nucleotide sequence, either DNA or RNA, derived from a coleopteran and/or hemipteran

-45-

pest can be used to construct plant cells resistant to infestation by the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests. The host plant of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest (*e.g.*, *Z. mays* or *G. max*), for example, can be transformed to contain one or more of the nucleotide sequences derived from the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest as provided herein. The nucleotide sequence transformed into the host may encode one or more RNAs that form into a dsRNA sequence in the cells or biological fluids within the transformed host, thus making the dsRNA available if/when the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest forms a nutritional relationship with the transgenic host. This may result in the suppression of expression of one or more genes in the cells of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, and ultimately death or inhibition of its growth or development.

[00203] Thus, in some embodiments, a gene is targeted that is essentially involved in the growth, development and reproduction of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Other target genes for use in the present disclosure may include, for example, those that play important roles in coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest viability, movement, migration, growth, development, infectivity, establishment of feeding sites and reproduction. A target gene may therefore be a housekeeping gene or a transcription factor. Additionally, a native coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest nucleotide sequence for use in the present disclosure may also be derived from a homolog (*e.g.*, an ortholog), of a plant, viral, bacterial or insect gene, the function of which is known to those of skill in the art, and the nucleotide sequence of which is specifically hybridizable with a target gene in the genome of the target coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Methods of identifying a homolog of a gene with a known nucleotide sequence by hybridization are known to those of skill in the art.

[00204] In some embodiments, the disclosure provides methods for obtaining a nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence for producing an iRNA (*e.g.*, dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, miRNA, and hpRNA) molecule. One such embodiment comprises: (a) analyzing one or more target gene(s) for their expression, function, and phenotype upon dsRNA-mediated gene suppression in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest; (b) probing a cDNA or gDNA library with a probe comprising all or a portion of a nucleotide sequence or a homolog thereof from a targeted coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest that displays an altered (*e.g.*, reduced) growth or development phenotype in a dsRNA-mediated suppression analysis; (c) identifying a DNA clone that specifically hybridizes with the probe; (d) isolating the DNA clone identified in step (b); (e) sequencing the cDNA or gDNA

-46-

fragment that comprises the clone isolated in step (d), wherein the sequenced nucleic acid molecule comprises all or a substantial portion of the RNA sequence or a homolog thereof; and (f) chemically synthesizing all or a substantial portion of a gene sequence, or a siRNA or miRNA or shRNA or hpRNA or mRNA or dsRNA.

[00205] In further embodiments, a method for obtaining a nucleic acid fragment comprising a nucleotide sequence for producing a substantial portion of an iRNA (*e.g.*, dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, miRNA, and hpRNA) molecule includes: (a) synthesizing first and second oligonucleotide primers specifically complementary to a portion of a native nucleotide sequence from a targeted coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest; and (b) amplifying a cDNA or gDNA insert present in a cloning vector using the first and second oligonucleotide primers of step (a), wherein the amplified nucleic acid molecule comprises a substantial portion of a siRNA or shRNA or miRNA or hpRNA or mRNA or dsRNA molecule.

[00206] Nucleic acids of the disclosure can be isolated, amplified, or produced by a number of approaches. For example, an iRNA (*e.g.*, dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, miRNA, and hpRNA) molecule may be obtained by PCR amplification of a target nucleic acid sequence (*e.g.*, a target gene or a target transcribed non-coding sequence) derived from a gDNA or cDNA library, or portions thereof. DNA or RNA may be extracted from a target organism, and nucleic acid libraries may be prepared therefrom using methods known to those ordinarily skilled in the art. gDNA or cDNA libraries generated from a target organism may be used for PCR amplification and sequencing of target genes. A confirmed PCR product may be used as a template for *in vitro* transcription to generate sense and antisense RNA with minimal promoters. Alternatively, nucleic acid molecules may be synthesized by any of a number of techniques (*See, e.g.*, Ozaki *et al.* (1992) *Nucleic Acids Research*, 20: 5205-5214; and Agrawal *et al.* (1990) *Nucleic Acids Research*, 18: 5419-5423), including use of an automated DNA synthesizer (for example, a P. E. Biosystems, Inc. (Foster City, Calif.) model 392 or 394 DNA/RNA Synthesizer), using standard chemistries, such as phosphoramidite chemistry. *See, e.g.*, Beaucage *et al.* (1992) *Tetrahedron*, 48: 2223-2311; U.S. Patent Nos. 4,415,732, 4,458,066, 4,725,677, 4,973,679, and 4,980,460. Alternative chemistries resulting in non-natural backbone groups, such as phosphorothioate, phosphoramidate, and the like, can also be employed.

-47-

[00207] An RNA, dsRNA, siRNA, miRNA, shRNA, or hpRNA molecule of the present disclosure may be produced chemically or enzymatically by one skilled in the art through manual or automated reactions, or *in vivo* in a cell comprising a nucleic acid molecule comprising a sequence encoding the RNA, dsRNA, siRNA, miRNA, shRNA, or hpRNA molecule. RNA may also be produced by partial or total organic synthesis- any modified ribonucleotide can be introduced by *in vitro* enzymatic or organic synthesis. An RNA molecule may be synthesized by a cellular RNA polymerase or a bacteriophage RNA polymerase (*e.g.*, T3 RNA polymerase, T7 RNA polymerase, and SP6 RNA polymerase). Expression constructs useful for the cloning and expression of nucleotide sequences are known in the art. *See, e.g.*, U.S. Patent Nos. 5,593,874, 5,693,512, 5,698,425, 5,712,135, 5,789,214, and 5,804,693. RNA molecules that are synthesized chemically or by *in vitro* enzymatic synthesis may be purified prior to introduction into a cell. For example, RNA molecules can be purified from a mixture by extraction with a solvent or resin, precipitation, electrophoresis, chromatography, or a combination thereof. Alternatively, RNA molecules that are synthesized chemically or by *in vitro* enzymatic synthesis may be used without any purification or a minimum amount of purification, for example, to avoid losses due to sample processing. The RNA molecules may be dried for storage or dissolved in an aqueous solution. The solution may contain buffers or salts to promote annealing, and/or stabilization of dsRNA molecule duplex strands.

[00208] In embodiments, a dsRNA molecule may be formed by a single self-complementary RNA strand or from two complementary RNA strands. dsRNA molecules may be synthesized either *in vivo* or *in vitro*. An endogenous RNA polymerase of the cell may mediate transcription of the one or two RNA strands *in vivo*, or cloned RNA polymerase may be used to mediate transcription *in vivo* or *in vitro*. Post-transcriptional inhibition of a target gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest may be host-targeted by specific transcription in an organ, tissue, or cell type of the host (*e.g.*, by using a tissue-specific promoter); stimulation of an environmental condition in the host (*e.g.*, by using an inducible promoter that is responsive to infection, stress, temperature, and/or chemical inducers); and/or engineering transcription at a developmental stage or age of the host (*e.g.*, by using a developmental stage-specific promoter). RNA strands that form a dsRNA molecule, whether transcribed *in vitro* or *in vivo*, may or may not be polyadenylated, and may or may not be capable of being translated into a polypeptide by a cell's translational apparatus.

[00209] D. Recombinant Vectors and Host Cell Transformation

[00210] In some embodiments, the disclosure also provides a DNA molecule for introduction into a cell (*e.g.*, a bacterial cell, a yeast cell, or a plant cell), wherein the DNA molecule comprises a nucleotide sequence that, upon expression to RNA and ingestion by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, achieves suppression of a target gene in a cell, tissue, or organ of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Thus, some embodiments provide a recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleic acid sequence capable of being expressed as an iRNA (*e.g.*, dsRNA, siRNA, miRNA, shRNA, and hpRNA) molecule in a plant cell to inhibit target gene expression in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In order to initiate or enhance expression, such recombinant nucleic acid molecules may comprise one or more regulatory sequences, which regulatory sequences may be operably linked to the nucleic acid sequence capable of being expressed as an iRNA. Methods to express a gene suppression molecule in plants are known, and may be used to express a nucleotide sequence of the present disclosure. *See, e.g.*, International PCT Publication No. WO06/073727; and U.S. Patent Publication No. 2006/0200878 A1).

[00211] In specific embodiments, a recombinant DNA molecule of the disclosure may comprise a nucleic acid sequence encoding a dsRNA molecule. Such recombinant DNA molecules may encode dsRNA molecules capable of inhibiting the expression of endogenous target gene(s) in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest cell upon ingestion. In many embodiments, a transcribed RNA may form a dsRNA molecule that may be provided in a stabilized form; *e.g.*, as a hairpin and stem and loop structure.

[00212] In these and further embodiments, one strand of a dsRNA molecule may be formed by transcription from a nucleotide sequence which is substantially homologous to a nucleotide sequence consisting of SEQ ID NO:1; the complement of SEQ ID NO:1; SEQ ID NO:3, the complement of SEQ ID NO:3; SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of SEQ ID NO:5; a fragment of at least 19 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NOs:1,3, or 5; the complement of a fragment of at least 19 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NOs:1, 3, or 5; a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism (*e.g.*, WCR) comprising SEQ ID NOs:1, 3, or 5; the complement of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising SEQ ID NOs:1, 3, or 5; a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1,

3, or 5; the complement of a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, 3, or 5; a fragment of at least 19 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism (*e.g.*, WCR) comprising SEQ ID NO:1, 3, or 5; the complement of a fragment of at least 19 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising SEQ ID NO:1, 3, or 5; a fragment of at least 19 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, 3, or 5; and the complement of a fragment of at least 19 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, 3, or 5.

[00213] In other embodiments, one strand of a dsRNA molecule may be formed by transcription from a nucleotide sequence which is substantially homologous to a nucleotide sequence consisting of SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:78; a native coding sequence of a hemipteran organism comprising SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a native coding sequence of a hemipteran organism comprising SEQ ID NO:78; a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a hemipteran organism comprising SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a hemipteran organism comprising SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78; and the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78.

[00214] In particular embodiments, a recombinant DNA molecule encoding a dsRNA molecule may comprise at least two nucleotide sequence segments within a transcribed sequence, such sequences arranged such that the transcribed sequence comprises a first nucleotide sequence segment in a sense orientation, and a second nucleotide sequence segment (comprising the

-50-

complement of the first nucleotide sequence segment) is in an antisense orientation, relative to at least one promoter, wherein the sense nucleotide sequence segment and the antisense nucleotide sequence segment are linked or connected by a spacer sequence segment of from about five (~5) to about one thousand (~1000) nucleotides. Generally, the spacer does not exhibit sequences that are complementary with one another, although in some embodiments the very 5' and 3' ends of the spacer may exhibit some level of complementarity. As such, the spacer sequence segment may form a loop between the sense and antisense sequence segments. The sense nucleotide sequence segment or the antisense nucleotide sequence segment may be substantially homologous to the nucleotide sequence of a target gene (*e.g.*, a gene comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78) or fragment thereof. In some embodiments, however, a recombinant DNA molecule may encode a dsRNA molecule without a spacer sequence. In embodiments, a sense coding sequence and an antisense coding sequence may be different lengths.

[00215] In other embodiments, a recombinant DNA molecule encoding a dsRNA molecule may comprise at least two separate nucleotide sequence segments. In such an embodiment, the first nucleotide sequence comprises a first nucleotide sequence segment in a sense orientation. Comparatively, the second nucleotide sequence comprises a second nucleotide sequence segment in an antisense orientation. Both sequences are substantially complementary to one another (*e.g.*, sharing at least about 80%, about 85%, about 87.5%, about 90%, about 92.5%, about 95%, about 97.5%, about 99%, about 99.9%, about 100% or 100% sequence identity) such that the sequences can be chemically linked to form a dsRNA. Either sequence may be operatively linked to at least one promoter, such that the sense nucleotide sequence segment and the antisense nucleotide sequence segment are expressed within a cell (*e.g.*, a bacterial cell, a yeast cell, or a plant cell) or produced synthetically. The sequences may be co-expressed in a cell, wherein they anneal within the cell to form a dsRNA molecule. In other instances, the sequences may be synthesized or expressed separately in different cells, wherein the sequences are isolated, purified and combined to anneal and form a dsRNA molecule. The sense nucleotide sequence segment or the antisense nucleotide sequence segment may be substantially homologous to the nucleotide sequence of a target gene (*e.g.*, a gene comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78) or fragment

-51-

thereof. In embodiments, a sense coding sequence and an antisense coding sequence may be different lengths.

[00216] Sequences identified as having a deleterious effect on coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests or a plant-protective effect with regard to coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests may be readily incorporated into expressed dsRNA molecules through the creation of appropriate expression cassettes in a recombinant nucleic acid molecule of the disclosure. For example, such sequences may be expressed as a hairpin with stem and loop structure by taking a first segment corresponding to a target gene sequence (*e.g.*, SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:78, and fragments thereof); linking this sequence to a second segment spacer region that is not homologous or complementary to the first segment; and linking this to a third segment, wherein at least a portion of the third segment is substantially complementary to the first segment. Such a construct forms a stem and loop structure by intramolecular base-pairing of the first segment with the third segment, wherein the loop structure forms and comprises the second segment. *See, e.g.*, U.S. Patent Publication Nos. 2002/0048814 and 2003/0018993; and International PCT Publication Nos. WO94/01550 and WO98/05770. A dsRNA molecule may be generated, for example, in the form of a double-stranded structure such as a stem-loop structure (*e.g.*, hairpin), whereby production of siRNA targeted for a native coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest sequence is enhanced by co-expression of a fragment of the targeted gene, for instance on an additional plant expressible cassette, that leads to enhanced siRNA production, or reduces methylation to prevent transcriptional gene silencing of the dsRNA hairpin promoter.

[00217] Embodiments of the disclosure include introduction of a recombinant nucleic acid molecule of the present disclosure into a plant (*i.e.*, transformation) to achieve coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest-inhibitory levels of expression of one or more iRNA molecules. A recombinant DNA molecule may, for example, be a vector, such as a linear or a closed circular plasmid. The vector system may be a single vector or plasmid, or two or more vectors or plasmids that together contain the total DNA to be introduced into the genome of a host. In addition, a vector may be an expression vector. Nucleic acid sequences of the disclosure can, for example, be suitably inserted into a vector under the control of a suitable promoter that functions in one or more hosts to drive expression of a linked coding sequence or other DNA sequence. Many vectors are available for this

-52-

purpose, and selection of the appropriate vector will depend mainly on the size of the nucleic acid to be inserted into the vector and the particular host cell to be transformed with the vector. Each vector contains various components depending on its function (*e.g.*, amplification of DNA or expression of DNA) and the particular host cell with which it is compatible.

[00218] To impart coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest resistance to a transgenic plant, a recombinant DNA may, for example, be transcribed into an iRNA molecule (*e.g.*, an RNA molecule that forms a dsRNA molecule) within the tissues or fluids of the recombinant plant. An iRNA molecule may comprise a nucleotide sequence that is substantially homologous and specifically hybridizable to a corresponding transcribed nucleotide sequence within a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest that may cause damage to the host plant species. The coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest may contact the iRNA molecule that is transcribed in cells of the transgenic host plant, for example, by ingesting cells or fluids of the transgenic host plant that comprise the iRNA molecule. Thus, expression of a target gene is suppressed by the iRNA molecule within coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests that infest the transgenic host plant. In some embodiments, suppression of expression of the target gene in the target coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest may result in the plant being resistant to attack by the pest.

[00219] In order to enable delivery of iRNA molecules to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest in a nutritional relationship with a plant cell that has been transformed with a recombinant nucleic acid molecule of the disclosure, expression (*i.e.*, transcription) of iRNA molecules in the plant cell is required. Thus, a recombinant nucleic acid molecule may comprise a nucleotide sequence of the disclosure operably linked to one or more regulatory sequences, such as a heterologous promoter sequence that functions in a host cell, such as a bacterial cell wherein the nucleic acid molecule is to be amplified, and a plant cell wherein the nucleic acid molecule is to be expressed.

[00220] Promoters suitable for use in nucleic acid molecules of the disclosure include those that are inducible, viral, synthetic, or constitutive, all of which are well known in the art. Non-limiting examples describing such promoters include U.S. Patent Nos. 6,437,217 (maize RS81 promoter); 5,641,876 (rice actin promoter); 6,426,446 (maize RS324 promoter); 6,429,362 (maize PR-1 promoter); 6,232,526 (maize A3 promoter); 6,177,611 (constitutive maize promoters); 5,322,938, 5,352,605, 5,359,142, and 5,530,196 (CaMV 35S promoter); 6,433,252 (maize L3 oleosin promoter);

-53-

6,429,357 (rice actin 2 promoter, and rice actin 2 intron); 6,294,714 (light-inducible promoters); 6,140,078 (salt-inducible promoters); 6,252,138 (pathogen-inducible promoters); 6,175,060 (phosphorous deficiency-inducible promoters); 6,388,170 (bidirectional promoters); 6,635,806 (gamma-coixin promoter); and U.S. Patent Publication No. 2009/757,089 (maize chloroplast aldolase promoter). Additional promoters include the nopaline synthase (NOS) promoter (Ebert *et al.* (1987) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 84(16):5745-5749) and the octopine synthase (OCS) promoters (which are carried on tumor-inducing plasmids of *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*); the caulimovirus promoters such as the cauliflower mosaic virus (CaMV) 19S promoter (Lawton *et al.* (1987) Plant Mol. Biol. 9:315-324); the CaMV 35S promoter (Odell *et al.* (1985) Nature 313:810-812; the figwort mosaic virus 35S-promoter (Walker *et al.* (1987) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 84(19):6624-6628); the sucrose synthase promoter (Yang and Russell (1990) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 87:4144-4148); the R gene complex promoter (Chandler *et al.* (1989) Plant Cell 1:1175-1183); the chlorophyll a/b binding protein gene promoter; CaMV 35S (U.S. Patent Nos. 5,322,938, 5,352,605, 5,359,142, and 5,530,196); FMV 35S (U.S. Patent Nos. 5,378,619 and 6,051,753); a PC1SV promoter (U.S. Patent No. 5,850,019); the SCP1 promoter (U.S. Patent No. 6,677,503); and AGRtu.nos promoters (GenBank™ Accession No. V00087; Depicker *et al.* (1982) J. Mol. Appl. Genet. 1:561-573; Bevan *et al.* (1983) Nature 304:184-187).

[00221] In particular embodiments, nucleic acid molecules of the disclosure comprise a tissue-specific promoter, such as a root-specific promoter. Root-specific promoters drive expression of operably-linked coding sequences exclusively or preferentially in root tissue. Examples of root-specific promoters are known in the art. *See, e.g.*, U.S. Patent Nos. 5,110,732; 5,459,252 and 5,837,848; and Opperman *et al.* (1994) Science 263:221-3; and Hirel *et al.* (1992) Plant Mol. Biol. 20:207-18. In some embodiments, a nucleotide sequence or fragment for coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest control according to the disclosure may be cloned between two root-specific promoters oriented in opposite transcriptional directions relative to the nucleotide sequence or fragment, and which are operable in a transgenic plant cell and expressed therein to produce RNA molecules in the transgenic plant cell that subsequently may form dsRNA molecules, as described, *supra*. The iRNA molecules expressed in plant tissues may be ingested by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest so that suppression of target gene expression is achieved.

-54-

[00222] Additional regulatory sequences that may optionally be operably linked to a nucleic acid molecule of interest include introns and/or 5'UTRs that function as a translation leader sequence located between a promoter sequence and a coding sequence. The translation leader sequence is present in the fully-processed mRNA, and it may affect processing of the primary transcript, and/or RNA stability. Examples of translation leader sequences include maize and petunia heat shock protein leaders (U.S. Patent No. 5,362,865), plant virus coat protein leaders, plant rubisco leaders, and others. *See, e.g.*, Turner and Foster (1995) *Molecular Biotech.* 3(3):225-36. Non-limiting examples of 5'UTRs include GmHsp (U.S. Patent No. 5,659,122); PhDnaK (U.S. Patent No. 5,362,865); AtAnt1; TEV (Carrington and Freed (1990) *J. Virol.* 64:1590-7); and AGRtunos (GenBank™ Accession No. V00087; and Bevan *et al.* (1983) *Nature* 304:184-7). Non-limiting examples of introns include the intron from maize actin depolymerizing factor (U.S. Patent No. 7,071,385); an *Arabidopsis thaliana* intron (U.S. Patent No. 8,673,631); a hsp70 intron (U.S. Patent No. 5,593,874); an intron from rice (U.S. Patent No. 8,088,971); and the rice actin 2 intron (U.S. Patent No. 6,429,357).

[00223] Additional regulatory sequences that may optionally be operably linked to a nucleic acid molecule of interest also include 3' non-translated sequences, 3' transcription termination regions, or poly-adenylation regions. These are genetic elements located downstream of a nucleotide sequence, and include polynucleotides that provide polyadenylation signal, and/or other regulatory signals capable of affecting transcription or mRNA processing. The polyadenylation signal functions in plants to cause the addition of polyadenylate nucleotides to the 3' end of the mRNA precursor. The polyadenylation sequence can be derived from a variety of plant genes, or from T-DNA genes. A non-limiting example of a 3' transcription termination region is the nopaline synthase 3' region (nos 3'; Fraley *et al.* (1983) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 80:4803-7). An example of the use of different 3' nontranslated regions is provided in Ingelbrecht *et al.*, (1989) *Plant Cell* 1:671-80. Non-limiting examples of polyadenylation signals include one from a *Pisum sativum* RbcS2 gene (Ps.RbcS2-E9; Coruzzi *et al.* (1984) *EMBO J.* 3:1671-9) and AGRtu.nos (GenBank™ Accession No. E01312).

[00224] Some embodiments may include a plant transformation vector that comprises an isolated and purified DNA molecule comprising at least one of the above-described regulatory sequences operatively linked to one or more nucleotide sequences of the present disclosure. When

-55-

expressed, the one or more nucleotide sequences result in one or more RNA molecule(s) comprising a nucleotide sequence that is specifically complementary to all or part of a native RNA molecule in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Thus, the nucleotide sequence(s) may comprise a segment encoding all or part of a ribonucleotide sequence present within a targeted coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest RNA transcript, and may comprise inverted repeats of all or a part of a targeted coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest transcript. A plant transformation vector may contain sequences specifically complementary to more than one target sequence, thus allowing production of more than one dsRNA for inhibiting expression of two or more genes in cells of one or more populations or species of target coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests. Segments of nucleotide sequence specifically complementary to nucleotide sequences present in different genes can be combined into a single composite nucleic acid molecule for expression in a transgenic plant. Such segments may be contiguous or separated by a spacer sequence.

