



# A Proteomic- and Bioinformatic-Based Identification of Specific Allergens from Edible Insects

Annick Barre, Carole Pichereaux, Mathias Simplicien, Odile Burlet-Schiltz,  
Hervé Benoist, Pierre Rougé

## ► To cite this version:

Annick Barre, Carole Pichereaux, Mathias Simplicien, Odile Burlet-Schiltz, Hervé Benoist, et al.. A Proteomic- and Bioinformatic-Based Identification of Specific Allergens from Edible Insects: Probes for Future Detection as Food Ingredients. *Foods*, 2021, 10 (2), pp.280. 10.3390/foods10020280 . hal-03542623

**HAL Id: hal-03542623**

**<https://ut3-toulouseinp.hal.science/hal-03542623>**

Submitted on 25 Jan 2022

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Article

# A Proteomic- and Bioinformatic-Based Identification of Specific Allergens from Edible Insects: Probes for Future Detection as Food Ingredients

Annick Barre <sup>1</sup>, Carole Pichereaux <sup>2,3</sup>, Mathias Simplicien <sup>1</sup>, Odile Burlet-Schiltz <sup>3</sup>, Hervé Benoist <sup>1</sup> and Pierre Rouge <sup>1,\*</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> UMR 152 PharmaDev, Institut de Recherche et Développement, Faculté de Pharmacie, Université Paul Sabatier, 35 Chemin des Maraîchers, 31062 Toulouse, France; annick.barre@univ-tlse3.fr (A.B.); simplicien.mathias@gmail.com (M.S.); herve.benoist@ird.fr (H.B.)
- <sup>2</sup> Fédération de Recherche (FR3450), Agrobiosciences, Interactions et Biodiversité (AIB), CNRS, 31326 Toulouse, France; Carole.Pichereaux@ipbs.fr
- <sup>3</sup> Institut de Pharmacologie et Biologie Structurale (IPBS), Université de Toulouse UPS, CNRS, 31077 Toulouse, France; Odile.Schiltz@ipbs.fr
- \* Correspondence: pierre.rouge.perso@gmail.com; Tel.: +33-6955-20851



**Citation:** Barre, A.; Pichereaux, C.; Simplicien, M.; Burlet-Schiltz, O.; Benoist, H.; Rouge, P. A Proteomic- and Bioinformatic-Based Identification of Specific Allergens from Edible Insects: Probes for Future Detection as Food Ingredients. *Foods* **2021**, *10*, 280. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods10020280>

Academic Editors: Rosario Linacero and Carmen Cuadrado  
Received: 16 December 2020  
Accepted: 27 January 2021  
Published: 30 January 2021

**Publisher's Note:** MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



**Copyright:** © 2021 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

**Abstract:** The increasing development of edible insect flours as alternative sources of proteins added to food and feed products for improving their nutritional value, necessitates an accurate evaluation of their possible adverse side-effects, especially for individuals suffering from food allergies. Using a proteomic- and bioinformatic-based approach, the diversity of proteins occurring in currently consumed edible insects such as silkworm (*Bombyx mori*), cricket (*Acheta domesticus*), African migratory locust (*Locusta migratoria*), yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*), red palm weevil (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*), and giant milworm beetle (*Zophobas atratus*), was investigated. Most of them consist of phylogenetically-related protein allergens widely distributed in the different groups of arthropods (mites, insects, crustaceans) and mollusks. However, a few proteins belonging to discrete protein families including the chemosensory protein, hexamerin, and the odorant-binding protein, emerged as proteins highly specific for edible insects. To a lesser extent, other proteins such as apolipophorin III, the larval cuticle protein, and the receptor for activated protein kinase, also exhibited a rather good specificity for edible insects. These proteins, that are apparently missing or much less represented in other groups of arthropods, mollusks and nematods, share well conserved amino acid sequences and very similar three-dimensional structures. Owing to their ability to trigger allergic responses in sensitized people, they should be used as probes for the specific detection of insect proteins as food ingredients in various food products and thus, to assess their food safety, especially for people allergic to edible insects.