[00225] In some embodiments, a plasmid of the present disclosure already containing at least one nucleotide sequence(s) of the disclosure can be modified by the sequential insertion of additional nucleotide sequence(s) in the same plasmid, wherein the additional nucleotide sequence(s) are operably linked to the same regulatory elements as the original at least one nucleotide sequence(s). In some embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule may be designed for the inhibition of multiple target genes. In some embodiments, the multiple genes to be inhibited can be obtained from the same coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest species, which may enhance the effectiveness of the nucleic acid molecule. In other embodiments, the genes can be derived from different coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests, which may broaden the range of coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests against which the agent(s) is/are effective. When multiple genes are targeted for suppression or a combination of expression and suppression, a polycistronic DNA element can be fabricated.

[00226] A recombinant nucleic acid molecule or vector of the present disclosure may comprise a selectable marker that confers a selectable phenotype on a transformed cell, such as a plant cell. Selectable markers may also be used to select for plants or plant cells that comprise a recombinant nucleic acid molecule of the disclosure. The marker may encode biocide resistance, antibiotic resistance (*e.g.*, kanamycin, Geneticin (G418), bleomycin, hygromycin, *etc.*), or herbicide tolerance (*e.g.*, glyphosate, *etc.*). Examples of selectable markers include, but are not limited to: a

-56-

neo gene which codes for kanamycin resistance and can be selected for using kanamycin, G418, *etc.*; a *bar* gene which codes for bialaphos resistance; a mutant EPSP synthase gene which encodes glyphosate resistance; a nitrilase gene which confers resistance to bromoxynil; a mutant acetolactate synthase (*ALS*) gene which confers imidazolinone or sulfonylurea tolerance; and a methotrexate resistant DHFR gene. Multiple selectable markers are available that confer resistance to ampicillin, bleomycin, chloramphenicol, gentamycin, hygromycin, kanamycin, lincomycin, methotrexate, phosphinothricin, puromycin, spectinomycin, rifampicin, streptomycin and tetracycline, and the like. Examples of such selectable markers are illustrated in, *e.g.*, U.S. Patent Nos. 5,550,318; 5,633,435; 5,780,708 and 6,118,047.

[00227] A recombinant nucleic acid molecule or vector of the present disclosure may also include a screenable marker. Screenable markers may be used to monitor expression. Exemplary screenable markers include a β -glucuronidase or *uidA* gene (GUS) which encodes an enzyme for which various chromogenic substrates are known (Jefferson *et al.* (1987) Plant Mol. Biol. Rep. 5:387-405); an R-locus gene, which encodes a product that regulates the production of anthocyanin pigments (red color) in plant tissues (Dellaporta *et al.* (1988) "Molecular cloning of the maize *R-nj* allele by transposon tagging with *Ac*." In 18th Stadler Genetics Symposium, P. Gustafson and R. Appels, eds. (New York: Plenum), pp. 263-82); a β -lactamase gene (Sutcliffe *et al.* (1978) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 75:3737-41); a gene which encodes an enzyme for which various chromogenic substrates are known (*e.g.*, PADAC, a chromogenic cephalosporin); a luciferase gene (Ow *et al.* (1986) Science 234:856-9); an *xyle* gene that encodes a catechol dioxygenase that can convert chromogenic catechols (Zukowski *et al.* (1983) Gene 46(2-3):247-55); an amylase gene (Ikata *et al.* (1990) Bio/Technol. 8:241-2); a tyrosinase gene which encodes an enzyme capable of oxidizing tyrosine to DOPA and dopaquinone which in turn condenses to melanin (Katz *et al.* (1983) J. Gen. Microbiol. 129:2703-14); and an α -galactosidase.

[00228] In some embodiments, recombinant nucleic acid molecules, as described, *supra*, may be used in methods for the creation of transgenic plants and expression of heterologous nucleic acids in plants to prepare transgenic plants that exhibit reduced susceptibility to coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests. Plant transformation vectors can be prepared, for example, by inserting nucleic

-57-

acid molecules encoding iRNA molecules into plant transformation vectors and introducing these into plants.

[00229] Suitable methods for transformation of host cells include any method by which DNA can be introduced into a cell, such as by transformation of protoplasts (*See, e.g.*, U.S. Patent No. 5,508,184), by desiccation/inhibition-mediated DNA uptake (*See, e.g.*, Potrykus *et al.* (1985) *Mol. Gen. Genet.* 199:183-8), by electroporation (*See, e.g.*, U.S. Patent No. 5,384,253), by agitation with silicon carbide fibers (*See, e.g.*, U.S. Patent Nos. 5,302,523 and 5,464,765), by *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation (*See, e.g.*, U.S. Patent Nos. 5,563,055; 5,591,616; 5,693,512; 5,824,877; 5,981,840; and 6,384,301) and by acceleration of DNA-coated particles (*See, e.g.*, U.S. Patent Nos. 5,015,580, 5,550,318, 5,538,880, 6,160,208, 6,399,861, and 6,403,865), *etc.* Techniques that are particularly useful for transforming corn are described, for example, in U.S. Patent Nos. 5,591,616, 7,060,876 and 7,939,328. Through the application of techniques such as these, the cells of virtually any species may be stably transformed. In some embodiments, transforming DNA is integrated into the genome of the host cell. In the case of multicellular species, transgenic cells may be regenerated into a transgenic organism. Any of these techniques may be used to produce a transgenic plant, for example, comprising one or more nucleic acid sequences encoding one or more iRNA molecules in the genome of the transgenic plant.

[00230] The most widely utilized method for introducing an expression vector into plants is based on the natural transformation system of various *Agrobacterium* species. *A. tumefaciens* and *A. rhizogenes* are plant pathogenic soil bacteria which genetically transform plant cells. The Ti and Ri plasmids of *A. tumefaciens* and *A. rhizogenes*, respectively, carry genes responsible for genetic transformation of the plant. The Ti (tumor-inducing)-plasmids contain a large segment, known as T-DNA, which is transferred to transformed plants. Another segment of the Ti plasmid, the Vir region, is responsible for T-DNA transfer. The T-DNA region is bordered by terminal repeats. In modified binary vectors, the tumor-inducing genes have been deleted, and the functions of the Vir region are utilized to transfer foreign DNA bordered by the T-DNA border sequences. The T-region may also contain a selectable marker for efficient recovery of transgenic cells and plants, and a multiple cloning site for inserting sequences for transfer such as a dsRNA encoding nucleic acid.

-58-

[00231] Thus, in some embodiments, a plant transformation vector is derived from a Ti plasmid of *A. tumefaciens* (See, e.g., U.S. Patent Nos. 4,536,475, 4,693,977, 4,886,937, and 5,501,967; and European Patent No. EP 0 122 791) or a Ri plasmid of *A. rhizogenes*. Additional plant transformation vectors include, for example and without limitation, those described by Herrera-Estrella *et al.* (1983) Nature 303:209-13; Bevan *et al.* (1983) Nature 304:184-7; Klee *et al.* (1985) Bio/Technol. 3:637-42; and in European Patent No. EP 0 120 516, and those derived from any of the foregoing. Other bacteria such as *Sinorhizobium*, *Rhizobium*, and *Mesorhizobium* that interact with plants naturally can be modified to mediate gene transfer to a number of diverse plants. These plant-associated symbiotic bacteria can be made competent for gene transfer by acquisition of both a disarmed Ti plasmid and a suitable binary vector.

[00232] After providing exogenous DNA to recipient cells, transformed cells are generally identified for further culturing and plant regeneration. In order to improve the ability to identify transformed cells, one may desire to employ a selectable or screenable marker gene, as previously set forth, with the transformation vector used to generate the transformant. In the case where a selectable marker is used, transformed cells are identified within the potentially transformed cell population by exposing the cells to a selective agent or agents. In the case where a screenable marker is used, cells may be screened for the desired marker gene trait.

[00233] Cells that survive the exposure to the selective agent, or cells that have been scored positive in a screening assay, may be cultured in media that supports regeneration of plants. In some embodiments, any suitable plant tissue culture media (e.g., MS and N6 media) may be modified by including further substances, such as growth regulators. Tissue may be maintained on a basic medium with growth regulators until sufficient tissue is available to begin plant regeneration efforts, or following repeated rounds of manual selection, until the morphology of the tissue is suitable for regeneration (e.g., typically about 2 weeks), then transferred to media conducive to shoot formation. Cultures are transferred periodically until sufficient shoot formation has occurred. Once shoots are formed, they are transferred to media conducive to root formation. Once sufficient roots are formed, plants can be transferred to soil for further growth and maturation.

[00234] To confirm the presence of a nucleic acid molecule of interest (for example, a DNA sequence encoding one or more iRNA molecules that inhibit target gene expression in a coleopteran

and/or hemipteran pest) in the regenerating plants, a variety of assays may be performed. Such assays include, for example: molecular biological assays, such as Southern and northern blotting, PCR, and nucleic acid sequencing; biochemical assays, such as detecting the presence of a protein product, *e.g.*, by immunological means (ELISA and/or immuno blots) or by enzymatic function; plant part assays, such as leaf or root assays; and analysis of the phenotype of the whole regenerated plant.

[00235] Integration events may be analyzed, for example, by PCR amplification using, *e.g.*, oligonucleotide primers specific for a nucleic acid molecule of interest. PCR genotyping is understood to include, but not be limited to, polymerase-chain reaction (PCR) amplification of genomic DNA derived from isolated host plant callus tissue predicted to contain a nucleic acid molecule of interest integrated into the genome, followed by standard cloning and sequence analysis of PCR amplification products. Methods of PCR genotyping have been well described (for example, Rios, G. *et al.* (2002) Plant J. 32:243-53) and may be applied to genomic DNA derived from any plant species (*e.g.*, *Z. mays* or *G. max*) or tissue type, including cell cultures.

[00236] A transgenic plant formed using *Agrobacterium*-dependent transformation methods typically contains a single recombinant DNA sequence inserted into one chromosome. The single recombinant DNA sequence is referred to as a "transgenic event" or "integration event". Such transgenic plants are hemizygous for the inserted exogenous sequence. In some embodiments, a transgenic plant homozygous with respect to a transgene may be obtained by sexually mating (selfing) an independent segregant transgenic plant that contains a single exogenous gene sequence to itself, for example a T₀ plant, to produce T₁ seed. One fourth of the T₁ seed produced will be homozygous with respect to the transgene. Germinating T₁ seed results in plants that can be tested for heterozygosity, typically using an SNP assay or a thermal amplification assay that allows for the distinction between heterozygotes and homozygotes (*i.e.*, a zygosity assay).

[00237] In particular embodiments, at least 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 or more different iRNA molecules that have a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest-inhibitory effect are produced in a plant cell. The iRNA molecules (*e.g.*, dsRNA molecules) may be expressed from multiple nucleic acid sequences introduced in different transformation events, or from a single nucleic acid sequence introduced in a single transformation event. In some embodiments, a plurality of iRNA molecules are expressed under the control of a single promoter. In other embodiments, a plurality of iRNA

-60-

molecules are expressed under the control of multiple promoters. Single iRNA molecules may be expressed that comprise multiple nucleic acid sequences that are each homologous to different loci within one or more coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests (for example, the locus defined by SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78), both in different populations of the same species of coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, or in different species of coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests.

[00238] In addition to direct transformation of a plant with a recombinant nucleic acid molecule, transgenic plants can be prepared by crossing a first plant having at least one transgenic event with a second plant lacking such an event. For example, a recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence that encodes an iRNA molecule may be introduced into a first plant line that is amenable to transformation to produce a transgenic plant, which transgenic plant may be crossed with a second plant line to introgress the nucleotide sequence that encodes the iRNA molecule into the second plant line.

[00239] The disclosure also includes commodity products containing one or more of the sequences as disclosed herein. Particular embodiments include commodity products produced from a recombinant plant or seed containing one or more of the nucleotide sequences of the present disclosure. A commodity product containing one or more of the sequences of the present disclosure is intended to include, but not be limited to, meals, oils, crushed or whole grains or seeds of a plant, or any food or animal feed product comprising any meal, oil, or crushed or whole grain of a recombinant plant or seed containing one or more of the sequences of the present disclosure. The detection of one or more of the sequences of the present disclosure in one or more commodity or commodity products contemplated herein is *de facto* evidence that the commodity or commodity product is produced from a transgenic plant designed to express one or more of the nucleotide sequences of the present disclosure for the purpose of controlling coleopteran and/or hemipteran plant pests using dsRNA-mediated gene suppression methods.

[00240] In some aspects, seeds and commodity products produced by transgenic plants derived from transformed plant cells are included, wherein the seeds or commodity products comprise a detectable amount of a nucleic acid sequence of the disclosure. In some embodiments, such commodity products may be produced, for example, by obtaining transgenic plants and preparing

-61-

food or feed from them. Commodity products comprising one or more of the nucleic acid sequences of the disclosure includes, for example and without limitation: meals, oils, crushed or whole grains or seeds of a plant, and any food product comprising any meal, oil, or crushed or whole grain of a recombinant plant or seed comprising one or more of the nucleic acid sequences of the disclosure. The detection of one or more of the sequences of the disclosure in one or more commodity or commodity products is *de facto* evidence that the commodity or commodity product is produced from a transgenic plant designed to express one or more of the iRNA molecules of the disclosure for the purpose of controlling coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests.

[00241] In some embodiments, a transgenic plant or seed comprising a nucleic acid molecule of the disclosure also may comprise at least one other transgenic event in its genome, including without limitation: a transgenic event from which is transcribed an iRNA molecule targeting a locus in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest other than the one defined by SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, or SEQ ID NO:78, such as, for example, one or more loci selected from the group consisting of Caf1-180 (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2012/0174258), VatpaseC (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2012/0174259), Rho1 (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2012/0174260), VatpaseH (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2012/0198586), PPI-87B (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2013/0091600), RPA70 (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2013/0091601), RPS6 (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2013/0097730), *ROP* (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 14/577,811), *RNA polymerase II* (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 62/133,214), *RNA polymerase III40* (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 14/577,854), *RNA polymerase II215* (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 62/133,202), *RNA polymerase II33* (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 62/133,210), *ncm* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/095487), *Dre4* (U.S. Patent Application No. 14/705,807), *COPI alpha* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/063,199), *COPI beta* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/063,203), *COPI gamma* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/063,192), *COPI delta* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/063,216), *snap25* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/193502), *transcription elongation factor spt5* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/168,613), and *transcription elongation factor spt6* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/168,606); a transgenic event from which is transcribed an iRNA molecule targeting a gene in an organism other than a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest (*e.g.*, a plant-parasitic nematode); a gene encoding an insecticidal protein (*e.g.*,

-62-

a *Bacillus thuringiensis* insecticidal protein, such as, for example, Cry34Ab1 (U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,127,180, 6,340,593, and 6,624,145), Cry35Ab1 (U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,083,499, 6,340,593, and 6,548,291), a “Cry34/35Ab1” combination in a single event (*e.g.*, maize event DAS-59122-7; U.S. Pat. No. 7,323,556), Cry3A (*e.g.*, U.S. Pat. No. 7,230,167), Cry3B (*e.g.*, U. S. Patent No. 8,101,826), Cry6A (*e.g.*, U.S. Pat. No. 6,831,062), and combinations thereof (*e.g.*, U.S. Patent Application Nos. 2013/0167268, 2013/0167269, and 2013/0180016); a herbicide tolerance gene (*e.g.*, a gene providing tolerance to glyphosate, glufosinate, dicamba or 2,4-D (*e.g.*, U.S. Pat. No. 7,838,733)); and a gene contributing to a desirable phenotype in the transgenic plant, such as increased yield, altered fatty acid metabolism, or restoration of cytoplasmic male sterility. In particular embodiments, sequences encoding iRNA molecules of the disclosure may be combined with other insect control or with disease resistance traits in a plant to achieve desired traits for enhanced control of insect damage and plant disease. Combining insect control traits that employ distinct modes-of-action may provide protected transgenic plants with superior durability over plants harboring a single control trait, for example, because of the reduced probability that resistance to the trait(s) will develop in the field.

[00242] V. Target Gene Suppression in a Coleopteran and/or Hemipteran Pest

[00243] A. Overview

[00244] In some embodiments of the disclosure, at least one nucleic acid molecule useful for the control of coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests may be provided to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, wherein the nucleic acid molecule leads to RNAi-mediated gene silencing in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In particular embodiments, an iRNA molecule (*e.g.*, dsRNA, siRNA, miRNA, shRNA, and hpRNA) may be provided to the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In some embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule useful for the control of coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests may be provided to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest by contacting the nucleic acid molecule with the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In these and further embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule useful for the control of coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests may be provided in a feeding substrate of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, for example, a nutritional composition. In these and further embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule useful for the control of coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests may be provided through ingestion of plant material comprising the nucleic acid

-63-

molecule that is ingested by the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In certain embodiments, the nucleic acid molecule is present in plant material through expression of a recombinant nucleic acid sequence introduced into the plant material, for example, by transformation of a plant cell with a vector comprising the recombinant nucleic acid sequence and regeneration of a plant material or whole plant from the transformed plant cell.

[00245] B. RNAi-mediated Target Gene Suppression

[00246] In embodiments, the disclosure provides iRNA molecules (*e.g.*, dsRNA, siRNA, miRNA, shRNA, and hpRNA) that may be designed to target essential native nucleotide sequences (*e.g.*, essential genes) in the transcriptome of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest (*e.g.*, WCR, NCR, MCR, BSB, *Nezara viridula*, *Piezodorus guildinii*, *Halyomorpha halys*, *Acrosternum hilare*, and *Euschistus servus*), for example by designing an iRNA molecule that comprises at least one strand comprising a nucleotide sequence that is specifically complementary to the target sequence. The sequence of an iRNA molecule so designed may be identical to the target sequence, or may incorporate mismatches that do not prevent specific hybridization between the iRNA molecule and its target sequence.

[00247] iRNA molecules of the disclosure may be used in methods for gene suppression in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, thereby reducing the level or incidence of damage caused by the pest on a plant (for example, a protected transformed plant comprising an iRNA molecule). As used herein the term "gene suppression" refers to any of the well-known methods for reducing the levels of protein produced as a result of gene transcription to mRNA and subsequent translation of the mRNA, including the reduction of protein expression from a gene or a coding sequence including post-transcriptional inhibition of expression and transcriptional suppression. Post-transcriptional inhibition is mediated by specific homology between all or a part of an mRNA transcribed from a gene targeted for suppression and the corresponding iRNA molecule used for suppression. Additionally, post-transcriptional inhibition refers to the substantial and measurable reduction of the amount of mRNA available in the cell for binding by ribosomes.

[00248] In embodiments wherein an iRNA molecule is a dsRNA molecule, the dsRNA molecule may be cleaved by the enzyme, DICER, into short siRNA molecules (approximately 20 nucleotides in length). The double-stranded siRNA molecule generated by DICER activity upon the

-64-

dsRNA molecule may be separated into two single-stranded siRNAs; the "passenger strand" and the "guide strand". The passenger strand may be degraded, and the guide strand may be incorporated into RISC. Post-transcriptional inhibition occurs by specific hybridization of the guide strand with a specifically complementary sequence of an mRNA molecule, and subsequent cleavage by the enzyme, Argonaute (catalytic component of the RISC complex).

[00249] In embodiments of the disclosure, any form of iRNA molecule may be used. Those of skill in the art will understand that dsRNA molecules typically are more stable than are single-stranded RNA molecules, during preparation and during the step of providing the iRNA molecule to a cell, and are typically also more stable in a cell. Thus, while siRNA and miRNA molecules, for example, may be equally effective in some embodiments, a dsRNA molecule may be chosen due to its stability.

[00250] In particular embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule is provided that comprises a nucleotide sequence, which nucleotide sequence may be expressed *in vitro* to produce an iRNA molecule that is substantially homologous to a nucleic acid molecule encoded by a nucleotide sequence within the genome of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In certain embodiments, the *in vitro* transcribed iRNA molecule may be a stabilized dsRNA molecule that comprises a stem-loop structure. After a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest contacts the *in vitro* transcribed iRNA molecule, post-transcriptional inhibition of a target gene in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest (for example, an essential gene) may occur.

[00251] In some embodiments of the disclosure, expression of a nucleic acid molecule comprising at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a nucleotide sequence is used in a method for post-transcriptional inhibition of a target gene in a coleopteran pest, wherein the nucleotide sequence is selected from the group consisting of: SEQ ID NO:1; the complement of SEQ ID NO:1; SEQ ID NO:3; the complement of SEQ ID NO:3; SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of SEQ ID NO:5; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism (e.g., WCR) comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; a native non-coding sequence

-65-

of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism (e.g., WCR) comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; and the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5. In certain embodiments, expression of a nucleic acid molecule that is at least 80% identical (e.g., 80%, about 81%, about 82%, about 83%, about 84%, about 85%, about 86%, about 87%, about 88%, about 89%, about 90%, about 91%, about 92%, about 93%, about 94%, about 95%, about 96%, about 97%, about 98%, about 99%, about 100%, and 100%) with any of the foregoing may be used. In these and further embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule may be expressed that specifically hybridizes to an RNA molecule present in at least one cell of a coleopteran pest.

[00252] In certain embodiments of the disclosure, expression of a nucleic acid molecule comprising at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a nucleotide sequence is used in a method for post-transcriptional inhibition of a target gene in a hemipteran pest, wherein the nucleotide sequence is selected from the group consisting of: SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:78; a native coding sequence of a hemipteran organism SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a native coding sequence of a hemipteran organism comprising SEQ ID NO:78; a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78; the

-66-

complement of a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a hemipteran organism comprising SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a hemipteran organism comprising SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78; and the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78. In certain embodiments, expression of a nucleic acid molecule that is at least 80% identical (e.g., 80%, about 81%, about 82%, about 83%, about 84%, about 85%, about 86%, about 87%, about 88%, about 89%, about 90%, about 91%, about 92%, about 93%, about 94%, about 95%, about 96%, about 97%, about 98%, about 99%, about 100%, and 100%) with any of the foregoing may be used. In these and further embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule may be expressed that specifically hybridizes to an RNA molecule present in at least one cell of a hemipteran pest.

[00253] In some embodiments, expression of at least one nucleic acid molecule comprising at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a nucleotide sequence may be used in a method for post-transcriptional inhibition of a target gene in a coleopteran pest, wherein the nucleotide sequence is selected from the group consisting of: SEQ ID NO:1; the complement of SEQ ID NO:1; SEQ ID NO:3; the complement of SEQ ID NO:3; SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of SEQ ID NO:5; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism (e.g., WCR) comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism (e.g., WCR) comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding

-67-

sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism (*e.g.*, WCR) comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; and the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5. In certain embodiments, expression of a nucleic acid molecule that is at least 80% identical (*e.g.*, 80%, about 81%, about 82%, about 83%, about 84%, about 85%, about 86%, about 87%, about 88%, about 89%, about 90%, about 91%, about 92%, about 93%, about 94%, about 95%, about 96%, about 97%, about 98%, about 99%, about 100%, and 100%) with any of the foregoing may be used. In these and further embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule may be expressed that specifically hybridizes to an RNA molecule present in at least one cell of a coleopteran pest. In particular examples, such a nucleic acid molecule may comprise a nucleotide sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5.

[00254] In particular embodiments of the disclosure, expression of a nucleic acid molecule comprising at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a nucleotide sequence is used in a method for post-transcriptional inhibition of a target gene in a hemipteran pest, wherein the nucleotide sequence is selected from the group consisting of: SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:78; a native coding sequence of a hemipteran organism SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a native coding sequence of a hemipteran organism comprising SEQ ID NO:78; a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a hemipteran organism comprising SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a hemipteran

-68-

organism comprising SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78; and the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native non-coding sequence of a hemipteran organism that is transcribed into a native RNA molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:78. In certain embodiments, expression of a nucleic acid molecule that is at least 80% identical (e.g., 80%, about 81%, about 82%, about 83%, about 84%, about 85%, about 86%, about 87%, about 88%, about 89%, about 90%, about 91%, about 92%, about 93%, about 94%, about 95%, about 96%, about 97%, about 98%, about 99%, about 100%, and 100%) with any of the foregoing may be used. In these and further embodiments, a nucleic acid molecule may be expressed that specifically hybridizes to an RNA molecule present in at least one cell of a hemipteran pest. In particular examples, such a nucleic acid molecule may comprise a nucleotide sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:78.

[00255] It is an important feature of some embodiments of the disclosure that the RNAi post-transcriptional inhibition system is able to tolerate sequence variations among target genes that might be expected due to genetic mutation, strain polymorphism, or evolutionary divergence. The introduced nucleic acid molecule may not need to be absolutely homologous to either a primary transcription product or a fully-processed mRNA of a target gene, so long as the introduced nucleic acid molecule is specifically hybridizable to either a primary transcription product or a fully-processed mRNA of the target gene. Moreover, the introduced nucleic acid molecule may not need to be full-length, relative to either a primary transcription product or a fully processed mRNA of the target gene.

[00256] Inhibition of a target gene using the iRNA technology of the present disclosure is sequence-specific; *i.e.*, nucleotide sequences substantially homologous to the iRNA molecule(s) are targeted for genetic inhibition. In some embodiments, an RNA molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence identical to a portion of a target gene sequence may be used for inhibition. In these and further embodiments, an RNA molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence with one or more insertion, deletion, and/or point mutations relative to a target gene sequence may be used. In particular embodiments, an iRNA molecule and a portion of a target gene may share, for example, at least from about 80%, at least from about 81%, at least from about 82%, at least from about 83%, at least from about 84%, at least from about 85%, at least from about 86%, at least from about 87%, at least from

-69-

about 88%, at least from about 89%, at least from about 90%, at least from about 91%, at least from about 92%, at least from about 93%, at least from about 94%, at least from about 95%, at least from about 96%, at least from about 97%, at least from about 98%, at least from about 99%, at least from about 100%, and 100% sequence identity. Alternatively, the duplex region of a dsRNA molecule may be specifically hybridizable with a portion of a target gene transcript. In specifically hybridizable molecules, a less than full length sequence exhibiting a greater homology compensates for a longer, less homologous sequence. The length of the nucleotide sequence of a duplex region of a dsRNA molecule that is identical to a portion of a target gene transcript may be at least about 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, or at least about 1000 bases. In some embodiments, a sequence of greater than 15 to 100 nucleotides may be used. In particular embodiments, a sequence of greater than about 200 to 300 nucleotides may be used. In particular embodiments, a sequence of greater than about 500 to 1000 nucleotides may be used, depending on the size of the target gene.

[00257] In certain embodiments, expression of a target gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest may be inhibited by at least 10%; at least 33%; at least 50%; or at least 80% within a cell of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, such that a significant inhibition takes place. Significant inhibition refers to inhibition over a threshold that results in a detectable phenotype (*e.g.*, cessation of growth, cessation of feeding, cessation of development, induced mortality, *etc.*), or a detectable decrease in RNA and/or gene product corresponding to the target gene being inhibited. Although in certain embodiments of the disclosure inhibition occurs in substantially all cells of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, in other embodiments inhibition occurs only in a subset of cells expressing the target gene.

[00258] In some embodiments, transcriptional suppression in a cell is mediated by the presence of a dsRNA molecule exhibiting substantial sequence identity to a promoter DNA sequence or the complement thereof, to effect what is referred to as "promoter trans suppression". Gene suppression may be effective against target genes in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest that may ingest or contact such dsRNA molecules, for example, by ingesting or contacting plant material containing the dsRNA molecules. dsRNA molecules for use in promoter trans suppression may be specifically designed to inhibit or suppress the expression of one or more homologous or

-70-

complementary sequences in the cells of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Post-transcriptional gene suppression by antisense or sense oriented RNA to regulate gene expression in plant cells is disclosed in U.S. Patent Nos. 5,107,065, 5,231,020, 5,283,184, and 5,759,829.

[00259] C. Expression of iRNA Molecules Provided to a Coleopteran and/or Hemipteran Pest

[00260] Expression of iRNA molecules for RNAi-mediated gene inhibition in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest may be carried out in any one of many *in vitro* or *in vivo* formats. The iRNA molecules may then be provided to a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, for example, by contacting the iRNA molecules with the pest, or by causing the pest to ingest or otherwise internalize the iRNA molecules. Some embodiments of the disclosure include transformed host plants of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, transformed plant cells, and progeny of transformed plants. The transformed plant cells and transformed plants may be engineered to express one or more of the iRNA molecules, for example, under the control of a heterologous promoter, to provide a pest-protective effect. Thus, when a transgenic plant or plant cell is consumed by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest during feeding, the pest may ingest iRNA molecules expressed in the transgenic plants or cells. The nucleotide sequences of the present disclosure may also be introduced into a wide variety of prokaryotic and eukaryotic microorganism hosts to produce iRNA molecules. The term "microorganism" includes prokaryotic and eukaryotic species, such as bacteria and fungi.

[00261] Modulation of gene expression may include partial or complete suppression of such expression. In another embodiment, a method for suppression of gene expression in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest comprises providing in the tissue of the host of the pest a gene-suppressive amount of at least one dsRNA molecule formed following transcription of a nucleotide sequence as described herein, at least one segment of which is complementary to an mRNA sequence within the cells of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. A dsRNA molecule, including its modified form such as an siRNA, miRNA, shRNA, or hpRNA molecule, ingested by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest in accordance with the disclosure, may be at least from about 80%, about 81%, about 82%, about 83%, about 84%, about 85%, about 86%, about 87%, about 88%, about 89%, about 90%, about 91%, about 92%, about 93%, about 94%, about 95%, about 96%, about 97%, about 98%, about 99%, about 100%, or 100% identical to an RNA molecule transcribed from a nucleic acid molecule

-71-

comprising a nucleotide sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5 or SEQ ID NO:78. Isolated and substantially purified nucleic acid molecules including, but not limited to, non-naturally occurring nucleotide sequences and recombinant DNA constructs for providing dsRNA molecules of the present disclosure are therefore provided, which suppress or inhibit the expression of an endogenous coding sequence or a target coding sequence in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest when introduced thereto.

[00262] Particular embodiments provide a delivery system for the delivery of iRNA molecules for the post-transcriptional inhibition of one or more target gene(s) in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran plant pest and control of a population of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran plant pest. In some embodiments, the delivery system comprises ingestion of a host transgenic plant cell or contents of the host cell comprising RNA molecules transcribed in the host cell. In these and further embodiments, a transgenic plant cell or a transgenic plant is created that contains a recombinant DNA construct providing a stabilized dsRNA molecule of the disclosure. Transgenic plant cells and transgenic plants comprising nucleic acid sequences encoding a particular iRNA molecule may be produced by employing recombinant DNA technologies (which basic technologies are well-known in the art) to construct a plant transformation vector comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding an iRNA molecule of the disclosure (*e.g.*, a stabilized dsRNA molecule); to transform a plant cell or plant; and to generate the transgenic plant cell or the transgenic plant that contains the transcribed iRNA molecule.

[00263] To impart coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest resistance to a transgenic plant, a recombinant DNA molecule may, for example, be transcribed into an iRNA molecule, such as a dsRNA molecule, an siRNA molecule, an miRNA molecule, an shRNA molecule, or an hpRNA molecule. In some embodiments, an RNA molecule transcribed from a recombinant DNA molecule may form a dsRNA molecule within the tissues or fluids of the recombinant plant. Such a dsRNA molecule may be comprised in part of a nucleotide sequence that is identical to a corresponding nucleotide sequence transcribed from a DNA sequence within a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest of a type that may infest the host plant. Expression of a target gene within the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest is suppressed by the ingested dsRNA molecule, and the suppression of expression of the target gene in the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest results in, for example, cessation of feeding

-72-

by the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, with an ultimate result being, for example, that the transgenic plant is protected from further damage by the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. The modulatory effects of dsRNA molecules have been shown to be applicable to a variety of genes expressed in pests, including, for example, endogenous genes responsible for cellular metabolism or cellular transformation, including house-keeping genes; transcription factors; molting-related genes; and other genes which encode polypeptides involved in cellular metabolism or normal growth and development.

[00264] For transcription from a transgene *in vivo* or an expression construct, a regulatory region (*e.g.*, promoter, enhancer, silencer, and polyadenylation signal) may be used in some embodiments to transcribe the RNA strand (or strands). Therefore, in some embodiments, as set forth, *supra*, a nucleotide sequence for use in producing iRNA molecules may be operably linked to one or more promoter sequences functional in a plant host cell. The promoter may be an endogenous promoter, normally resident in the host genome. The nucleotide sequence of the present disclosure, under the control of an operably linked promoter sequence, may further be flanked by additional sequences that advantageously affect its transcription and/or the stability of a resulting transcript. Such sequences may be located upstream of the operably linked promoter, downstream of the 3' end of the expression construct, and may occur both upstream of the promoter and downstream of the 3' end of the expression construct.

[00265] Some embodiments provide methods for reducing the damage to a host plant (*e.g.*, a corn plant) caused by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest that feeds on the plant, wherein the method comprises providing in the host plant a transformed plant cell expressing at least one nucleic acid molecule of the disclosure, wherein the nucleic acid molecule(s) functions upon being taken up by the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest to inhibit the expression of a target sequence within the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, which inhibition of expression results in mortality, reduced growth, and/or reduced reproduction of the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, thereby reducing the damage to the host plant caused by the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. In some embodiments, the nucleic acid molecule(s) comprise dsRNA molecules. In these and further embodiments, the nucleic acid molecule(s) comprise dsRNA molecules that each comprise more than one nucleotide sequence that is specifically hybridizable to a nucleic acid molecule expressed in a coleopteran and/or

-73-

hemipteran pest cell. In some embodiments, the nucleic acid molecule(s) consist of one nucleotide sequence that is specifically hybridizable to a nucleic acid molecule expressed in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest cell.

[00266] In other embodiments, a method for increasing the yield of a crop (e.g., corn crop) is provided, wherein the method comprises introducing into a plant (e.g., corn plant) at least one nucleic acid molecule of the disclosure; cultivating the plant (e.g., corn plant) to allow the expression of an iRNA molecule comprising the nucleic acid sequence, wherein expression of an iRNA molecule comprising the nucleic acid sequence inhibits coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest growth and/or coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest damage, thereby reducing or eliminating a loss of yield due to coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest infestation. In some embodiments, the iRNA molecule is a dsRNA molecule. In these and further embodiments, the nucleic acid molecule(s) comprise dsRNA molecules that each comprise more than one nucleotide sequence that is specifically hybridizable to a nucleic acid molecule expressed in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest cell. In some embodiments, the nucleic acid molecule(s) consists of one nucleotide sequence that is specifically hybridizable to a nucleic acid molecule expressed in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest cell.

[00267] In some embodiments, a method for modulating the expression of a target gene in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest is provided, the method comprising: transforming a plant cell with a vector comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding at least one nucleic acid molecule of the disclosure, wherein the nucleotide sequence is operatively-linked to a promoter and a transcription termination sequence; culturing the transformed plant cell under conditions sufficient to allow for development of a plant cell culture including a plurality of transformed plant cells; selecting for transformed plant cells that have integrated the nucleic acid molecule into their genomes; screening the transformed plant cells for expression of an iRNA molecule encoded by the integrated nucleic acid molecule; selecting a transgenic plant cell that expresses the iRNA molecule; and feeding the selected transgenic plant cell to the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Plants may also be regenerated from transformed plant cells that express an iRNA molecule encoded by the integrated nucleic acid molecule. In some embodiments, the iRNA molecule is a dsRNA molecule. In these and further embodiments, the nucleic acid molecule(s) comprise dsRNA molecules that each comprise more than one nucleotide sequence that is specifically hybridizable to a nucleic acid

-74-

molecule expressed in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest cell. In some embodiments, the nucleic acid molecule(s) consists of one nucleotide sequence that is specifically hybridizable to a nucleic acid molecule expressed in a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest cell.

[00268] iRNA molecules of the disclosure can be incorporated within the seeds of a plant species (*e.g.*, corn), either as a product of expression from a recombinant gene incorporated into a genome of the plant cells, or as incorporated into a coating or seed treatment that is applied to the seed before planting. A plant cell comprising a recombinant gene is considered to be a transgenic event. Also included in embodiments of the disclosure are delivery systems for the delivery of iRNA molecules to coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests. For example, the iRNA molecules of the disclosure may be directly introduced into the cells of a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. Methods for introduction may include direct mixing of iRNA with plant tissue from a host for the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest, as well as application of compositions comprising iRNA molecules of the disclosure to host plant tissue. For example, iRNA molecules may be sprayed onto a plant surface. Alternatively, an iRNA molecule may be expressed by a microorganism, and the microorganism may be applied onto the plant surface, or introduced into a root or stem by a physical means such as an injection. As discussed, *supra*, a transgenic plant may also be genetically engineered to express at least one iRNA molecule in an amount sufficient to kill the coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests known to infest the plant. iRNA molecules produced by chemical or enzymatic synthesis may also be formulated in a manner consistent with common agricultural practices, and used as spray-on products for controlling plant damage by a coleopteran and/or hemipteran pest. The formulations may include the appropriate stickers and wetters required for efficient foliar coverage, as well as UV protectants to protect iRNA molecules (*e.g.*, dsRNA molecules) from UV damage. Such additives are commonly used in the bioinsecticide industry, and are well known to those skilled in the art. Such applications may be combined with other spray-on insecticide applications (biologically based or otherwise) to enhance plant protection from coleopteran and/or hemipteran pests.

[00269] All references, including publications, patents, and patent applications, cited herein are hereby incorporated by reference to the extent they are not inconsistent with the explicit details of this disclosure, and are so incorporated to the same extent as if each reference were individually and specifically indicated to be incorporated by reference and were set forth in its entirety herein. The

-75-

references discussed herein are provided solely for their disclosure prior to the filing date of the present application. Nothing herein is to be construed as an admission that the inventors are not entitled to antedate such disclosure by virtue of prior invention.

[00270] The following EXAMPLES are provided to illustrate certain particular features and/or aspects. These EXAMPLES should not be construed to limit the disclosure to the particular features or aspects described.

EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1

Insect Diet Bioassays

[00271] Sample preparation and bioassays; A number of dsRNA molecules (including those corresponding to *rab5* reg1 (SEQ ID NO:7), *rab5* reg2 (SEQ ID NO:8), *rab5* reg3 (SEQ ID NO:9), and *rab5* ver1 (SEQ ID NO:10) were synthesized and purified using a MEGASCRIP[®] RNAi kit or HiScribe[®] T7 In Vitro Transcription Kit. The purified dsRNA molecules were prepared in TE buffer, and all bioassays contained a control treatment consisting of this buffer, which served as a background check for mortality or growth inhibition of WCR (*Diabrotica virgifera virgifera* LeConte). The concentrations of dsRNA molecules in the bioassay buffer were measured using a NANODROP[™] 8000 spectrophotometer (THERMO SCIENTIFIC, Wilmington, DE).

[00272] Samples were tested for insect activity in bioassays conducted with neonate insect larvae on artificial insect diet. WCR eggs were obtained from CROP CHARACTERISTICS, INC. (Farmington, MN).

[00273] The bioassays were conducted in 128-well plastic trays specifically designed for insect bioassays (C-D INTERNATIONAL, Pitman, NJ). Each well contained approximately 1.0 mL of an artificial diet designed for growth of coleopteran insects. A 60 μ L aliquot of dsRNA sample was delivered by pipette onto the surface of the diet of each well (40 μ L/cm²). dsRNA sample concentrations were calculated as the amount of dsRNA per square centimeter (ng/cm²) of surface area (1.5 cm²) in the well. The treated trays were held in a fume hood until the liquid on the diet surface evaporated or was absorbed into the diet.

-76-

[00274] Within a few hours of eclosion, individual larvae were picked up with a moistened camel hair brush and deposited on the treated diet (one or two larvae per well). The infested wells of the 128-well plastic trays were then sealed with adhesive sheets of clear plastic, and vented to allow gas exchange. Bioassay trays were held under controlled environmental conditions (28°C, ~40% Relative Humidity, 16:8 (Light: Dark)) for 9 days, after which time the total number of insects exposed to each sample, the number of dead insects, and the weight of surviving insects were recorded. Average percent mortality and average growth inhibition were calculated for each treatment. Growth inhibition (GI) was calculated as follows:

$$GI = [1 - (TWIT/TNIT)/(TWIBC/TNIBC)]$$

where TWIT is the Total Weight of live Insects in the Treatment;

TNIT is the Total Number of Insects in the Treatment;

TWIBC is the Total Weight of live Insects in the Background Check (Buffer control);
and

TNIBC is the Total Number of Insects in the Background Check (Buffer control).

[00275] Statistical analysis was done using JMP™ software (SAS, Cary, NC).

[00276] LC₅₀ (Lethal Concentration) is defined as the dosage at which 50% of the test insects are killed. GI₅₀ (Growth Inhibition) is defined as the dosage at which the mean growth (*e.g.* live weight) of the test insects is 50% of the mean value seen in Background Check samples.

[00277] Replicated bioassays demonstrated that ingestion of particular samples resulted in a surprising and unexpected mortality and growth inhibition of corn rootworm larvae.

EXAMPLE 2

Identification of Candidate Target Genes

[00278] Multiple stages of WCR (*Diabrotica virgifera virgifera* LeConte) development were selected for pooled transcriptome analysis to provide candidate target gene sequences for control by RNAi transgenic plant insect resistance technology.

[00279] In one exemplification, total RNA was isolated from about 0.9 gm whole first-instar WCR larvae; (4 to 5 days post-hatch; held at 16°C), and purified using the following phenol/TRI REAGENT®-based method (MOLECULAR RESEARCH CENTER, Cincinnati, OH):

-77-

[00280] Larvae were homogenized at room temperature in a 15 mL homogenizer with 10 mL of TRI REAGENT[®] until a homogenous suspension was obtained. Following 5 min. incubation at room temperature, the homogenate was dispensed into 1.5 mL microfuge tubes (1 mL per tube), 200 μ L of chloroform was added, and the mixture was vigorously shaken for 15 seconds. After allowing the extraction to sit at room temperature for 10 min, the phases were separated by centrifugation at 12,000 x g at 4°C. The upper phase (comprising about 0.6 mL) was carefully transferred into another sterile 1.5 mL tube, and an equal volume of room temperature isopropanol was added. After incubation at room temperature for 5 to 10 min, the mixture was centrifuged 8 min at 12,000 x g (4°C or 25°C).

[00281] The supernatant was carefully removed and discarded, and the RNA pellet was washed twice by vortexing with 75% ethanol, with recovery by centrifugation for 5 min at 7,500 x g (4°C or 25°C) after each wash. The ethanol was carefully removed, the pellet was allowed to air-dry for 3 to 5 min, and then was dissolved in nuclease-free sterile water. RNA concentration was determined by measuring the absorbance (A) at 260 nm and 280 nm. A typical extraction from about 0.9 gm of larvae yielded over 1 mg of total RNA, with an A_{260}/A_{280} ratio of 1.9. The RNA thus extracted was stored at -80°C until further processed.

[00282] RNA quality was determined by running an aliquot through a 1% agarose gel. The agarose gel solution was made using autoclaved 10x TAE buffer (Tris-acetate EDTA; 1x concentration is 0.04 M Tris-acetate, 1 mM EDTA (ethylenediamine tetra-acetic acid sodium salt), pH 8.0) diluted with DEPC (diethyl pyrocarbonate)-treated water in an autoclaved container. 1x TAE was used as the running buffer. Before use, the electrophoresis tank and the well-forming comb were cleaned with RNaseAway[™] (INVITROGEN INC., Carlsbad, CA). Two μ L of RNA sample were mixed with 8 μ L of TE buffer (10 mM Tris HCl pH 7.0; 1 mM EDTA) and 10 μ L of RNA sample buffer (NOVAGEN[®] Catalog No 70606; EMD4 Bioscience, Gibbstown, NJ). The sample was heated at 70°C for 3 min, cooled to room temperature, and 5 μ L (containing 1 μ g to 2 μ g RNA) were loaded per well. Commercially available RNA molecular weight markers were simultaneously run in separate wells for molecular size comparison. The gel was run at 60 volts for 2 hr.

[00283] A normalized cDNA library was prepared from the larval total RNA by a commercial service provider (EUROFINS MWG Operon, Huntsville, AL), using random priming.