**Keywords:** edible insect proteins; insect food allergens; food allergy; cricket; giant milworm; migratory locust; silkworm; yellow mealworm; palm weevil; allergen structure diversity; structure-function relationships; allergen detection

## 1. Introduction

The increasing use of insects as food ingredients, developed at the same time that progress has been achieved in the factory farming of edible insects such as yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*), cricket (*Acheta domesticus*, *Gryllus bimaculatus*), or black soldier fly (*Hermetia illucens*) [1–15]. However, besides their relevant nutritional properties, products derived from edible insects may also exhibit some potential chemical safety risks due to the persistence of heavy metals or hazardous organic pollutants in the ready-to-eat insects [16–22], and microbiological and parasitological risks associated to the possible occurrence in edible insects of bacteria or parasites potentially pathogenic for humans [23–26].

In addition, edible insects may also exhibit deleterious effects on people suffering from allergic disease towards insects and, more broadly, towards arthropods (acari, crustaceans, insects), mollusks and nematods [27]. Accordingly, facing the potential allergenic risk associated to edible insect consumption, adapted methods of detection need to be developed for probing food products containing insect flours, particularly potential insect protein allergens.

Allergic responses associated to entomophagy, i.e., the consumption of edible insects, has been known for a long time and has been recently reviewed in details [28–33]. More recently, an anaphylactic reaction was reported after consumption of yellow mealworm [34], and silkworm pupae [35]. Most of the insect allergens identified as IgE-binding allergens, cross-react with shellfish, mollusk and nematod allergens and thus correspond to IgE-binding cross-reacting pan-allergens, widely distributed in various animal phyla [36–44]. Among these cross-reacting allergens, alpha-actin, arginine-kinase (AK), enolase, fructose-1,6-biphosphate aldolase (FPA), glyceraldehyde-3-phospho-deshydrogenase (GAPDH), and tropomyosin, consist of the frequently identified IgE-binding cross-reacting allergens [33]. Other widely distributed proteins such as alpha-amylase, glutathione S-transferase (GST), myosin, paramyosin, triose-phosphate isomerase (TPI), and troponin, also occur as IgE-binding cross-reacting allergens in insects, crustaceans and mollusks [36,39]. Besides pan-allergens, insects might contain much more specific allergens, which could be used as specific probes for the detection of insect flour added either intentionally as a food ingredient or involuntarily as hidden allergens, to food products. Such a detection approach, based on the occurrence of allergens specific for edible insects in food products, could be used as a complementary approach for the genomic detection of insect species/flour/proteins in foods, using e.g., a multiplex polymerase chain reactions (PCR) [45].

The present work was aimed at identifying potential allergens that are more specifically distributed in edible insects, while lacking or weakly represented in other arthropods, mollusks and nematods, to dispose of more specific probes to detect the addition of insect flour to food products.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Materials

#### 2.1.1. Insect Samples

Samples from commercially available ready-to-eat insects were used as starting materials, to ensure that our analyses would focus on samples of actually consumed insects. Yellow mealworm larvae (*Tenebrio molitor*) and house cricket (*Acheta domesticus*) were a gift from Micronutris (<http://www.micronutris.com>). Silkworm pupae (*Bombyx mori*), giant worm (*Zophobas morio*) and palm worm (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*) larvae were purchased from Next-Food (<http://www.next-food.net>). Edible insect flours were prepared by careful grinding of ready-to-eat insect samples previously frozen by soaking in liquid nitrogen.

#### 2.1.2. Chemicals

Acetonitrile Optima LC/MS grade (Fischer Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA), trifluoroacetic acid reagent plus (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA) and formic acid 98–100% LC/MS (Sigma-Aldrich), were used for the nano-LC-MS/MS analyses.

### 2.2. Edible Insect Protein Extract

Insect protein extracts were prepared by two 40 s. grinding steps of insect flour (150 mg) in Tris-HCl buffered saline, pH 7.4 (0.85 mL), in a Fast Prep-24 homogenizer (MP Biomedicals, Illkirch, France). After a centrifugation step of  $15,000 \times g$  for 15 min. at 4 °C, the collected supernatant was filtered (0.2 µm) and stored at −20 °C until used. The bicinchoninic method kit (Pierce) [46] was used to measure the protein content in the insect protein extracts, using bovine serum albumin (Sigma) as a calibration standard.