-78-

The normalized larval cDNA library was sequenced at 1/2 plate scale by GS FLX 454 Titanium™ series chemistry at EUROFINs MWG Operon, which resulted in over 600,000 reads with an average read length of 348 bp. 350,000 reads were assembled into over 50,000 contigs. Both the unassembled reads and the contigs were converted into BLASTable databases using the publicly available program, FORMATDB (available from NCBI).

[00284] Total RNA and normalized cDNA libraries were similarly prepared from materials harvested at other WCR developmental stages. A pooled transcriptome library for target gene screening was constructed by combining cDNA library members representing the various developmental stages.

[00285] Candidate genes for RNAi targeting were selected using information regarding lethal RNAi effects of particular genes in other insects such as *Drosophila* and *Tribolium*. These genes were hypothesized to be essential for survival and growth in coleopteran insects. Selected target gene homologs were identified in the transcriptome sequence database as described below. Full-length or partial sequences of the target genes were amplified by PCR to prepare templates for double-stranded RNA (dsRNA) production.

[00286] TBLASTN searches using candidate protein coding sequences were run against BLASTable databases containing the unassembled *Diabrotica* sequence reads or the assembled contigs. Significant hits to a *Diabrotica* sequence (defined as better than e^{-20} for contigs homologies and better than e^{-10} for unassembled sequence reads homologies) were confirmed using BLASTX against the NCBI non-redundant database. The results of this BLASTX search confirmed that the *Diabrotica* homolog candidate gene sequences identified in the TBLASTN search indeed comprised *Diabrotica* genes, or were the best hit to the non-*Diabrotica* candidate gene sequence present in the *Diabrotica* sequences. In most cases, *Tribolium* candidate genes which were annotated as encoding a protein gave an unambiguous sequence homology to a sequence or sequences in the *Diabrotica* transcriptome sequences. In a few cases, it was clear that some of the *Diabrotica* contigs or unassembled sequence reads selected by homology to a non-*Diabrotica* candidate gene overlapped, and that the assembly of the contigs had failed to join these overlaps. In those cases, Sequencher™ v4.9 (GENE CODES CORPORATION, Ann Arbor, MI) was used to assemble the sequences into longer contigs.

-79-

[00287] A candidate target gene encoding *Diabrotica rab5* (SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, and SEQ ID NO:5) was identified as a gene that may lead to coleopteran pest mortality, inhibition of growth, inhibition of development, or inhibition of reproduction in WCR.

[00288] The sequences of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, and SEQ ID NO:5 are novel. These sequences are not provided in public databases and are not disclosed in WO/2011/025860; U.S. Patent Application No. 20070124836; U.S. Patent Application No. 20090306189; U.S. Patent Application No. 2007005086; U.S. Patent Application No. 2010019226; or US Patent No. 7612194.

[00289] *rab5* dsRNA transgenes can be combined with other dsRNA molecules to provide redundant RNAi targeting and unexpected RNAi effects (e.g., synergistic RNAi effects). Transgenic corn events expressing dsRNA that targets *rab5* are useful for preventing root feeding damage by corn rootworm. *rab5* dsRNA transgenes represent new modes of action for combining with *Bacillus thuringiensis* insecticidal protein technology in Insect Resistance Management gene pyramids (or stacks) to mitigate against the development of rootworm populations resistant to either of these rootworm control technologies.

[00290] Full-length or partial clones of sequences of a *Diabrotica* candidate gene, herein referred to as *rab5*, were used to generate PCR amplicons for dsRNA synthesis.

[00291] SEQ ID NO:1 shows a 3710 bp DNA sequence of *Diabrotica rab5-1*.

[00292] SEQ ID NO:3 shows a 1005 bp DNA sequence of *Diabrotica rab5-2*.

[00293] SEQ ID NO:5 shows a 544 bp DNA sequence of *Diabrotica rab5-3*.

[00294] SEQ ID NO:7 shows a 444 bp DNA sequence of *rab5* reg1.

[00295] SEQ ID NO:8 shows a 491 bp DNA sequence of *rab5* reg2.

[00296] SEQ ID NO:9 shows a 474 bp DNA sequence of *rab5* reg3.

[00297] SEQ ID NO:10 shows a 128 bp DNA sequence of *rab5* v1.

EXAMPLE 3

Amplification of Target Genes to produce dsRNA

[00298] Primers were designed to amplify portions of coding regions of each target gene by PCR. See Table 1. Where appropriate, a T7 phage promoter sequence (TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGAGA; SEQ ID NO:11) was incorporated into the 5' ends of the

-80-

amplified sense or antisense strands. *See Table 1.* Total RNA was extracted from WCR, and first-strand cDNA was used as template for PCR reactions using opposing primers positioned to amplify all or part of the native target gene sequence. dsRNA was also amplified from a DNA clone comprising the coding region for a yellow fluorescent protein (YFP) (SEQ ID NO:12; Shagin *et al.* (2004) Mol. Biol. Evol. 21(5):841-50).

Table 1. Primers and Primer Pairs used to amplify portions of coding regions of exemplary *rab5* target gene and YFP negative control gene.

	Gene ID	Primer ID	SEQ ID NO:	Sequence
Pair 1	<i>rab5</i> reg1	<i>rab5</i> -F1T7	13	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGA ACCATGGCGTTAAAGAACCAAG
		<i>rab5</i> -R1T7	14	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGA GGGTGGTGGCACAAGGTACT
Pair 2	<i>rab5</i> reg2	<i>rab5</i> -F2T7	15	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGA CTCGACCGAGGTTTCGAC
		<i>rab5</i> -R2T7	16	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGA TAACTGAAGGTTGGCGATGGTC
Pair 3	<i>rab5</i> reg3	<i>rab5</i> -F3T7	17	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGA CACCATGGGCTCCAGCGGCGCCC
		<i>rab5</i> -R3T7	18	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGA AGATCTTGAAGGCGCTCTTCAGG
Pair 4	<i>rab5</i> v1	<i>rab5</i> v1_F	19	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGA AATGCAATGGTACAGTATCACG
		<i>rab5</i> v1_R	20	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGA CTTTAAACCCATTGAATTCAGCT
Pair 5	YFP	YFP-F_T7	28	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGA CACCATGGGCTCCAGCGGCGCCC
		YFP-R_T7	31	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGA AGATCTTGAAGGCGCTCTTCAGG

EXAMPLE 4 RNAi Constructs

[00299] Template preparation by PCR and dsRNA synthesis.

-81-

[00300] A strategy used to provide specific templates for *rab5* and YFP dsRNA production is shown in **Figure 1**. Template DNAs intended for use in *rab5* dsRNA synthesis were prepared by PCR using the primer pairs in **Table 1** and (as PCR template) first-strand cDNA prepared from total RNA isolated from WCR first-instar larvae. For each selected *rab5* and YFP target gene region, PCR amplifications introduced a T7 promoter sequence at the 5' ends of the amplified sense and antisense strands (the YFP segment was amplified from a DNA clone of the YFP coding region). The PCR products having a T7 promoter sequence at their 5' ends of both sense and antisense strands were used as transcription template for dsRNA production. *See Figure 1*. The sequences of the dsRNA templates amplified with the particular primer pairs were: SEQ ID NO:7 (*rab5* reg1), SEQ ID NO:8 (*rab5* reg2), SEQ ID NO:9 (*rab5* reg3), SEQ ID NO:10 (*rab5* v1), and YFP (SEQ ID NO:12). Double-stranded RNA for insect bioassay was synthesized and purified using an AMBION® MEGASCRIP™ RNAi kit following the manufacturer's instructions (INVITROGEN) or HiScribe™ T7 High Yield RNA Synthesis Kit following the manufacturer's instructions (New England Biolabs). The concentrations of dsRNAs were measured using a NANODROP™ 8000 spectrophotometer (THERMO SCIENTIFIC, Wilmington, DE).

[00301] Construction of plant transformation vectors

[00302] Entry vectors harboring a target gene construct for hairpin formation comprising segments of *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5) are assembled using a combination of chemically synthesized fragments (DNA2.0, Menlo Park, CA) and standard molecular cloning methods. Intramolecular hairpin formation by RNA primary transcripts is facilitated by arranging (within a single transcription unit) two copies of a segment of a *rab5* target gene sequence in opposite orientation to one another, the two segments being separated by a linker polynucleotide (*e.g.*, a loop (such as SEQ ID NO:116) or ST-LS1 intron sequence; Vancanneyt *et al.* (1990) Mol. Gen. Genet. 220(2):245-50). Thus, the primary mRNA transcript contains the two *rab5* gene segment sequences as large inverted repeats of one another, separated by the linker sequence. A copy of a promoter (*e.g.* maize ubiquitin 1, U.S. Patent No. 5,510,474; 35S from Cauliflower Mosaic Virus (CaMV); Sugarcane bacilliform badnavirus (ScBV) promoter; promoters from rice actin genes; ubiquitin promoters; pEMU; MAS; maize H3 histone promoter; ALS promoter; phaseolin gene promoter; *cab*; *rubisco*; *LAT52*; *Zm13*; and/or *apg*) is used to drive production of the

-82-

primary mRNA hairpin transcript, and a fragment comprising a 3' untranslated region (*e.g.*, a maize peroxidase 5 gene (ZmPer5 3'UTR v2; U.S. Patent 6,699,984), AtUbi10, AtEf1, or StPinII) is used to terminate transcription of the hairpin-RNA-expressing gene.

[00303] Entry vectors are used in standard GATEWAY® recombination reactions with a typical binary destination vector to produce *rab5* hairpin RNA expression transformation vectors for *Agrobacterium*-mediated maize embryo transformations.

[00304] A binary destination vector comprises a herbicide tolerance gene (aryloxyalkanoate dioxygenase; AAD-1 v3) (U.S. Patent No. 7838733(B2), and Wright *et al.* (2010) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 107:20240-5) under the regulation of a plant operable promoter (*e.g.*, sugarcane bacilliform badnavirus (ScBV) promoter (Schenk *et al.* (1999) Plant Mol. Biol. 39:1221-30) or ZmUbi1 (U.S. Patent 5,510,474)). A 5'UTR and linker are positioned between the 3' end of the promoter segment and the start codon of the *AAD-1* coding region. A fragment comprising a 3' untranslated region from a maize lipase gene (ZmLip 3'UTR; U.S. Patent 7,179,902) is used to terminate transcription of the AAD-1 mRNA.

[00305] A negative control binary vector, which comprises a gene that expresses a YFP protein, is constructed by means of standard GATEWAY® recombination reactions with a typical binary destination vector and entry vector. The binary destination vector comprises a herbicide tolerance gene (aryloxyalkanoate dioxygenase; AAD-1 v3) (as above) under the expression regulation of a maize ubiquitin 1 promoter (as above) and a fragment comprising a 3' untranslated region from a maize lipase gene (ZmLip 3'UTR; as above). An entry vector comprises a YFP coding region under the expression control of a maize ubiquitin 1 promoter (as above) and a fragment comprising a 3' untranslated region from a maize peroxidase 5 gene (as above).

EXAMPLE 5

Screening of Candidate Target Genes

[00306] Synthetic dsRNA designed to inhibit target gene sequences identified in EXAMPLE 2 caused mortality and growth inhibition when administered to WCR in diet-based assays. *rab5* reg1 and *rab5* v1, were observed to exhibit greatly increased efficacy in this assay over other dsRNAs screened.

-83-

[00307] Replicated bioassays demonstrated that ingestion of dsRNA preparations derived from *rab5* reg1 and *rab5* v1 each resulted in mortality and/or growth inhibition of western corn rootworm larvae. **Table 2** and **Table 3** show the results of diet-based feeding bioassays of WCR larvae following 9-day exposure to these dsRNAs, as well as the results obtained with a negative control sample of dsRNA prepared from a yellow fluorescent protein (YFP) coding region (SEQ ID NO:12).

Table 2. Results of *rab5* dsRNA diet feeding assays obtained with western corn rootworm larvae after 9 days of feeding. ANOVA analysis found significance differences in Mean % Mortality and Mean % Growth Inhibition (GI). Means were separated using the Tukey-Kramer test.

Gene Name	Dose (ng/cm ²)	No. Rows	Mean (% Mortality) ± SEM*	Mean (GI) ± SEM
<i>rab5</i> reg1	500	8	97.06 ± 2.94 (A)	0.99 ± 0.01 (A)
<i>rab5</i> v1	500	8	97.8 ± 1.55 (A)	1.0 ± 0 (A)
TE**	0	14	5.25 ± 1.37 (B)	-0.09 ± 0.04 (C)
WATER	0	14	7.25 ± 1.93 (B)	-0.12 ± 0.07 (C)
YFP***	500	14	14.78 ± 5.16 (B)	0.19 ± 0.08 (B)

*SEM =Standard Error of the Mean. Letters in parentheses designate statistical levels. Levels not connected by same letter are significantly different (P<0.05).

**TE = Tris HCl (1 mM) plus EDTA (1 mM) buffer, pH7.2.

***YFP = Yellow Fluorescent Protein

Table 3. Summary of oral potency of *rab5* dsRNA on WCR larvae (ng/cm²).

Gene Name	LC ₅₀ (ng/cm ²)	Range	GI ₅₀ (ng/cm ²)	Range
<i>rab5</i> v1	7.84	6.42-9.55	1.04	0.78-1.40

[00308] It has previously been suggested that certain genes of *Diabrotica* spp. may be exploited for RNAi-mediated insect control. See U.S. Patent Publication No. 2007/0124836, which discloses 906 sequences, and U.S. Patent No. 7,612,194, which discloses 9,112 sequences. However, it was determined that many genes suggested to have utility for RNAi-mediated insect control are not efficacious in controlling *Diabrotica*. It was also determined that sequences *rab5* reg1 and *rab5* v1

-84-

each provide surprising and unexpected superior control of *Diabrotica*, compared to other genes suggested to have utility for RNAi-mediated insect control.

[00309] For example, Annexin, Beta spectrin 2, and mtRP-L4 were each suggested in U.S. Patent No. 7,612,194 to be efficacious in RNAi-mediated insect control. SEQ ID NO:22 is the DNA sequence of Annexin region 1 (Reg 1), and SEQ ID NO:23 is the DNA sequence of Annexin region 2 (Reg 2). SEQ ID NO:24 is the DNA sequence of Beta spectrin 2 region 1 (Reg 1), and SEQ ID NO:25 is the DNA sequence of Beta spectrin 2 region 2 (Reg2). SEQ ID NO:26 is the DNA sequence of mtRP-L4 region 1 (Reg 1), and SEQ ID NO:27 is the DNA sequence of mtRP-L4 region 2 (Reg 2). A YFP sequence (SEQ ID NO:12) was also used to produce dsRNA as a negative control.

[00310] Each of the aforementioned sequences was used to produce dsRNA by the methods of EXAMPLE 3. The strategy used to provide specific templates for dsRNA production is shown in **Figure 2**. Template DNAs intended for use in dsRNA synthesis were prepared by PCR using the primer pairs in **Table 4** and (as PCR template) first-strand cDNA prepared from total RNA isolated from WCR first-instar larvae. (YFP was amplified from a DNA clone.) For each selected target gene region, two separate PCR amplifications were performed. The first PCR amplification introduced a T7 promoter sequence at the 5' end of the amplified sense strands. The second reaction incorporated the T7 promoter sequence at the 5' ends of the antisense strands. The two PCR amplified fragments for each region of the target genes were then mixed in approximately equal amounts, and the mixture was used as transcription template for dsRNA production. *See Figure 2*. Double-stranded RNA was synthesized and purified using an AMBION[®] MEGAscript[®] RNAi kit following the manufacturer's instructions (INVITROGEN). The concentrations of dsRNAs were measured using a NANODROP[™] 8000 spectrophotometer (THERMO SCIENTIFIC, Wilmington, DE). and the dsRNAs were each tested by the same diet-based bioassay methods described above. **Table 4** lists the sequences of the primers used to produce the YFP, Annexin Reg1, Annexin Reg2, Beta spectrin 2 Reg1, Beta spectrin 2 Reg2, mtRP-L4 Reg1, and mtRP-L4 Reg2 dsRNA molecules. YFP primer sequences for use in the method depicted in **Figure 2** are also listed in **Table 4**. **Table 5** presents the results of diet-based feeding bioassays of WCR larvae following 9-day exposure to these dsRNA molecules. Replicated bioassays demonstrated that ingestion of these dsRNAs resulted in no

mortality or growth inhibition of western corn rootworm larvae above that seen with control samples of TE buffer, water, or YFP protein.

Table 4 . Primers and Primer Pairs used to amplify portions of coding regions of genes.

	Gene (Region)	Primer ID	SEQ ID NO:	Sequence
Pair 6	YFP	YFP-F_T7	28	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGAGAC ACCATGGGCTCCAGCGGCGCCC
		YFP-R	29	AGATCTTGAAGGCGCTCTTCAGG
Pair 7	YFP	YFP-F	30	CACCATGGGCTCCAGCGGCGCCC
		YFP-R_T7	31	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGAGAA GATCTTGAAGGCGCTCTTCAGG
Pair 8	Annexin (Reg 1)	Ann-F1_T7	32	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGAGAG CTCCAACAGTGGTTCCTTATC
	Annexin (Reg 1)	Ann-R1	33	CTAATAATTCTTTTTTAATGTTTCCTG AGG
Pair 9	Annexin (Reg 1)	Ann-F1	34	GCTCCAACAGTGGTTCCTTATC
	Annexin (Reg 1)	Ann-R1_T7	35	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGAGAC TAATAATTCTTTTTTAATGTTTCCTGA GG
Pair 10	Annexin (Reg 2)	Ann-F2_T7	36	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGAGAT TGTTACAAGCTGGAGAACTTCTC
	Annexin (Reg 2)	Ann-R2	37	CTTAACCAACAACGGCTAATAAGG
Pair 11	Annexin (Reg 2)	Ann-F2	38	TTGTTACAAGCTGGAGAACTTCTC
	Annexin (Reg 2)	Ann-R2T7	39	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGAGAC TTAACCAACAACGGCTAATAAGG
Pair 12	Beta-spect2 (Reg 1)	Betasp2-F1_T7	40	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGAGAA GATGTTGGCTGCATCTAGAGAA
	Beta-spect2 (Reg 1)	Betasp2-R1	41	GTCCATTCGTCCATCCACTGCA
Pair 13	Beta-spect2 (Reg 1)	Betasp2-F1	42	AGATGTTGGCTGCATCTAGAGAA
	Beta-spect2 (Reg 1)	Betasp2-R1_T7	43	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGAGAG TCCATTCGTCCATCCACTGCA

-86-

Pair 14	Beta-spect2 (Reg 2)	Betasp2-F2_T7	44	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGAG CAGATGAACACCAGCGAGAAA
	Beta-spect2 (Reg 2)	Betasp2-R2	45	CTGGGCAGCTTCTTGTTTCCTC
Pair 15	Beta-spect2 (Reg 2)	Betasp2-F2	46	GCAGATGAACACCAGCGAGAAA
	Beta-spect2 (Reg 2)	Betasp2-R2_T7	47	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGAC TGGGCAGCTTCTTGTTTCCTC
Pair 16	mtRP-L4 (Reg 1)	L4-F1_T7	48	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGAA GTGAAATGTTAGCAAATATAACATC C
	mtRP-L4 (Reg 1)	L4-R1	49	ACCTCTCACTTCAAATCTTGACTTTG
Pair 17	mtRP-L4 (Reg 1)	L4-F1	50	AGTGAAATGTTAGCAAATATAACAT CC
	mtRP-L4 (Reg 1)	L4-R1_T7	51	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGAA CCTCTCACTTCAAATCTTGACTTTG
Pair 18	mtRP-L4 (Reg 2)	L4-F2_T7	52	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGAC AAAGTCAAGATTTGAAGTGAGAGGT
	mtRP-L4 (Reg 2)	L4-R2	53	CTACAAATAAAACAAGAAGGACCC C
Pair 19	mtRP-L4 (Reg 2)	L4-F2	54	CAAAGTCAAGATTTGAAGTGAGAGG T
	mtRP-L4 (Reg 2)	L4-R2_T7	55	TTAATACGACTCACTATAGGGGAGAC TACAAATAAAACAAGAAGGACCCC

Table 5. Results of diet feeding assays obtained with western corn rootworm larvae after 9 days.

Gene Name	Dose (ng/cm ²)	Mean Live Larval Weight (mg)	Mean % Mortality	Mean Growth Inhibition
Annexin-Reg 1	1000	0.545	0	-0.262
Annexin-Reg 2	1000	0.565	0	-0.301
Beta spectrin2 Reg 1	1000	0.340	12	-0.014
Beta spectrin2 Reg 2	1000	0.465	18	-0.367
mtRP-L4 Reg 1	1000	0.305	4	-0.168
mtRP-L4 Reg 2	1000	0.305	7	-0.180
TE buffer*	0	0.430	13	0.000
Water	0	0.535	12	0.000

YFP**	1000	0.480	9	-0.386
-------	------	-------	---	--------

*TE = Tris HCl (10 mM) plus EDTA (1 mM) buffer, pH8.

**YFP = Yellow Fluorescent Protein

EXAMPLE 6

Production of Transgenic Maize Tissues Comprising Insecticidal Hairpin dsRNAs

[00311] *Agrobacterium*-mediated Transformation; Transgenic maize cells, tissues, and plants that produce one or more insecticidal dsRNA molecules (for example, at least one dsRNA molecule including a dsRNA molecule targeting a gene comprising *rab5*-1 (SEQ ID NO:1); *rab5*-2 (SEQ ID NO:3); *rab5*-3 (SEQ ID NO:5); *rab5* reg1 (SEQ ID NO:7); *rab5* reg2 (SEQ ID NO:8); *rab5* reg3 (SEQ ID NO:9); *rab5* v1 (SEQ ID NO:10); BSB_*rab5* (SEQ ID NO:78); BSB_*rab5* reg1 (SEQ ID NO:80); or BSB_*rab5* v1 (SEQ ID NO:81) through expression of a chimeric gene stably-integrated into the plant genome are produced following *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation. Maize transformation methods employing superbinary or binary transformation vectors are known in the art, as described, for example, in U.S. Patent No. 8,304,604, which is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety. Transformed tissues are selected by their ability to grow on Haloxypop-containing medium and are screened for dsRNA production, as appropriate. Portions of such transformed tissue cultures may be presented to neonate corn rootworm larvae for bioassay, essentially as described in EXAMPLE 1.

[00312] *Agrobacterium* Culture Initiation; Glycerol stocks of *Agrobacterium* strain DA13192 cells (WO 2012/016222A2) harboring a binary transformation vector described above (EXAMPLE 4) are streaked on AB minimal medium plates (Watson, *et al.*, (1975) J. Bacteriol. 123:255-264) containing appropriate antibiotics and are grown at 20 °C for 3 days. The cultures are then streaked onto YEP plates (gm/L: yeast extract, 10; Peptone, 10; NaCl 5) containing the same antibiotics and are incubated at 20 °C for 1 day.

[00313] *Agrobacterium* culture; On the day of an experiment, a stock solution of Inoculation Medium and acetosyringone is prepared in a volume appropriate to the number of constructs in the experiment and pipetted into a sterile, disposable, 250 mL flask. Inoculation Medium (Frame *et al.* (2011) *Genetic Transformation Using Maize Immature Zygotic Embryos*. IN Plant Embryo Culture Methods and Protocols: Methods in Molecular Biology. T. A. Thorpe and E. C. Yeung, (Eds),

-88-

Springer Science and Business Media, LLC. pp 327-341) contains: 2.2 gm/L MS salts; 1X ISU Modified MS Vitamins (Frame *et al.*, *ibid.*) 68.4 gm/L sucrose; 36 gm/L glucose; 115 mg/L L-proline; and 100 mg/L myo-inositol; at pH 5.4.) Acetosyringone is added to the flask containing Inoculation Medium to a final concentration of 200 μ M from a 1 M stock solution in 100% dimethyl sulfoxide and the solution is thoroughly mixed.

[00314] For each construct, 1 or 2 inoculating loops-full of *Agrobacterium* from the YEP plate are suspended in 15 mL of the Inoculation Medium/acetosyringone stock solution in a sterile, disposable, 50 mL centrifuge tube, and the optical density of the solution at 550 nm (OD₅₅₀) is measured in a spectrophotometer. The suspension is then diluted to OD₅₅₀ of 0.3 to 0.4 using additional Inoculation Medium/acetosyringone mixture. The tube of *Agrobacterium* suspension is then placed horizontally on a platform shaker set at about 75 rpm at room temperature and shaken for 1 to 4 hours while embryo dissection is performed.

[00315] Ear sterilization and embryo isolation; Maize immature embryos are obtained from plants of *Zea mays* inbred line B104 (Hallauer *et al.* (1997) Crop Science 37:1405-1406) grown in the greenhouse and self- or sib-pollinated to produce ears. The ears are harvested approximately 10 to 12 days post-pollination. On the experimental day, de-husked ears are surface-sterilized by immersion in a 20% solution of commercial bleach (ULTRA CLOROX® Germicidal Bleach, 6.15% sodium hypochlorite; with two drops of TWEEN 20) and shaken for 20 to 30 min, followed by three rinses in sterile deionized water in a laminar flow hood. Immature zygotic embryos (1.8 to 2.2 mm long) are aseptically dissected from each ear and randomly distributed into microcentrifuge tubes containing 2.0 mL of a suspension of appropriate *Agrobacterium* cells in liquid Inoculation Medium with 200 μ M acetosyringone, into which 2 μ L of 10% BREAK-THRU® S233 surfactant (EVONIK INDUSTRIES; Essen, Germany) is added. For a given set of experiments, embryos from pooled ears are used for each transformation.

[00316] *Agrobacterium* co-cultivation; Following isolation, the embryos are placed on a rocker platform for 5 minutes. The contents of the tube are then poured onto a plate of Co-cultivation Medium, which contains 4.33 gm/L MS salts; 1X ISU Modified MS Vitamins; 30 gm/L sucrose; 700 mg/L L-proline; 3.3 mg/L Dicamba in KOH (3,6-dichloro-o-anisic acid or 3,6-dichloro-2-methoxybenzoic acid); 100 mg/L myo-inositol; 100 mg/L Casein Enzymatic Hydrolysate; 15 mg/L

-89-

AgNO₃; 200 µM acetosyringone in DMSO; and 3 gm/L GELZAN™, at pH 5.8. The liquid *Agrobacterium* suspension is removed with a sterile, disposable, transfer pipette. The embryos are then oriented with the scutellum facing up using sterile forceps with the aid of a microscope. The plate is closed, sealed with 3M™ MICROPORE™ medical tape, and placed in an incubator at 25°C with continuous light at approximately 60 µmol m⁻²s⁻¹ of Photosynthetically Active Radiation (PAR).

[00317] Callus Selection and Regeneration of Transgenic Events; Following the Co-Cultivation period, embryos are transferred to Resting Medium, which is composed of 4.33 gm/L MS salts; 1X ISU Modified MS Vitamins; 30 gm/L sucrose; 700 mg/L L-proline; 3.3 mg/L Dicamba in KOH; 100 mg/L myo-inositol; 100 mg/L Casein Enzymatic Hydrolysate; 15 mg/L AgNO₃; 0.5 gm/L MES (2-(N-morpholino)ethanesulfonic acid monohydrate; PHYTOTECNOLOGIES LABR.; Lenexa, KS); 250 mg/L Carbenicillin; and 2.3 gm/L GELZAN™; at pH 5.8. No more than 36 embryos are moved to each plate. The plates are placed in a clear plastic box and incubated at 27 °C with continuous light at approximately 50 µmol m⁻²s⁻¹ PAR for 7 to 10 days. Callused embryos are then transferred (<18/plate) onto Selection Medium I, which is comprised of Resting Medium (above) with 100 nM R-Haloxyp acid (0.0362 mg/L; for selection of calli harboring the AAD-1 gene). The plates are returned to clear boxes and incubated at 27 °C with continuous light at approximately 50 µmol m⁻²s⁻¹ PAR for 7 days. Callused embryos are then transferred (<12/plate) to Selection Medium II, which is comprised of Resting Medium (above) with 500 nM R-Haloxyp acid (0.181 mg/L). The plates are returned to clear boxes and incubated at 27 °C with continuous light at approximately 50 µmol m⁻²s⁻¹ PAR for 14 days. This selection step allows transgenic callus to further proliferate and differentiate.

[00318] Proliferating, embryogenic calli are transferred (<9/plate) to Pre-Regeneration medium. Pre-Regeneration Medium contains 4.33 gm/L MS salts; 1X ISU Modified MS Vitamins; 45 gm/L sucrose; 350 mg/L L-proline; 100 mg/L myo-inositol; 50 mg/L Casein Enzymatic Hydrolysate; 1.0 mg/L AgNO₃; 0.25 gm/L MES; 0.5 mg/L naphthaleneacetic acid in NaOH; 2.5 mg/L abscisic acid in ethanol; 1 mg/L 6-benzylaminopurine; 250 mg/L Carbenicillin; 2.5 gm/L GELZAN™; and 0.181 mg/L Haloxyp acid; at pH 5.8. The plates are stored in clear boxes and incubated at 27 °C with continuous light at approximately 50 µmol m⁻²s⁻¹ PAR for 7 days. Regenerating calli are then transferred (<6/plate) to Regeneration Medium in PHYTATRAYS™

-90-

(SIGMA-ALDRICH) and incubated at 28 °C with 16 hours light/8 hours dark per day (at approximately 160 $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ PAR) for 14 days or until shoots and roots develop. Regeneration Medium contains 4.33 gm/L MS salts; 1X ISU Modified MS Vitamins; 60 gm/L sucrose; 100 mg/L myo-inositol; 125 mg/L Carbenicillin; 3 gm/L GELLAN™ gum; and 0.181 mg/L R-Haloxypop acid; at pH 5.8. Small shoots with primary roots are then isolated and transferred to Elongation Medium without selection. Elongation Medium contains 4.33 gm/L MS salts; 1X ISU Modified MS Vitamins; 30 gm/L sucrose; and 3.5 gm/L GELRITE™: at pH 5.8.

[00319] Transformed plant shoots selected by their ability to grow on medium containing Haloxypop are transplanted from PHYTATRAYS™ to small pots filled with growing medium (PROMIX BX; PREMIER TECH HORTICULTURE), covered with cups or HUMI-DOMES (ARCO PLASTICS), and then hardened-off in a CONVIRON growth chamber (27 °C day/24 °C night, 16-hour photoperiod, 50-70% RH, 200 $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ PAR). In some instances, putative transgenic plantlets are analyzed for transgene relative copy number by quantitative real-time PCR assays using primers designed to detect the AAD1 herbicide tolerance gene integrated into the maize genome. Further, qPCR assays are used to detect the presence of the linker and/or target sequence in putative transformants. Selected transformed plantlets are then moved into a greenhouse for further growth and testing.

[00320] Transfer and establishment of T₀ plants in the greenhouse for bioassay and seed production; When plants reach the V3-V4 stage, they are transplanted into IE CUSTOM BLEND (PROFILE/METRO MIX 160) soil mixture and grown to flowering in the greenhouse (Light Exposure Type: Photo or Assimilation; High Light Limit: 1200 PAR; 16-hour day length; 27 °C day/24 °C night).

[00321] Plants to be used for insect bioassays are transplanted from small pots to TINUS™ 350-4 ROOTRAINERS® (SPENCER-LEMAIRE INDUSTRIES, Acheson, Alberta, Canada) (one plant per event per ROOTRAINER®). Approximately four days after transplanting to ROOTRAINERS®, plants are infested for bioassay.

[00322] Plants of the T₁ generation are obtained by pollinating the silks of T₀ transgenic plants with pollen collected from plants of non-transgenic elite inbred line B104 or other appropriate pollen donors, and planting the resultant seeds. Reciprocal crosses are performed when possible.

EXAMPLE 7

Molecular Analyses of Transgenic Maize Tissues

[00323] Molecular analyses (*e.g.* RT-qPCR) of maize tissues are performed on samples from leaves collected from greenhouse grown plants on the same days that root feeding damage is assessed.

[00324] Results of RT-qPCR assays for the gene of interest are used to validate expression of the transgenes. Results of RT-qPCR assays for the linker sequence (which is integral to the formation of dsRNA hairpin molecules) in expressed RNAs can be used to validate the presence of hairpin transcripts. Transgene RNA expression levels are measured relative to the RNA levels of an endogenous maize gene.

[00325] DNA qPCR analyses to detect a portion of the AAD1 coding region in genomic DNA are used to estimate transgene insertion copy number. Samples for these analyses are collected from plants grown in environmental chambers. Results are compared to DNA qPCR results of assays designed to detect a portion of a single-copy native gene, and simple events (having one or two copies of *rab5* transgenes) are advanced for further studies in the greenhouse.

[00326] Additionally, qPCR assays designed to detect a portion of the spectinomycin-resistance gene (SpecR; harbored on the binary vector plasmids outside of the T-DNA) are used to determine if the transgenic plants contained extraneous integrated plasmid backbone sequences.

[00327] Hairpin RNA transcript expression level: target qPCR; Callus cell events or transgenic plants are analyzed by real time quantitative PCR (qPCR) of the target sequence to determine the relative expression level of the full length hairpin transcript, as compared to the transcript level of an internal maize gene (SEQ ID NO:56; GENBANK Accession No. BT069734), which encodes a TIP41-like protein (*i.e.*, a maize homolog of GENBANK Accession No. AT4G34270; having a tBLASTX score of 74% identity). RNA is isolated using an Norgen BioTek Total RNA Isolation Kit (Norgen, Thorold, ON). The total RNA is subjected to an ON COLUMN DNaseI (SIGMA-ALDRICH) treatment according to the kit's suggested protocol. The RNA is then quantified on a NANODROP 8000 spectrophotometer (THERMO SCIENTIFIC) and concentration is normalized to 50 ng/μL. First strand cDNA is prepared using a HIGH CAPACITY cDNA

-92-

SYNTHESIS KIT (INVITROGEN) in a 10 μ L reaction volume with 5 μ L denatured RNA, substantially according to the manufacturer's recommended protocol. The protocol is modified slightly to include the addition of 10 μ L of 100 μ M T20VN oligonucleotide (IDT) (SEQ ID NO:57; TTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTVN, where V is A, C, or G, and N is A, C, G, or T/U) into the 1 mL tube of random primer stock mix, in order to prepare a working stock of combined random primers and oligo dT.

[00328] Following cDNA synthesis, samples are diluted 1:3 with nuclease-free water, and stored at -20°C until assayed.

[00329] Separate real-time PCR assays for the target gene and TIP41-like transcript are performed on a LIGHTCYCLER™ 480 (ROCHE DIAGNOSTICS, Indianapolis, IN) in 10 μ L reaction volumes. For the target gene assay, reactions are run with Primers *rab5* (F) (SEQ ID NO:58) and *rab5* (R) (SEQ ID NO:59), and a an IDT Custom Oligo probe *rab5* PRB Set1, labeled with FAM and double quenched with Zen and Iowa Black quenchers (SEQ ID NO:21). For the TIP41-like reference gene assay, primers TIPmxF (SEQ ID NO:60) and TIPmxR (SEQ ID NO:61), and Probe HXTIP (SEQ ID NO:62) labeled with HEX (hexachlorofluorescein) are used.

[00330] All assays include negative controls of no-template (mix only). For the standard curves, a blank (water in source well) is also included in the source plate to check for sample cross-contamination. Primer and probe sequences are set forth in **Table 6**. Reaction components recipes for detection of the various transcripts are disclosed in **Table 7**, and PCR reactions conditions are summarized in **Table 8**. The FAM (6-Carboxy Fluorescein Amidite) fluorescent moiety is excited at 465 nm and fluorescence is measured at 510 nm; the corresponding values for the HEX (hexachlorofluorescein) fluorescent moiety are 533 nm and 580 nm.

Table 6. Oligonucleotide sequences for molecular analyses of transcript levels in transgenic maize.

Target	Oligonucleotide	SEQ ID NO.	Sequence
<i>rab5</i>	<i>rab5</i> (F)	58	GCAGACGTATGCTGACGAA
<i>rab5</i>	<i>rab5</i> (R)	59	TTGTTTATTCTTGGGCAGTTTC
<i>rab5</i>	<i>rab5</i> (Probe)	21	CTTCCGCAAAGACGGCAATGAACG
TIP41	TIPmxF	60	TGAGGGTAATGCCAACTGGTT

-93-

TIP41	TIPmxR	61	GCAATGTAACCGAGTGTCTCTCAA
TIP41	HXTIP (HEX-Probe)	62	TTTTTGGCTTAGAGTTGATGGTGTACTGA TGA

*TIP41-like protein.

Table 7. PCR reaction recipes for transcript detection.

	Target Gene	TIP-like Gene
Component	Final Concentration	
Roche Buffer	1 X	1X
<i>rab5</i> (F)	0.4 μ M	0
<i>rab5</i> (R)	0.4 μ M	0
<i>rab5</i> (FAM)	0.2 μ M	0
HEXtipZM F	0	0.4 μ M
HEXtipZM R	0	0.4 μ M
HEXtipZMP (HEX)	0	0.2 μ M
cDNA (2.0 μ L)	NA	NA
Water	To 10 μ L	To 10 μ L

Table 8. Thermocycler conditions for RNA qPCR.

Target Gene and TIP41-like Gene Detection			
Process	Temp.	Time	No. Cycles
Target Activation	95°C	10 min	1
Denature	95°C	10 sec	40
Extend	60°C	40 sec	
Acquire FAM or HEX	72°C	1 sec	
Cool	40°C	10 sec	1

[00331] Data are analyzed using LIGHTCYCLER™ Software v1.5 by relative quantification using a second derivative max algorithm for calculation of Cq values according to the supplier's recommendations. For expression analyses, expression values are calculated using the $\Delta\Delta C_t$ method (*i.e.*, $2^{-(C_q \text{ TARGET} - C_q \text{ REF})}$), which relies on the comparison of differences of Cq values between two targets, with the base value of 2 being selected under the assumption that, for optimized PCR reactions, the product doubles every cycle.

-94-

[00332] Hairpin transcript size and integrity: Northern Blot Assay; In some instances, additional molecular characterization of the transgenic plants is obtained by the use of Northern Blot (RNA blot) analysis to determine the molecular size of the *rab5* hairpin RNA in transgenic plants expressing a *rab5* dsRNA.

[00333] All materials and equipment are treated with RNAZAP (AMBION/INVITROGEN) before use. Tissue samples (100 mg to 500 mg) are collected in 2 mL SAFELOCK EPPENDORF tubes, disrupted with a KLECKO™ tissue pulverizer (GARCIA MANUFACTURING, Visalia, CA) with three tungsten beads in 1 mL of TRIZOL (INVITROGEN) for 5 min, then incubated at room temperature (RT) for 10 min. Optionally, the samples are centrifuged for 10 min at 4°C at 11,000 rpm and the supernatant is transferred into a fresh 2 mL SAFELOCK EPPENDORF tube. After 200 µL of chloroform are added to the homogenate, the tube is mixed by inversion for 2 to 5 min, incubated at RT for 10 minutes, and centrifuged at 12,000 x g for 15 min at 4°C. The top phase is transferred into a sterile 1.5 mL EPPENDORF tube, 600 µL of 100% isopropanol are added, followed by incubation at RT for 10 min to 2 hr, and then centrifuged at 12,000 x g for 10 min at 4° to 25°C. The supernatant is discarded and the RNA pellet is washed twice with 1 mL of 70% ethanol, with centrifugation at 7,500 x g for 10 min at 4° to 25°C between washes. The ethanol is discarded and the pellet is briefly air dried for 3 to 5 min before resuspending in 50 µL of nuclease-free water.

[00334] Total RNA is quantified using the NANODROP8000® (THERMO-FISHER) and samples are normalized to 5 µg/10 µL. 10 µL of glyoxal (AMBION/INVITROGEN) are then added to each sample. Five to 14 ng of DIG RNA standard marker mix (ROCHE APPLIED SCIENCE, Indianapolis, IN) are dispensed and added to an equal volume of glyoxal. Samples and marker RNAs are denatured at 50°C for 45 min and stored on ice until loading on a 1.25% SEAKEM GOLD agarose (LONZA, Allendale, NJ) gel in NORTHERNMAX 10 X glyoxal running buffer (AMBION/INVITROGEN). RNAs are separated by electrophoresis at 65 volts/30 mA for 2 hr and 15 min.

[00335] Following electrophoresis, the gel is rinsed in 2X SSC for 5 min and imaged on a GEL DOC station (BIORAD, Hercules, CA), then the RNA is passively transferred to a nylon membrane (MILLIPORE) overnight at RT, using 10X SSC as the transfer buffer (20X SSC consists of 3 M sodium chloride and 300 mM trisodium citrate, pH 7.0). Following the transfer, the membrane

-95-

is rinsed in 2X SSC for 5 minutes, the RNA is UV-crosslinked to the membrane (AGILENT/STRATAGENE), and the membrane is allowed to dry at RT for up to 2 days.

[00336] The membrane is prehybridized in ULTRAHYB buffer (AMBION/INVITROGEN) for 1 to 2 hr. The probe consists of a PCR amplified product containing the sequence of interest, labeled with digoxigenin by means of a ROCHE APPLIED SCIENCE DIG procedure. Hybridization in recommended buffer is overnight at a temperature of 60°C in hybridization tubes. Following hybridization, the blot is subjected to DIG washes, wrapped, exposed to film for 1 to 30 minutes, then the film is developed, all by methods recommended by the supplier of the DIG kit.

[00337] Transgene copy number determination;

[00338] Maize leaf pieces approximately equivalent to 2 leaf punches are collected in 96-well collection plates (QIAGEN). Tissue disruption is performed with a KLECKO™ tissue pulverizer (GARCIA MANUFACTURING, Visalia, CA) in BIOSPRINT96 AP1 lysis buffer (supplied with a BIOSPRINT96 PLANT KIT; QIAGEN) with one stainless steel bead. Following tissue maceration, genomic DNA (gDNA) is isolated in high throughput format using a BIOSPRINT96 PLANT KIT and a BIOSPRINT96 extraction robot. Genomic DNA is diluted 1:3 DNA:water prior to setting up the qPCR reaction.

[00339] qPCR analysis; Transgene detection by hydrolysis probe assay is performed by real-time PCR using a LIGHTCYCLER®480 system. Oligonucleotides to be used in hydrolysis probe assays to detect the target gene, the linker sequence sequence (*e.g.*, the loop), and/or to detect a portion of the SpecR gene (*i.e.* the spectinomycin resistance gene borne on the binary vector plasmids; SEQ ID NO:63; SPC1 oligonucleotides in **Table 9**), are designed using LIGHTCYCLER® PROBE DESIGN SOFTWARE 2.0. Further, oligonucleotides to be used in hydrolysis probe assays to detect a segment of the AAD-1 herbicide tolerance gene (SEQ ID NO:64; GAAD1 oligonucleotides in **Table 9**) are designed using PRIMER EXPRESS software (APPLIED BIOSYSTEMS). **Table 9** shows the sequences of the primers and probes. Assays are multiplexed with reagents for an endogenous maize chromosomal gene (Invertase (SEQ ID NO:65; GENBANK Accession No: U16123; referred to herein as IVR1), which serves as an internal reference sequence to ensure gDNA is present in each assay. For amplification, LIGHTCYCLER®480 PROBES MASTER mix

-96-

(ROCHE APPLIED SCIENCE) is prepared at 1x final concentration in a 10 μ L volume multiplex reaction containing 0.4 μ M of each primer and 0.2 μ M of each probe (**Table 10**). A two step amplification reaction is performed as outlined in **Table 11**. Fluorophore activation and emission for the FAM- and HEX-labeled probes are as described above; CY5 conjugates are excited maximally at 650 nm and fluoresce maximally at 670 nm.

[00340] Cp scores (the point at which the fluorescence signal crosses the background threshold) are determined from the real time PCR data using the fit points algorithm (LIGHTCYCLER® SOFTWARE release 1.5) and the Relative Quant module (based on the $\Delta\Delta C_t$ method). Data are handled as described previously (above; RNA qPCR).

Table 9. Sequences of primers and probes (with fluorescent conjugate) for gene copy number determination and binary vector plasmid backbone detection.

Name	SEQ ID NO:	Sequence
Loop- F	75	GGAACGAGCTGCTTGCGTAT
Loop- R	76	CACGGTGCAGCTGATTGATG
Loop-P (FAM)	77	TCCCTTCCGTAGTCAGAG
GAAD1-F	66	TGTTCGGTTCCTCTACCAA
GAAD1-R	67	CAACATCCATCACCTTGACTGA
GAAD1-P (FAM)	68	CACAGAACCGTCGCTTCAGCAACA
IVR1-F	69	TGGCGGACGACGACTTGT
IVR1-R	70	AAAGTTTGGAGGCTGCCGT
IVR1-P (HEX)	71	CGAGCAGACCGCCGTGTACTTCTACC
SPC1A	72	CTTAGCTGGATAACGCCAC
SPC1S	73	GACCGTAAGGCTTGATGAA
TQSPEC (CY5*)	74	CGAGATTCTCCGCGCTGTAGA

CY5 = Cyanine-5

Table 10. Reaction components for gene copy number analyses and plasmid backbone detection.

Component	Amt. (μ L)	Stock	Final Conc'n
2x Buffer	5.0	2x	1x
Appropriate Forward Primer	0.4	10 μ M	0.4
Appropriate Reverse Primer	0.4	10 μ M	0.4

-97-

Appropriate Probe	0.4	5 μ M	0.2
IVR1-Forward Primer	0.4	10 μ M	0.4
IVR1-Reverse Primer	0.4	10 μ M	0.4
IVR1-Probe	0.4	5 μ M	0.2
H ₂ O	0.6	NA*	NA
gDNA	2.0	ND**	ND
Total	10.0		

*NA = Not Applicable

**ND = Not Determined

Table 11. Thermocycler conditions for DNA qPCR

Genomic copy number analyses			
Process	Temp.	Time	No. Cycles
Target Activation	95°C	10 min	1
Denature	95°C	10 sec	40
Extend & Acquire FAM, HEX, or CY5	60°C	40 sec	
Cool	40°C	10 sec	1

EXAMPLE 8**Bioassay of Transgenic Maize**

[00341] *In vitro* Insect Bioassays; Bioactivity of dsRNA of the subject disclosure produced in plant cells is demonstrated by bioassay methods. *See, e.g., Baum et al. (2007) Nat. Biotechnol. 25(11):1322-1326.* One is able to demonstrate efficacy, for example, by feeding various plant tissues or tissue pieces derived from a plant producing an insecticidal dsRNA to target insects in a controlled feeding environment. Alternatively, extracts are prepared from various plant tissues derived from a plant producing the insecticidal dsRNA and the extracted nucleic acids are dispensed on top of artificial diets for bioassays as previously described herein. The results of such feeding assays are compared to similarly conducted bioassays that employ appropriate control tissues from host plants that do not produce an insecticidal dsRNA, or to other control samples.

[00342] Insect Bioassays with Transgenic Maize Events; Two western corn rootworm larvae (1 to 3 days old) hatched from washed eggs are selected and placed into each well of the bioassay tray. The wells are then covered with a "PULL N' PEEL" tab cover (BIO-CV-16, BIO-SERV) and placed in a 28°C incubator with an 18 hr/6 hr light/dark cycle. Nine days after the initial infestation, the larvae are assessed for mortality, which is calculated as the percentage of dead insects out of the

-98-

total number of insects in each treatment. The insect samples are frozen at -20°C for two days, then the insect larvae from each treatment are pooled and weighed. The percent of growth inhibition is calculated as the mean weight of the experimental treatments divided by the mean of the average weight of two control well treatments. The data are expressed as a Percent Growth Inhibition (of the Negative Controls). Mean weights that exceed the control mean weight are normalized to zero.

[00343] Insect bioassays in the greenhouse; Western corn rootworm (WCR, *Diabrotica virgifera virgifera* LeConte) eggs are received in soil from CROP CHARACTERISTICS (Farmington, MN). WCR eggs are incubated at 28 °C for 10 to 11 days. Eggs are washed from the soil, placed into a 0.15% agar solution, and the concentration is adjusted to approximately 75 to 100 eggs per 0.25 mL aliquot. A hatch plate is set up in a Petri dish with an aliquot of egg suspension to monitor hatch rates.

[00344] The soil around the maize plants growing in ROOTRAINERS® is infested with 150 to 200 WCR eggs. The insects are allowed to feed for 2 weeks, after which time a "Root Rating" is given to each plant. A Node-Injury Scale is utilized for grading essentially according to Oleson *et al.* (2005, J. Econ. Entomol. 98:1-8). Plants which passed this bioassay are transplanted to 5-gallon pots for seed production. Transplants are treated with insecticide to prevent further rootworm damage and insect release in the greenhouses. Plants are hand pollinated for seed production. Seeds produced by these plants are saved for evaluation at the T₁ and subsequent generations of plants.

[00345] Transgenic negative control plants are generated by transformation with vectors harboring genes designed to produce a yellow fluorescent protein (YFP). Bioassays are conducted with negative controls included in each set of plant materials. Some constructs provided root protection from WCR (Table 12).

[00346] **Table 12.** Greenhouse bioassay and molecular analyses results of *rab5*-expressing maize plants and YFP control plants.

Sample ID	Gene of Interest	ssRNA	dsRNA	Root Rating
<i>rab5</i> Events				
126163[1]-001	<i>rab5</i>			1
126163[1]-002	<i>rab5</i>	0.693	4.438	1
126163[1]-003	<i>rab5</i>	0.457	2.790	1

-99-

126163[1]-008	<i>rab5</i>	0.415	4.857	1
126163[1]-011	<i>rab5</i>	4.113	24.252	0.05
126163[1]-012	<i>rab5</i>	1.636	7.728	0.1
126163[1]-015	<i>rab5</i>	2.621	11.876	0.25
126163[1]-016	<i>rab5</i>	1.079	8.225	0.5
126163[1]-019	<i>rab5</i>	2.412	9.254	1
126163[1]-020	<i>rab5</i>	0.933	3.945	1
126163[1]-021	<i>rab5</i>	2.81	12.996	0.25
126163[1]-023	<i>rab5</i>	1.266	6.105	0.75
126163[1]-025	<i>rab5</i>			0.05
126163[1]-026	<i>rab5</i>	1.717	9.580	0.5
YFP Events				
126944[5]-026	YFPv2			1
126944[6]-031	YFPv2			1
126944[7]-038	YFPv2			1
126944[7]-051	YFPv2			1
126944[7]-052	YFPv2			1

EXAMPLE 9

Transgenic *Zea mays* Comprising Coleopteran Pest Sequences

[00347] Ten to 20 transgenic T₀ *Zea mays* plants are generated as described in EXAMPLE 6. A further 10-20 T₁ *Zea mays* independent lines expressing hairpin dsRNA for an RNAi construct are obtained for corn rootworm challenge. Hairpin dsRNA may be derived comprising all or part of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, and SEQ ID NO:5. Additional hairpin dsRNAs may be derived, for example, from coleopteran pest sequences such as, for example, Caf1-180 (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2012/0174258), VatpaseC (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2012/0174259), Rho1 (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2012/0174260), VatpaseH (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2012/0198586), PPI-87B (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2013/0091600), RPA70 (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2013/0091601), RPS6 (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2013/0097730), *ROP* (U.S. Patent Application No. 14/577,811), *RNA polymerase III40* (U.S. Patent Application No. 14/577,854), *RNA polymerase II* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/133,214), *RNA polymerase II-215* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/133,202), *RNA polymerase 33* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/133,210), *ncm* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/095487), *Dre4* (U.S. Patent Application No. 14/705,807), *COPI alpha* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/063,199), *COPI*

-100-

beta (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/063,203), *COPI gamma* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/063,192), or *COPI delta* (U.S. Patent Application No. 62/063,216). These are confirmed through RT-PCR or other molecular analysis methods. Total RNA preparations from selected independent T₁ lines are optionally used for RT-PCR with primers designed to bind in the linker of the hairpin expression cassette in each of the RNAi constructs. In addition, specific primers for each target gene in an RNAi construct are optionally used to amplify and confirm the production of the pre-processed mRNA required for siRNA production *in planta*. The amplification of the desired bands for each target gene confirms the expression of the hairpin RNA in each transgenic *Zea mays* plant. Processing of the dsRNA hairpin of the target genes into siRNA is subsequently optionally confirmed in independent transgenic lines using RNA blot hybridizations.

[00348] Moreover, RNAi molecules having mismatch sequences with more than 80% sequence identity to target genes affect corn rootworms in a way similar to that seen with RNAi molecules having 100% sequence identity to the target genes. The pairing of mismatch sequence with native sequences to form a hairpin dsRNA in the same RNAi construct delivers plant-processed siRNAs capable of affecting the growth, development and viability of feeding coleopteran pests.

[00349] *In planta* delivery of dsRNA, siRNA or miRNA corresponding to target genes and the subsequent uptake by coleopteran pests through feeding results in down-regulation of the target genes in the coleopteran pest through RNA-mediated gene silencing. When the function of a target gene is important at one or more stages of development, the growth, development, and reproduction of the coleopteran pest is affected, and in the case of at least one of WCR, NCR, SCR, MCR, *D. balteata* LeConte, *D. u. tenella*, and *D. u. undecimpunctata* Mannerheim, leads to failure to successfully infest, feed, develop, and/or reproduce, or leads to death of the coleopteran pest. The choice of target genes and the successful application of RNAi is then used to control coleopteran pests.

[00350] Phenotypic comparison of transgenic RNAi lines and nontransformed *Zea mays*; Target coleopteran pest genes or sequences selected for creating hairpin dsRNA have no similarity to any known plant gene sequence. Hence it is not expected that the production or the activation of (systemic) RNAi by constructs targeting these coleopteran pest genes or sequences will have any deleterious effect on transgenic plants. However, development and morphological characteristics of

-101-

transgenic lines are compared with nontransformed plants, as well as those of transgenic lines transformed with an "empty" vector having no hairpin-expressing gene. Plant root, shoot, foliage and reproduction characteristics are compared. Plant shoot characteristics such as height, leaf numbers and sizes, time of flowering, floral size and appearance are recorded. In general, there are no observable morphological differences between transgenic lines and those without expression of target iRNA molecules when cultured *in vitro* and in soil in the glasshouse.

EXAMPLE 10

Transgenic *Zea mays* Comprising a Coleopteran Pest Sequence and Additional RNAi Constructs

[00351] A transgenic *Zea mays* plant comprising a heterologous coding sequence in its genome that is transcribed into an iRNA molecule that targets an organism other than a coleopteran pest is secondarily transformed *via Agrobacterium* or WHISKERS™ methodologies (*see* Petolino and Arnold (2009) Methods Mol. Biol. 526:59-67) to produce one or more insecticidal dsRNA molecules (for example, at least one dsRNA molecule including a dsRNA molecule targeting a gene comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5). Plant transformation plasmid vectors prepared essentially as described in EXAMPLE 4 are delivered *via Agrobacterium* or WHISKERS™-mediated transformation methods into maize suspension cells or immature maize embryos obtained from a transgenic Hi II or B104 *Zea mays* plant comprising a heterologous coding sequence in its genome that is transcribed into an iRNA molecule that targets an organism other than a coleopteran pest.

EXAMPLE 11

Transgenic *Zea mays* Comprising an RNAi Construct and Additional Coleopteran Pest Control Sequences

[00352] A transgenic *Zea mays* plant comprising a heterologous coding sequence in its genome that is transcribed into an iRNA molecule that targets a coleopteran pest organism (for example, at least one dsRNA molecule including a dsRNA molecule targeting a gene comprising SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5) is secondarily transformed *via Agrobacterium* or WHISKERS™ methodologies (*see* Petolino and Arnold (2009) Methods Mol. Biol. 526:59-67) to produce one or more insecticidal protein molecules, for example, Cry3 or Cry34/Cry35Ab1

-102-

insecticidal proteins. Plant transformation plasmid vectors prepared essentially as described in EXAMPLE 4 are delivered *via Agrobacterium* or WHISKERS™-mediated transformation methods into maize suspension cells or immature maize embryos obtained from a transgenic B104 *Zea mays* plant comprising a heterologous coding sequence in its genome that is transcribed into an iRNA molecule that targets a coleopteran pest organism. Doubly-transformed plants are obtained that produce iRNA molecules and insecticidal proteins for control of coleopteran pests.

EXAMPLE 12

Mortality of Neotropical Brown Stink Bug (*Euschistus heros*) following *rab5* RNAi injection

[00353] Neotropical Brown Stink Bug (BSB; *Euschistus heros*) colony; BSB were reared in a 27°C incubator, at 65% relative humidity, with 16: 8 hour light: dark cycle. One gram of eggs collected over 2-3 days were seeded in 5L containers with filter paper discs at the bottom; the containers were covered with #18 mesh for ventilation. Each rearing container yielded approximately 300-400 adult BSB. At all stages, the insects were fed fresh green beans three times per week, a sachet of seed mixture that contained sunflower seeds, soybeans, and peanuts (3:1:1 by weight ratio) was replaced once a week. Water was supplemented in vials with cotton plugs as wicks. After the initial two weeks, insects were transferred onto new container once a week.

[00354] BSB artificial diet; BSB artificial diet prepared as follows (used within two weeks of preparation). Lyophilized green beans were blended to a fine powder in a MAGIC BULLET® blender while raw (organic) peanuts were blended in a separate MAGIC BULLET® blender. Blended dry ingredients were combined (weight percentages: green beans, 35%; peanuts, 35%; sucrose, 5%; Vitamin complex (e.g. Vanderzant Vitamin Mixture for insects, SIGMA-ALDRICH, Catalog No. V1007), 0.9%); in a large MAGIC BULLET® blender, which was capped and shaken well to mix the ingredients. The mixed dry ingredients were then added to a mixing bowl. In a separate container, water and benomyl anti-fungal agent (50 ppm; 25 µL of a 20,000 ppm solution/50 mL diet solution) were mixed well and then added to the dry ingredient mixture. All ingredients were mixed by hand until the solution was fully blended. The diet was shaped into desired sizes, wrapped loosely in aluminum foil, heated for 4 hours at 60°C, then cooled and stored at 4°C.

-103-

[00355] BSB transcriptome assembly; Six stages of BSB development were selected for mRNA library preparation. Total RNA was extracted from insects frozen at -70°C and homogenized in 10 volumes of Lysis/Binding buffer in Lysing MATRIX A 2 mL tubes (MP BIOMEDICALS, Santa Ana, CA) on a FastPrep®-24 Instrument (MP BIOMEDICALS). Total mRNA was extracted using a mirVana™ miRNA Isolation Kit (AMBION; INVITROGEN) according to the manufacturer's protocol. RNA sequencing using an illumina® HiSeq™ system (San Diego, CA) provided candidate target gene sequences for use in RNAi insect control technology. HiSeq™ generated a total of about 378 million reads for the six samples. The reads were assembled individually for each sample using TRINITY assembler software (Grabherr et al. (2011) Nature Biotech. 29:644-652). The assembled transcripts were combined to generate a pooled transcriptome. This BSB pooled transcriptome contains 378,457 sequences.

[00356] BSB *rab5* ortholog identification; A tBLASTn search of the BSB pooled transcriptome was performed using as query the *Drosophila rab5* protein isoform A through I sequences: GENBANK Accession Nos. NP_722795, NP_722796, NP_722797, NP_722798, NP_523457, NP_722799, NP_001259925, NP_001259926, and NP_001259927. BSB *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:78) was identified as a *Euschistus heros* candidate target gene product with predicted peptide sequence SEQ ID NO:79.

[00357] Template preparation and dsRNA synthesis; cDNA was prepared from total BSB RNA extracted from a single young adult insect (about 90 mg) using TRIzol® Reagent (LIFE TECHNOLOGIES). The insect was homogenized at room temperature in a 1.5 mL microcentrifuge tube with 200 µL of TRIzol® using a pellet pestle (FISHERBRAND Catalog No. 12-141-363) and Pestle Motor Mixer (COLE-PARMER, Vernon Hills, IL). Following homogenization, an additional 800 µL of TRIzol® was added, the homogenate was vortexed, and then incubated at room temperature for five minutes. Cell debris was removed by centrifugation and the supernatant was transferred to a new tube. Following manufacturer-recommended TRIzol® extraction protocol for 1 mL of TRIzol®, the RNA pellet was dried at room temperature and resuspended in 200 µL of Tris Buffer from a GFX PCR DNA AND GEL EXTRACTION KIT (Illustra™; GE HEALTHCARE LIFE SCIENCES) using Elution Buffer Type 4 (*i.e.* 10 mM Tris-HCl pH8.0). RNA concentration

-104-

was determined using a NANODROP™ 8000 spectrophotometer (THERMO SCIENTIFIC, Wilmington, DE).

[00358] cDNA amplification; cDNA was reverse-transcribed from 5 µg of BSB total RNA template and oligo dT primer using a SUPERScript III FIRST-STRAND SYNTHESIS SYSTEM™ for RT-PCR (INVITROGEN), following the supplier's recommended protocol. The final volume of the transcription reaction was brought to 100 µL with nuclease-free water.

[00359] Primers BSB_ *rab5-1*-For (SEQ ID NO:82) and BSB_ *rab5-1*-Rev (SEQ ID NO:83) were used to amplify BSB_ *rab5* region 1, also referred to as BSB_ *rab5* reg1 template. Primers BSB_ *rab5-v1*-For (SEQ ID NO:84) and BSB_ *rab5-v1*-Rev (SEQ ID NO:85) were used to amplify BSB_ *rab5* version 1, also referred to as BSB_ *rab5* v1 template. The DNA template was amplified by touch-down PCR (annealing temperature lowered from 60°C to 50°C in a 1°C/cycle decrease) with 1 µL of cDNA (above) as the template. Fragment comprising 283 bp segment of BSB_ *rab5* reg1 (SEQ ID NO:80) and a 121 bp segment of BSB_ *rab5* v1 (SEQ ID NO:81) was generated during 35 cycles of PCR. The above procedure was also used to amplify a 301 bp negative control template YFPv2 (SEQ ID NO:87) using YFPv2-F (SEQ ID NO:88) and YFPv2-R (SEQ ID NO:86) primers. The BSB_ *rab5* and YFPv2 primers contained a T7 phage promoter sequence (SEQ ID NO:11) at their 5' ends, and thus enabled the use of YFPv2 and BSB_ *rab5* DNA fragments for dsRNA transcription.

[00360] dsRNA synthesis; dsRNA was synthesized using 2 µL of PCR product (above) as the template with a MEGAscript™ RNAi kit (AMBION) used according to the manufacturer's instructions. (See FIGURE 1). dsRNA was quantified on a NANODROP™ 8000 spectrophotometer and diluted to 500 ng/µL in nuclease-free 0.1X TE buffer (1 mM Tris HCL, 0.1 mM EDTA, pH7.4).

[00361] Injection of dsRNA into BSB hemoceol; BSB were reared on a green bean and seed diet, as the colony, in a 27°C incubator at 65% relative humidity and 16:8 hour light: dark photoperiod. Second instar nymphs (each weighing 1 to 1.5 mg) were gently handled with a small brush to prevent injury and were placed in a Petri dish on ice to chill and immobilize the insects. Each insect was injected with 55.2 nL of a 500 ng/µL dsRNA solution (i.e. 27.6 ng dsRNA; dosage of 18.4 to 27.6 µg/g body weight). Injections were performed using a NANOJECT™ II injector (DRUMMOND SCIENTIFIC, Broomhall, PA) equipped with an injection needle pulled from a Drummond 3.5 inch

-105-

#3-000-203-G/X glass capillary. The needle tip was broken and the capillary was backfilled with light mineral oil, then filled with 2 to 3 μ L of dsRNA. dsRNA was injected into the abdomen of the nymphs (10 insects injected per dsRNA per trial), and the trials were repeated on three different days. Injected insects (5 per well) were transferred into 32-well trays (Bio-RT-32 Rearing Tray; BIO-SERV, Frenchtown, NJ) containing a pellet of artificial BSB diet and covered with Pull-N- Peel™ tabs (BIO-CV-4; BIO-SERV). Moisture was supplied by means of 1.25 mL of water in a 1.5 mL microcentrifuge tube with a cotton wick. The trays were incubated at 26.5°C, 60% humidity and 16: 8 hour light: dark photoperiod. Viability counts and weights were taken on day 7 after the injections.

[00362] Injections identified BSB *rab5* as a lethal dsRNA target; dsRNA that targets segment of *YFP* coding region, YFPv2 was used as a negative control in BSB injection experiments. As summarized in **Table 13**, 27.6 ng of BSB_*rab5* reg1 dsRNA injected into the hemoceol of 2nd instar BSB nymphs produced high mortality within seven days. The mortality caused BSB_*rab5* reg1 dsRNA was significantly different from that seen with the same amount of injected YFPv2 dsRNA (negative control), with $p = 0.00263$ (Student's *t*-test).

[00363] **Table 13** Results of BSB_*rab5* reg1 dsRNA injection into the hemoceol of 2nd instar Brown Stink Bug nymphs seven days after injection.

Treatment*	N Trials	Mean % Mortality ± SEM†	p value <i>t</i> -test
BSB <i>rab5</i> reg1	3	89 ± 6.4	2.63E-03
Not injected	3	3 ± 3.3	5.61E-01
YFP v2 dsRNA	3	10 ± 10	---

*Ten insects injected per trial for each dsRNA.

†SEM- Standard error of the mean

EXAMPLE 13

Transgenic *Zea mays* Comprising Hemipteran Pest Sequences

[00364] Ten to 20 transgenic T₀ *Zea mays* plants harboring expression vectors for nucleic acids comprising SEQ ID NO: 78, SEQ ID NO:80, and/or SEQ ID NO:81 are generated as described in EXAMPLE 7. A further 10-20 T₁ *Zea mays* independent lines expressing hairpin dsRNA for an

-106-

RNAi construct are obtained for BSB challenge. Hairpin dsRNA may be derived as set forth in SEQ ID NO:80, SEQ ID NO:81, or otherwise further comprising SEQ ID NO:78. These are confirmed through RT-PCR or other molecular analysis methods. Total RNA preparations from selected independent T₁ lines are optionally used for RT-PCR with primers designed to bind in the linker of the hairpin expression cassette in each of the RNAi constructs. In addition, specific primers for each target gene in an RNAi construct are optionally used to amplify and confirm the production of the pre-processed mRNA required for siRNA production *in planta*. The amplification of the desired bands for each target gene confirms the expression of the hairpin RNA in each transgenic *Zea mays* plant. Processing of the dsRNA hairpin of the target genes into siRNA is subsequently optionally confirmed in independent transgenic lines using RNA blot hybridizations.

[00365] Moreover, RNAi molecules having mismatch sequences with more than 80% sequence identity to target genes affect corn rootworms in a way similar to that seen with RNAi molecules having 100% sequence identity to the target genes. The pairing of mismatch sequence with native sequences to form a hairpin dsRNA in the same RNAi construct delivers plant-processed siRNAs capable of affecting the growth, development and viability of feeding hemipteran pests.

[00366] *In planta* delivery of dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, or miRNA corresponding to target genes and the subsequent uptake by hemipteran pests through feeding results in down-regulation of the target genes in the hemipteran pest through RNA-mediated gene silencing. When the function of a target gene is important at one or more stages of development, the growth, development, and reproduction of the hemipteran pest is affected, and in the case of at least one of *Euschistus heros*, *Piezodorus guildinii*, *Halyomorpha halys*, *Nezara viridula*, *Acrosternum hilare*, and *Euschistus servus* leads to failure to successfully infest, feed, develop, and/or reproduce, or leads to death of the hemipteran pest. The choice of target genes and the successful application of RNAi is then used to control hemipteran pests.

[00367] Phenotypic comparison of transgenic RNAi lines and nontransformed *Zea mays*; Target hemipteran pest genes or sequences selected for creating hairpin dsRNA have no similarity to any known plant gene sequence. Hence it is not expected that the production or the activation of (systemic) RNAi by constructs targeting these hemipteran pest genes or sequences will have any deleterious effect on transgenic plants. However, development and morphological characteristics of

-107-

transgenic lines are compared with nontransformed plants, as well as those of transgenic lines transformed with an "empty" vector having no hairpin-expressing gene. Plant root, shoot, foliage and reproduction characteristics are compared. There is no observable difference in root length and growth patterns of transgenic and nontransformed plants. Plant shoot characteristics such as height, leaf numbers and sizes, time of flowering, floral size and appearance are similar. In general, there are no observable morphological differences between transgenic lines and those without expression of target iRNA molecules when cultured *in vitro* and in soil in the glasshouse.

EXAMPLE 14

Transgenic *Glycine max* Comprising Hemipteran Pest Sequences

[00368] Ten to 20 transgenic T₀ *Glycine max* plants harboring expression vectors for nucleic acids comprising SEQ ID NO: 78, SEQ ID NO:80 and/or SEQ ID NO:81 are generated as is known in the art, including for example by *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation, as follows. Mature soybean (*Glycine max*) seeds are sterilized overnight with chlorine gas for sixteen hours. Following sterilization with chlorine gas, the seeds are placed in an open container in a LAMINAR™ flow hood to dispel the chlorine gas. Next, the sterilized seeds are imbibed with sterile H₂O for sixteen hours in the dark using a black box at 24° C.

[00369] Preparation of split-seed soybeans; The split soybean seed comprising a portion of an embryonic axis protocol required preparation of soybean seed material which is cut longitudinally, using a #10 blade affixed to a scalpel, along the hilum of the seed to separate and remove the seed coat, and to split the seed into two cotyledon sections. Careful attention is made to partially remove the embryonic axis, wherein about 1/2 – 1/3 of the embryo axis remains attached to the nodal end of the cotyledon.

[00370] Inoculation; The split soybean seeds comprising a partial portion of the embryonic axis are then immersed for about 30 minutes in a solution of *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* (e.g., strain EHA 101 or EHA 105) containing binary plasmid comprising SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:80 and/or SEQ ID NO:81. The *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* solution is diluted to a final concentration of $\lambda=0.6$ OD₆₅₀ before immersing the cotyledons comprising the embryo axis.

-108-

[00371] Co-cultivation; Following inoculation, the split soybean seed is allowed to co-cultivate with the *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* strain for 5 days on co-cultivation medium (Wang, Kan. *Agrobacterium Protocols*. 2. 1. New Jersey: Humana Press, 2006. Print.) in a Petri dish covered with a piece of filter paper.

[00372] Shoot induction; After 5 days of co-cultivation, the split soybean seeds are washed in liquid Shoot Induction (SI) media consisting of B5 salts, B5 vitamins, 28 mg/L Ferrous, 38 mg/L Na₂EDTA, 30 g/L sucrose, 0.6 g/L MES, 1.11 mg/L BAP, 100 mg/L TIMENTIN™, 200 mg/L cefotaxime, and 50 mg/L vancomycin (pH 5.7). The split soybean seeds are then cultured on Shoot Induction I (SI I) medium consisting of B5 salts, B5 vitamins, 7 g/L Noble agar, 28 mg/L Ferrous, 38 mg/L Na₂EDTA, 30 g/L sucrose, 0.6 g/L MES, 1.11 mg/L BAP, 50 mg/L TIMENTIN™, 200 mg/L cefotaxime, 50 mg/L vancomycin (pH 5.7), with the flat side of the cotyledon facing up and the nodal end of the cotyledon imbedded into the medium. After 2 weeks of culture, the explants from the transformed split soybean seed are transferred to the Shoot Induction II (SI II) medium containing SI I medium supplemented with 6 mg/L glufosinate (LIBERTY®).

[00373] Shoot elongation; After 2 weeks of culture on SI II medium, the cotyledons are removed from the explants and a flush shoot pad containing the embryonic axis are excised by making a cut at the base of the cotyledon. The isolated shoot pad from the cotyledon is transferred to Shoot Elongation (SE) medium. The SE medium consists of MS salts, 28 mg/L Ferrous, 38 mg/L Na₂EDTA, 30 g/L sucrose and 0.6 g/L MES, 50 mg/L asparagine, 100 mg/L L-pyroglutamic acid, 0.1 mg/L IAA, 0.5 mg/L GA₃, 1 mg/L zeatin riboside, 50 mg/L TIMENTIN™, 200 mg/L cefotaxime, 50 mg/L vancomycin, 6 mg/L glufosinate, 7 g/L Noble agar, (pH 5.7). The cultures are transferred to fresh SE medium every 2 weeks. The cultures are grown in a CONVIRON™ growth chamber at 24° C with an 18 h photoperiod at a light intensity of 80-90 μmol/m²sec.

[00374] Rooting; Elongated shoots which developed from the cotyledon shoot pad are isolated by cutting the elongated shoot at the base of the cotyledon shoot pad, and dipping the elongated shoot in 1 mg/L IBA (Indole 3-butyric acid) for 1–3 minutes to promote rooting. Next, the elongated shoots are transferred to rooting medium (MS salts, B5 vitamins, 28 mg/L Ferrous,

-109-

38 mg/L Na₂EDTA, 20 g/L sucrose and 0.59 g/L MES, 50 mg/L asparagine, 100 mg/L L-pyroglutamic acid 7 g/L Noble agar, pH 5.6) in phyta trays.

[00375] Cultivation; Following culture in a CONVIRON™ growth chamber at 24° C, 18 h photoperiod, for 1-2 weeks, the shoots which have developed roots are transferred to a soil mix in a covered sundae cup and placed in a CONVIRON™ growth chamber (models CMP4030 and CMP3244, Controlled Environments Limited, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada) under long day conditions (16 hours light/8 hours dark) at a light intensity of 120-150 $\mu\text{mol}/\text{m}^2\text{sec}$ under constant temperature (22°C) and humidity (40-50%) for acclimatization of plantlets. The rooted plantlets are acclimated in sundae cups for several weeks before they are transferred to the greenhouse for further acclimatization and establishment of robust transgenic soybean plants.

[00376] A further 10-20 T₁ *Glycine max* independent lines expressing hairpin dsRNA for an RNAi construct are obtained for BSB challenge. Hairpin dsRNA may be derived as set forth in SEQ ID NO:80, SEQ ID NO:81, or otherwise further comprising SEQ ID NO:78. These are confirmed through RT-PCR or other molecular analysis methods. Total RNA preparations from selected independent T₁ lines are optionally used for RT-PCR with primers designed to bind in the linker of the hairpin expression cassette in each of the RNAi constructs. In addition, specific primers for each target gene in an RNAi construct are optionally used to amplify and confirm the production of the pre-processed mRNA required for siRNA production *in planta*. The amplification of the desired bands for each target gene confirms the expression of the hairpin RNA in each transgenic *Glycine max* plant. Processing of the dsRNA hairpin of the target genes into siRNA is subsequently optionally confirmed in independent transgenic lines using RNA blot hybridizations.

[00377] Moreover, RNAi molecules having mismatch sequences with more than 80% sequence identity to target genes affect corn rootworms in a way similar to that seen with RNAi molecules having 100% sequence identity to the target genes. The pairing of mismatch sequence with native sequences to form a hairpin dsRNA in the same RNAi construct delivers plant-processed siRNAs capable of affecting the growth, development and viability of feeding hemipteran pests.

[00378] *In planta* delivery of dsRNA, siRNA, shRNA, or miRNA corresponding to target genes and the subsequent uptake by hemipteran pests through feeding results in down-regulation of the target genes in the hemipteran pest through RNA-mediated gene silencing. When the function of

-110-

a target gene is important at one or more stages of development, the growth, development, and reproduction of the hemipteran pest is affected, and in the case of at least one of *Euschistus heros*, *Piezodorus guildinii*, *Halyomorpha halys*, *Nezara viridula*, *Acrosternum hilare*, and *Euschistus servus* leads to failure to successfully infest, feed, develop, and/or reproduce, or leads to death of the hemipteran pest. The choice of target genes and the successful application of RNAi is then used to control hemipteran pests.

[00379] Phenotypic comparison of transgenic RNAi lines and nontransformed Glycine max Target hemipteran pest genes or sequences selected for creating hairpin dsRNA have no similarity to any known plant gene sequence. Hence it is not expected that the production or the activation of (systemic) RNAi by constructs targeting these hemipteran pest genes or sequences will have any deleterious effect on transgenic plants. However, development and morphological characteristics of transgenic lines are compared with nontransformed plants, as well as those of transgenic lines transformed with an "empty" vector having no hairpin-expressing gene. Plant root, shoot, foliage and reproduction characteristics are compared. There is no observable difference in root length and growth patterns of transgenic and nontransformed plants. Plant shoot characteristics such as height, leaf numbers and sizes, time of flowering, floral size and appearance are similar. In general, there are no observable morphological differences between transgenic lines and those without expression of target iRNA molecules when cultured in vitro and in soil in the glasshouse.

EXAMPLE 15

E. heros bioassays on Artificial diet

[00380] In dsRNA feeding assays on artificial diet, 32-well trays are set up with an ~18 mg pellet of artificial diet and water, as for injection experiments (EXAMPLE 12). dsRNA at a concentration of 200 ng/μl is added to the food pellet and water sample, 100 μl to each of two wells. Five 2nd instar *E. heros* nymphs are introduced into each well. Water samples and dsRNA that targets YFP transcript are used as negative controls. The experiments are repeated on three different days. Surviving insects are weighed and the mortality rates are determined after 8 days of treatment.

-111-

EXAMPLE 16

Transgenic *Arabidopsis thaliana* Comprising Hemipteran Pest Sequences

[00381] *Arabidopsis* transformation vectors containing a target gene construct for hairpin formation comprising segments of *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:78) are generated using standard molecular methods similar to EXAMPLE 4. *Arabidopsis* transformation is performed using standard *Agrobacterium*-based procedure. T₁ seeds are selected with glufosinate tolerance selectable marker. Transgenic T₁ *Arabidopsis* plants are generated and homozygous simple-copy T₂ transgenic plants are generated for insect studies. Bioassays are performed on growing *Arabidopsis* plants with inflorescences. Five to ten insects are placed on each plant and monitored for survival within 14 days.

[00382] Construction of *Arabidopsis* transformation vectors; Entry clones based on an entry vector harboring a target gene construct for hairpin formation comprising a segment of *rab5* (SEQ ID NO:78) are assembled using a combination of chemically synthesized fragments (DNA2.0, Menlo Park, CA) and standard molecular cloning methods. Intramolecular hairpin formation by RNA primary transcripts is facilitated by arranging (within a single transcription unit) two copies of a target gene segment in opposite orientations, the two segments being separated by a linker sequence (e.g., a loop (such as SEQ ID NO:116) or an ST-LS1 intron sequence (Vancanneyt *et al.* (1990) Mol. Gen. Genet. 220(2):245-50)). Thus, the primary mRNA transcript contains the two *rab5* gene segment sequences as large inverted repeats of one another, separated by the linker sequence. A copy of a *Arabidopsis thaliana* ubiquitin 10 promoter (Callis *et al.* (1990) J. Biological Chem. 265:12486-12493) is used to drive production of the primary mRNA hairpin transcript, and a fragment comprising a 3' untranslated region from Open Reading Frame 23 of *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* (AtuORF23 3' UTR v1; US Patent No. 5,428,147) is used to terminate transcription of the hairpin-RNA-expressing gene.

[00383] The hairpin clone within an entry vector described above is used in standard GATEWAY® recombination reaction with a typical binary destination vector to produce hairpin RNA expression transformation vectors for *Agrobacterium*-mediated *Arabidopsis* transformation.

[00384] The binary destination vector comprises a herbicide tolerance gene, DSM-2v2 (U.S. Patent App. No. 2011/0107455), under the regulation of a Cassava vein mosaic virus promoter

-112-

(CsVMV Promoter v2, U.S. Patent No. US 7601885; Verdaguer et al, (1996) Plant Molecular Biology, 31:1129-1139). A fragment comprising a 3' untranslated region from Open Reading Frame 1 of *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* (AtuORF1 3' UTR v6; Huang et al, (1990) J. Bacteriol, 172:1814-1822) is used to terminate transcription of the DSM2v2 mRNA.

[00385] A negative control binary construct, which comprises a gene that expresses a YFP hairpin RNA, is constructed by means of standard GATEWAY® recombination reactions with a typical binary destination vector and entry vector. An entry construct comprises a YFP hairpin sequence (hpYFP v2-1, SEQ ID NO:89) under the expression control of an *Arabidopsis* Ubiquitin 10 promoter (as above) and a fragment comprising an ORF23 3' untranslated region from *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* (as above).

[00386] Production of transgenic *Arabidopsis* comprising insecticidal hairpin RNAs: *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation; Binary plasmids containing hairpin sequences are electroporated into *Agrobacterium* strain GV3101 (pMP90RK). The recombinant *Agrobacterium* clones are confirmed by restriction analysis of plasmids preparations of the recombinant *Agrobacterium* colonies. A Qiagen Plasmid Max Kit (Qiagen, Cat# 12162) is used to extract plasmids from *Agrobacterium* cultures following the manufacture recommended protocol.

[00387] *Arabidopsis* transformation and T₁ Selection; Twelve to fifteen *Arabidopsis* plants (c.v. Columbia) are grown in 4" pots in the green house with light intensity of 250 $\mu\text{mol}/\text{m}^2$, 25°C, and 18:6 hours of light: dark conditions. Primary flower stems are trimmed one week before transformation. *Agrobacterium* inoculums are prepared by incubating 10 μl of recombinant *Agrobacterium* glycerol stock in 100 ml LB broth (Sigma L3022) +100 mg/L Spectinomycin + 50 mg/L Kanamycin at 28°C and shaking at 225 rpm for 72 hours. *Agrobacterium* cells are harvested and suspended into 5% sucrose + 0.04% Silwet-L77 (Lehle Seeds Cat # VIS-02) +10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$ benzamino purine (BA) solution to OD₆₀₀ 0.8~1.0 before floral dipping. The above-ground parts of the plant are dipped into the *Agrobacterium* solution for 5-10 minutes, with gentle agitation. The plants are then transferred to the greenhouse for normal growth with regular watering and fertilizing until seed set.

EXAMPLE 17

-113-

Growth and bioassays of transgenic *Arabidopsis*.

[00388] Selection of T₁ *Arabidopsis* transformed with hairpin RNAi constructs; Up to 200 mg of T₁ seeds from each transformation is stratified in 0.1% agarose solution. The seeds are planted in germination trays (10.5" x 21" x 1"; T.O. Plastics Inc., Clearwater, MN.) with #5 sunshine media. Transformants are selected for tolerance to Ignite® (glufosinate) at 280 g/ha at 6 and 9 days post planting. Selected events are transplanted into 4" diameter pots. Insertion copy analysis is performed within a week of transplanting via hydrolysis quantitative Real-Time PCR (qPCR) using Roche LightCycler480. The PCR primers and hydrolysis probes are designed against DSM2v2 selectable marker using LightCycler Probe Design Software 2.0 (Roche). Plants are maintained at 24°C, with a 16:8 hour light: dark photoperiod under fluorescent and incandescent lights at intensity of 100-150mE/m²×s.

[00389] *E. heros* plant feeding bioassay; At least four low copy (1-2 insertions), four medium copy (2-3 insertions), and four high copy (≥4 insertions) events are selected for each construct. Plants are grown to a flowering stage (plants containing flowers and siliques). The surface of soil is covered with ~50 ml volume of white sand for easy insect identification. Five to ten 2nd instar *E. heros* nymphs are introduced onto each plant. The plants are covered with plastic tubes that are 3" in diameter, 16" tall, and with wall thickness of 0.03" (Item No. 484485, Visipack Fenton MO); the tubes are covered with nylon mesh to isolate the insects. The plants are kept under normal temperature, light, and watering conditions in a conviron. In 14 days, the insects are collected and weighed; percent mortality as well as growth inhibition (1 – weight treatment/weight control) are calculated. YFP hairpin-expressing plants are used as controls.

[00390] T₂ *Arabidopsis* seed generation and T₂ bioassays; T₂ seed is produced from selected low copy (1-2 insertions) events for each construct. Plants (homozygous and/or heterozygous) are subjected to *E. heros* feeding bioassay, as described above. T₃ seed is harvested from homozygotes and stored for future analysis.

-114-

Transformation of Additional Crop Species

[00391] Cotton is transformed with *rab5* (with or without a chloroplast transit peptide) to provide control of hemipteran insects by utilizing a method known to those of skill in the art, for example, substantially the same techniques previously described in EXAMPLE 14 of U.S. Patent 7,838,733, or Example 12 of PCT International Patent Publication No. WO 2007/053482.

EXAMPLE 19

Rab5 dsRNA in Insect Management

[00392] *Rab5* dsRNA transgenes are combined with other dsRNA molecules in transgenic plants to provide redundant RNAi targeting and synergistic RNAi effects. Transgenic plants including, for example and without limitation, corn, soybean, and cotton expressing dsRNA that target *rab5* are useful for preventing feeding damage by coleopteran and hemipteran insects. *Rab5* dsRNA transgenes are also combined in plants with *Bacillus thuringiensis* insecticidal protein technology to represent new modes of action in Insect Resistance Management gene pyramids. When combined with other dsRNA molecules that target insect pests, and/or with *Bacillus thuringiensis* insecticidal proteins, in transgenic plants, an unexpected insecticidal effect (e.g., synergistic insecticidal effect) is observed that also mitigates the development of resistant insect populations. Likewise, *Rab5* dsRNA transgenes are combined in plants with *Photorhabdus* or *Xenorhabdus* insecticidal protein technology to represent new modes of action in Insect Resistance Management gene pyramids. When combined with other dsRNA molecules that target insect pests, and/or with *Photorhabdus* or *Xenorhabdus* insecticidal proteins, in transgenic plants, an unexpected insecticidal effect (e.g., synergistic insecticidal effect) that mitigates the development of resistant insect populations.

[00393] While the present disclosure may be susceptible to various modifications and alternative forms, specific embodiments have been described by way of example in detail herein. However, it should be understood that the present disclosure is not intended to be limited to the particular forms disclosed. Rather, the present disclosure is to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the scope of the present disclosure as defined by the following appended claims and their legal equivalents.

-115-

CLAIMS

What may be claimed is:

1. An isolated nucleic acid comprising at least one polynucleotide operably linked to a heterologous promoter, wherein the polynucleotide is selected from the group consisting of:

SEQ ID NO:1; the complement of SEQ ID NO:1; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1; a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NO:7 or SEQ ID NO:10; the complement of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NO:7 or SEQ ID NO:10; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NO:7 or SEQ ID NO:10; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NO:7 or SEQ ID NO:10;

SEQ ID NO:3; the complement of SEQ ID NO:3; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:3; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:3; a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NO:8; the complement of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NO:8; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NO:8; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NO:8;

SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of SEQ ID NO:5; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:5; a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising SEQ ID NO:9; the complement of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising SEQ ID NO:9; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising SEQ ID NO:9; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising SEQ ID NO:9;

-116-

SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of SEQ ID NO:78; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:78; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:78; a native coding sequence of a *Euschistus* organism comprising SEQ ID NO:80 or SEQ ID NO:81; the complement of a native coding sequence of a *Euschistus* organism comprising SEQ ID NO:80 or SEQ ID NO:81; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Euschistus* organism comprising SEQ ID NO:80 or SEQ ID NO:81; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Euschistus* organism comprising SEQ ID NO:80 or SEQ ID NO:81.

2. The polynucleotide of claim 1, wherein the polynucleotide is selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1; the complement of SEQ ID NO:1; SEQ ID NO:3; the complement of SEQ ID NO:3; SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of SEQ ID NO:5; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:3; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:3; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:5; a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NOs:7-10; the complement of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NOs:7-10; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NOs:7-10; and the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NOs:7-10.

3. The polynucleotide of claim 1, wherein the polynucleotide is selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, and the complements of any of the foregoing.

-117-

4. The polynucleotide of claim 3, wherein the organism is selected from the group consisting of *D. v. virgifera* LeConte; *D. barberi* Smith and Lawrence; *D. u. howardi*; *D. v. zaeae*; *D. balteata* LeConte; *D. u. tenella*; *D. speciosa* Germar, and *D. u. undecimpunctata* Mannerheim.

5. A plant transformation vector comprising the polynucleotide of claim 1.

6. A ribonucleic acid (RNA) molecule transcribed from the polynucleotide of claim 1.

7. A double-stranded ribonucleic acid molecule produced from the expression of the polynucleotide of claim 1.

8. The double-stranded ribonucleic acid molecule of claim 7, wherein contacting the polynucleotide sequence with a coleopteran or hemipteran insect inhibits or down regulates the expression of a rab5 endogenous nucleotide sequence specifically complementary to the polynucleotide.

9. The double-stranded ribonucleic acid molecule of claim 8, wherein contacting said ribonucleotide molecule with a coleopteran or hemipteran insect kills or inhibits the growth, viability, and/or feeding of the insect.

10. The double stranded RNA of claim 7, comprising a first, a second and a third RNA segment, wherein the first RNA segment comprises the polynucleotide, wherein the third RNA segment is linked to the first RNA segment by the second RNA segment, and wherein the third RNA segment is substantially the reverse complement of the first RNA segment, such that the first and the third RNA segments hybridize when transcribed into a ribonucleic acid to form the double-stranded RNA.

-118-

11. The RNA of claim 6, selected from the group consisting of a double-stranded ribonucleic acid molecule and a single-stranded ribonucleic acid molecule of between about 15 and about 30 nucleotides in length.

12. A plant transformation vector comprising the polynucleotide of claim 1, wherein the heterologous promoter is functional in a plant cell.

13. A cell transformed with the polynucleotide of claim 1.

14. The cell of claim 13, wherein the cell is a prokaryotic cell.

15. The cell of claim 13, wherein the cell is a eukaryotic cell.

16. The cell of claim 15, wherein the cell is a plant cell.

17. A plant transformed with the polynucleotide of claim 1.

18. A seed of the plant of claim 17, wherein the seed comprises the polynucleotide.

19. A commodity product produced from the plant of claim 17, wherein the commodity product comprises a detectable amount of the polynucleotide.

20. The plant of claim 17, wherein the at least one polynucleotide is expressed in the plant as a double-stranded ribonucleic acid molecule.

21. The cell of claim 16, wherein the cell is a *Zea mays* cell.

22. The plant of claim 17, wherein the plant is *Zea mays*.

-119-

23. The plant of claim 17, wherein the at least one polynucleotide is expressed in the plant as a ribonucleic acid molecule, and the ribonucleic acid molecule inhibits the expression of an endogenous polynucleotide that is specifically complementary to the at least one polynucleotide when a coleopteran or hemipteran insect ingests a part of the plant.

24. The polynucleotide of claim 1, further comprising at least one additional polynucleotide that encodes an RNA molecule that inhibits the expression of an endogenous insect gene.

25. A plant transformation vector comprising the polynucleotide of claim 24, wherein the additional polynucleotide(s) are each operably linked to a heterologous promoter functional in a plant cell.

26. A method for controlling a coleopteran or hemipteran pest population, the method comprising providing an agent comprising a ribonucleic acid (RNA) molecule that functions upon contact with the pest to inhibit a biological function within the pest, wherein the RNA is specifically hybridizable with a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of any of SEQ ID NOs:92-102; the complement of any of SEQ ID NOs:92-102; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of any of SEQ ID NOs:92-102; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of any of SEQ ID NOs:92-102; a transcript of any of SEQ ID NOs:1, 3, 5, 7-10, 78, and 80-81; the complement of a transcript of any of SEQ ID NOs:1, 3, 5, 7-10, 78, and 80-81; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a transcript of any of SEQ ID NOs:1, 3, 5, 7-10, 78, and 80-81; and the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a transcript of any of SEQ ID NOs:1, 3, 5, 7-10, 78, and 80-81.

27. The method according to claim 26, wherein the RNA of the agent is specifically hybridizable with a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs:92 and 93; the complement of SEQ ID NO:92 or 93; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:92 or 93; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:92

-120-

or 93; a transcript of SEQ ID NOs:1, 3, or 5; the complement of a transcript of SEQ ID NOs: 1, 3, or 5; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a transcript of SEQ ID NOs:1 or 3; and the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a transcript of SEQ ID NOs: 1, 3, or 5.

28. The method according to claim 26, wherein the agent is a double-stranded RNA molecule.

29. A method for controlling a coleopteran pest population, the method comprising:
providing an agent comprising a first and a second polynucleotide sequence that functions upon contact with the coleopteran pest to inhibit a biological function within the coleopteran pest, wherein the first polynucleotide sequence comprises a region that exhibits from about 90% to about 100% sequence identity to from about 15 to about 30 contiguous nucleotides of any of SEQ ID NOs:92-97, and wherein the first polynucleotide sequence is specifically hybridized to the second polynucleotide sequence.

30. A method for controlling a hemipteran pest population, the method comprising:
providing an agent comprising a first and a second polynucleotide sequence that functions upon contact with the hemipteran pest to inhibit a biological function within the hemipteran pest, wherein the first polynucleotide sequence comprises a region that exhibits from about 90% to about 100% sequence identity to from about 15 to about 30 contiguous nucleotides of any of SEQ ID NOs:98-102, and wherein the first polynucleotide sequence is specifically hybridized to the second polynucleotide sequence.

31. A method for controlling a coleopteran pest population, the method comprising:
providing in a host plant of a coleopteran pest a transformed plant cell comprising the polynucleotide of claim 2, wherein the polynucleotide is expressed to produce a ribonucleic acid molecule that functions upon contact with a coleopteran pest belonging to the population to inhibit the expression of a target sequence within the coleopteran pest and results in decreased growth and/or

-121-

survival of the coleopteran pest or pest population, relative to reproduction of the same pest species on a plant of the same host plant species that does not comprise the polynucleotide.

32. The method according to claim 31, wherein the ribonucleic acid molecule is a double-stranded ribonucleic acid molecule.

33. The method according to claim 31, wherein the coleopteran pest population is reduced relative to a population of the same pest species infesting a host plant of the same host plant species lacking the transformed plant cell.

34. The method according to claim 32, wherein the coleopteran pest population is reduced relative to a coleopteran pest population infesting a host plant of the same species lacking the transformed plant cell.

35. A method of controlling coleopteran pest infestation in a plant, the method comprising providing in the diet of a coleopteran pest a ribonucleic acid (RNA) that is specifically hybridizable with a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of:

- SEQ ID NOs:92-97;
- the complement of any of SEQ ID NOs:92-97;
- a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of any of SEQ ID NOs:92-97;
- the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of any of SEQ ID NOs:92-97;
- a transcript of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5;
- the complement of a transcript of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5;
- a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a transcript of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; and
- the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a transcript of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5.

-122-

36. The method according to claim 35, wherein the diet comprises a plant cell transformed to express the polynucleotide.

37. The method according to claim 35, wherein the specifically hybridizable RNA is comprised in a double-stranded RNA molecule.

38. A method of controlling hemipteran pest infestation in a plant, the method comprising contacting a hemipteran pest with a ribonucleic acid (RNA) that is specifically hybridizable with a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of:

SEQ ID NOs:98-102;
the complement of any of SEQ ID NOs:98-102;
a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of any of SEQ ID NOs:98-102;
the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of any of SEQ ID NOs:98-102;
a transcript of SEQ ID NO:78;
the complement of a transcript of SEQ ID NO:78;
a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a transcript of SEQ ID NO:78; and
the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a transcript of SEQ ID NO:78.

39. The method according to claim 38, wherein contacting the hemipteran pest with the RNA comprises spraying the plant with a composition comprising the RNA.

40. The method according to claim 38, wherein the specifically hybridizable RNA is comprised in a double-stranded RNA molecule.

41. A method for improving the yield of a crop, the method comprising:
introducing the nucleic acid of claim 1 into a crop plant to produce a transgenic crop plant;
and

-123-

cultivating the crop plant to allow the expression of the at least one polynucleotide; wherein expression of the at least one polynucleotide inhibits insect pest reproduction or growth and loss of yield due to insect pest infection,

wherein the crop plant is corn, soybean, or cotton.

42. The method according to claim 41, wherein expression of the at least one polynucleotide produces an RNA molecule that suppresses at least a first target gene in an insect pest that has contacted a portion of the crop plant.

43. The method according to claim 41, wherein the polynucleotide is selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10 and the complements of any of the foregoing.

44. The method according to claim 43, wherein expression of the at least one polynucleotide produces an RNA molecule that suppresses at least a first target gene in a coleopteran insect pest that has contacted a portion of the corn plant.

45. A method for producing a transgenic plant cell, the method comprising:
transforming a plant cell with a vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 1;
culturing the transformed plant cell under conditions sufficient to allow for development of a plant cell culture comprising a plurality of transformed plant cells;
selecting for transformed plant cells that have integrated the at least one polynucleotide into their genomes;
screening the transformed plant cells for expression of a ribonucleic acid (RNA) molecule encoded by the at least one polynucleotide; and
selecting a plant cell that expresses the RNA.

46. The method according to claim 45, wherein the vector comprises a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of: SEQ ID NO:1; the complement of SEQ ID NO:1; SEQ ID

-124-

NO:3; the complement of SEQ ID NO:3; SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of SEQ ID NO:5; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, or SEQ ID NO:5; a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NOs:7-10; the complement of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NOs:7-10; a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NOs:7-10; and the complement of a fragment of at least 15 contiguous nucleotides of a native coding sequence of a *Diabrotica* organism comprising any of SEQ ID NOs:7-10.

47. The method according to claim 45, wherein the RNA molecule is a double-stranded RNA molecule.

48. A method for producing transgenic plant protected against a coleopteran pest, the method comprising:

providing the transgenic plant cell produced by the method of claim 46; and
regenerating a transgenic plant from the transgenic plant cell, wherein expression of the ribonucleic acid molecule encoded by the at least one polynucleotide is sufficient to modulate the expression of a target gene in a coleopteran pest that contacts the transformed plant.

49. A method for producing a transgenic plant cell, the method comprising:
transforming a plant cell with a vector comprising a means for providing coleopteran pest protection to a plant;
culturing the transformed plant cell under conditions sufficient to allow for development of a plant cell culture comprising a plurality of transformed plant cells;
selecting for transformed plant cells that have integrated the means for providing coleopteran pest protection to a plant into their genomes;
screening the transformed plant cells for expression of a means for inhibiting expression of an essential gene in a coleopteran pest; and

-125-

selecting a plant cell that expresses the means for inhibiting expression of an essential gene in a coleopteran pest.

50. A method for producing a transgenic plant protected against a coleopteran pest, the method comprising:

providing the transgenic plant cell produced by the method of claim 49; and
regenerating a transgenic plant from the transgenic plant cell, wherein expression of the means for inhibiting expression of an essential gene in a coleopteran pest is sufficient to modulate the expression of a target gene in a coleopteran pest that contacts the transformed plant.

51. A method for producing a transgenic plant cell, the method comprising:
transforming a plant cell with a vector comprising a means for providing hemipteran pest protection to a plant;

culturing the transformed plant cell under conditions sufficient to allow for development of a plant cell culture comprising a plurality of transformed plant cells;

selecting for transformed plant cells that have integrated the means for providing hemipteran pest protection to a plant into their genomes;

screening the transformed plant cells for expression of a means for inhibiting expression of an essential gene in a hemipteran pest; and

selecting a plant cell that expresses the means for inhibiting expression of an essential gene in a hemipteran pest.

52. A method for producing a transgenic plant protected against a hemipteran pest, the method comprising:

providing the transgenic plant cell produced by the method of claim 51; and
regenerating a transgenic plant from the transgenic plant cell, wherein expression of the means for inhibiting expression of an essential gene in a hemipteran pest is sufficient to modulate the expression of a target gene in a hemipteran pest that contacts the transformed plant.

-126-

53. The nucleic acid of claim 1, further comprising a polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide from *Bacillus thuringiensis* or a PIP-1 polypeptide.

54. The nucleic acid of claim 53, wherein the polynucleotide encodes a polypeptide from *B. thuringiensis* that is selected from a group comprising Cry3, Cry34, and Cry35.

55. The cell of claim 16, wherein the cell comprises a polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide from *Bacillus thuringiensis* or a PIP-1 polypeptide.

56. The cell of claim 55, wherein the polynucleotide encodes a polypeptide from *B. thuringiensis* that is selected from a group comprising Cry3, Cry34, and Cry35.

57. The plant of claim 17, wherein the plant comprises a polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide from *Bacillus thuringiensis* or a PIP-1 polypeptide.

58. The plant of claim 57, wherein the polynucleotide encodes a polypeptide from *B. thuringiensis* that is selected from a group comprising Cry3, Cry34, and Cry35.

59. The method according to claim 45, wherein the transformed plant cell comprises a polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide from *Bacillus thuringiensis* or a PIP-1 polypeptide.

60. The method according to claim 59, wherein the polynucleotide encodes a polypeptide from *B. thuringiensis* that is selected from a group comprising Cry3, Cry34, and Cry35.

61. A double stranded RNA (dsRNA) capable of down regulating the expression of a *rab5-1* gene of *D. v. virgifera* LeConte comprising a sense RNA strand and a complementary antisense RNA strand,

-127-

wherein the sense RNA strand is selected from the group consisting of a polynucleotide sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:95, or SEQ ID NO:10,

wherein the antisense RNA strand is selected from the group consisting of a polynucleotide sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:90, SEQ ID NO:91, SEQ ID NO:92, SEQ ID NO:93, SEQ ID NO:94, SEQ ID NO:9, or SEQ ID NO:96, and

wherein said dsRNA comprises from 19 to 3710 nucleotides.

62. The dsRNA of claim 61, wherein the *rab5* gene is selected from the group consisting of a *rab5*-1, *rab5*-2, or *rab5*-3 gene.

63. The dsRNA of claim 61, wherein the dsRNA is expressed within a transgenic plant.

64. The dsRNA of claim 63, wherein the dsRNA causes post-transcriptional gene repression or inhibition of a *rab5* gene in *D. v. virgifera* LeConte when *D. v. virgifera* LeConte feeds on the transgenic plant.

65. The dsRNA of claim 61, wherein the dsRNA is formed from two separate complementary RNA sequences.

66. The dsRNA of claim 61, wherein the dsRNA is formed from a single RNA sequence with internally complementary sequences.

67. A gene expression cassette capable of inhibiting or down regulating the expression of a *rab5* gene of *D. v. virgifera* LeConte, wherein the gene expression cassette comprises a promoter operably linked to a nucleic acid molecule encoding an RNA sequence that forms a double stranded RNA, the nucleic acid molecule comprises:

-128-

(i) a first nucleotide sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:95, SEQ ID NO:10 or a fragment thereof; and

(ii) a second nucleotide sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to a complementary sequence of SEQ ID NO:90, SEQ ID NO:91, SEQ ID NO:92, SEQ ID NO:93, SEQ ID NO:94, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:96 or a fragment thereof,

wherein said fragment thereof comprises from 19 to 3,710 nucleotides.

68. The gene expression cassette of claim 67, wherein the gene expression cassette is transformed into a plant.

69. The gene expression cassette of claim 68, wherein the dsRNA causes post-transcriptional gene repression or inhibition of the *rab5* gene in *D. v. virgifera* LeConte when *D. v. virgifera* LeConte feeds on the plant.

70. The gene expression cassette of claim 68, wherein the dsRNA is formed from two separate complementary RNA sequences.

71. The gene expression cassette of claim 68, wherein the dsRNA is formed from a single RNA sequence with internally complementary sequences.

72. The gene expression cassette of claim 71, comprising a first, a second and a third RNA segment, wherein the first RNA segment comprises the polynucleotide, wherein the third RNA segment is linked to the first RNA segment by the second RNA segment, and wherein the third RNA segment is substantially the reverse complement of the first RNA segment, such that the first and the third RNA segments hybridize when transcribed into a ribonucleic acid to form the double-stranded RNA.

-129-

73. The gene expression cassette of claim 68, wherein the *rab5* gene is selected from the group consisting of a *rab5-1*, *rab5-2*, or *rab5-3* gene.

74. A double stranded RNA (dsRNA) comprising a nucleic acid encoding a self-complementary RNA for silencing one or more target genes of a pest or pathogen of a plant, the self-complementary RNA comprising a double stranded region having a length of at least 19, 20, or 21 nucleotides, wherein one strand of said double stranded region is obtained from a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:95, or SEQ ID NO:10.

75. The dsRNA of claim 74, wherein the one or more target genes is a *rab5* gene.

76. The dsRNA of claim 75, wherein the *rab5* gene is selected from the group consisting of a *rab5-1*, *rab5-2*, or *rab5-3* gene.

77. The dsRNA of claim 74, wherein the pest or pathogen of a plant is *D. v. virgifera* LeConte.

78. The dsRNA of claim 74, wherein the dsRNA is expressed within a transgenic plant.

79. The dsRNA of claim 78, wherein the dsRNA causes post-transcriptional gene repression or inhibition of the *rab5* gene in *D. v. virgifera* LeConte when *D. v. virgifera* LeConte feeds on the transgenic plant.

80. The dsRNA of claim 74, comprising a first, a second and a third RNA segment, wherein the first RNA segment comprises the polynucleotide, wherein the third RNA segment is linked to the first RNA segment by the second RNA segment, and wherein the third RNA segment is substantially the reverse complement of the first RNA segment, such that the first and the third RNA segments hybridize when transcribed into a ribonucleic acid to form the double-stranded RNA.

FIG. 1.

Generation of dsRNA from a single transcription template with a single pair of primers

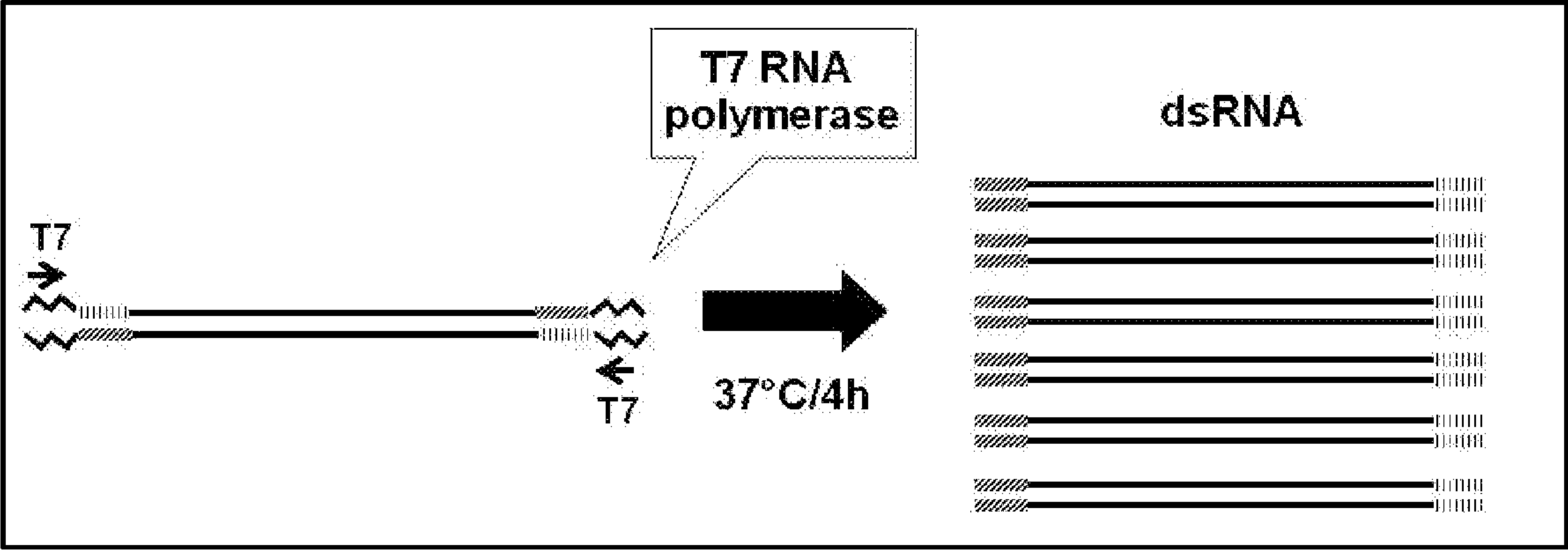


FIG. 2.

Generation of dsRNA from two transcription templates.

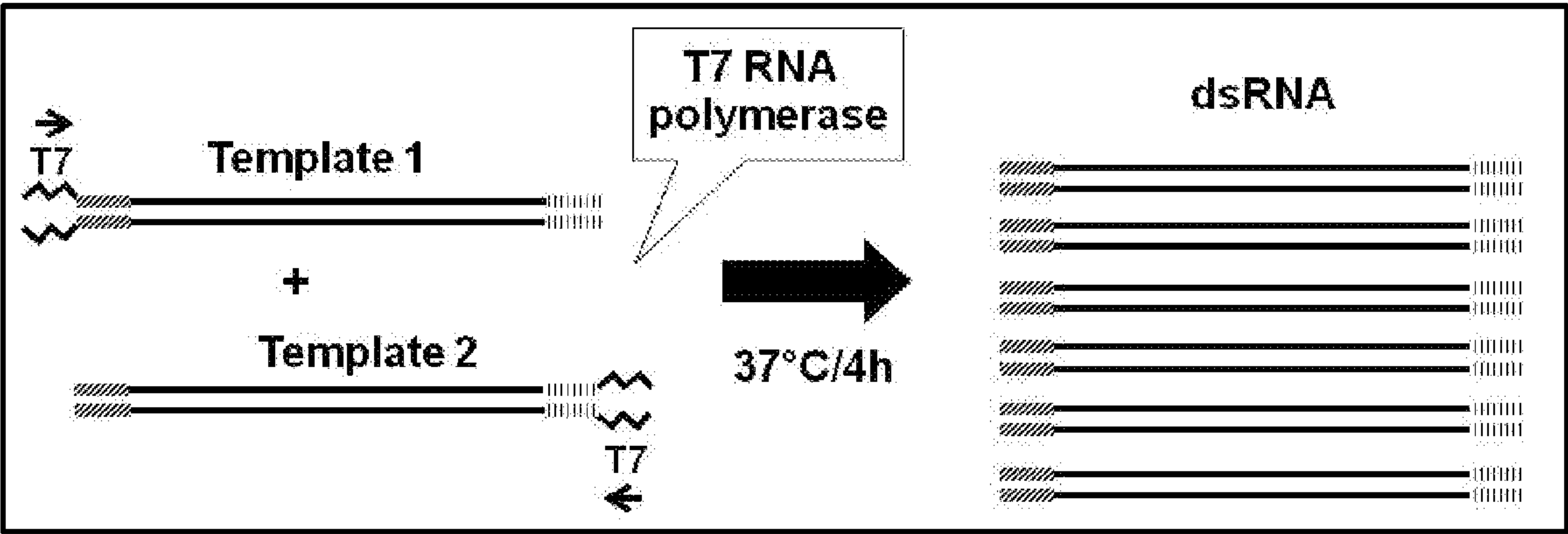


FIG. 1.

Generation of dsRNA from a single transcription template with a single pair of primers