### 2.3. Digestion and Nano-LC-MS/MS Analysis

The procedure has been described in details in [47]. After reduction and alkylation in dithiothreitol- and iodoacetamide-containing buffer, the proteome samples were loaded on 12% SDS-polyacrylamide gels. After staining with Instant Blue (Invitrogen), excised gel bands were digested in 60 µL of modified trypsin in 25 mM NH<sub>4</sub>HCO<sub>3</sub> (10 ng/µL, Promega, sequence grade). After overnight incubation at 37 °C, the peptide mixtures were analyzed by nano-LC-MS/MS, using nanoRS UHPLC system (Dionex, Amsterdam, The Netherlands) coupled to an LTQ-Orbitrap Velos mass spectrometer (Thermo Fisher Scientific). Samples (5 mL) were loaded on a C18 precolumn (300 mm Ø × 5 mm) at 20 mL/min in 5% acetonitrile, 0.05% TFA. After desalting, switching of the precolumn to the analytical C18 column (75 mm Ø × 15 cm) equilibrated in 95% solvent A (5% acetonitrile, 0.2% formic acid) and 5% solvent B (80% acetonitrile, 0.2% formic acid) was performed and peptides were eluted during 105 min using a 5–50% solvent B gradient at a flow rate of 300 nL min<sup>-1</sup>. Survey scan MS spectra were acquired in the Orbitrap in the 300–2000 m/z range with resolution set to 60,000. For each survey scan, the 20 most intense ions were selected for further CID (collision-induced dissociation) fragmentation, and analysis in the linear trap. A dynamic exclusion within 60 s was used to avoid the repetitive selection of the peptides.

Database search was performed in batch mode with on all the raw files acquired for each sample, using Mascot Daemon version 2.5 (Matrix Science, London, UK). The Extract\_msn.exe macro of Xcalibur (version 2.2 SP1.48, Thermo Fisher Scientific) was used to extract peak lists from Wcalibur raw files, using the following set of parameters: (1) parent ions in the 400–500 mass range, (2) no grouping of MS/MS scans, (3) threshold fixed at 1000. A peak list was generated for each analyzed gel band and Mascot search was performed for each band. Data were searched against all the entries of the Tenebrionidae 20,170,606 protein database and the genome assembly 130x\_Tmol\_Sep2019 (GenBank GCA\_014282415.1) for *Tenebrio molitor*, the genome assembly ASM15162v1 (RefSeq GCF\_000151625.1) for *Bombyx mori*, and the genome assembly LocusGenomeV1 (GenBank GCA\_000516895.1) for *Locusta migratoria*. Settings for Mascot search were as follow: (1) oxidation of Met and carbamidomethylation of Cys were set as variable modifications, (2) cleavage after Lys or Arg (except before Pro) for the specificity of trypsin digestion, and a single missed trypsin cleavage was allowed, (3) mass tolerance in MS and MS/MS set to 5 ppm and 0.8 Da, respectively, (4) ESI-Trap specified as instrument setting. Mascot results were validated using the so-called “Proline” in-house software (ProFiProteomics, France) [48]. Using the target-decoy database search to control and estimate the false positive identification rate in our catalogue of insect proteins, the false discovery rate (FDR) was below 1% for peptides and proteins.

### 2.4. Bioinformatics

Multiple amino acid sequence alignments were carried out with CLUSTAL-X [49] using the structural Risler’s matrix for homologous residues [50].

Except for the three-dimensional structures of apolipophorin III from *Locusta migratoria* (protein data bank (PDB) code 1AEP [51] and 1LS4 [52]), the chemosensory protein from *Bombyx mori* (PDB code 2JNT) [53], the 12 kDa hemolymph protein from *Tenebrio molitor* (PDB code 1C3Z) [54] and odorant-binding proteins from *Apis mellifera* (PDB code 3S0D) [55] and *Bombyx mori* (PDB code 2WCJ) [56] and (PDB code 1DQE) [57], and hexamerin from *Bombyx mori* (PDB code 4L37) [58], which are available at the Protein Data Bank (PDB) [59], other apolipophorins, chemosensory proteins (CSP), odorant-binding proteins (OBP) and hexamerins, were homology modelled with YASARA structure [60], using appropriate three-dimensional structures available at the PDB as templates.

As an example, the three-dimensional structures of arylphorin from *Antheraea pernyi* (PDB code 3GWJ) [61], arylphorin from *Bombyx mori* (PDB code 4L37) [58], hemocyanin from *Panulirus japonicus* (PDB code 6L8S) [62], and hemocyanin from *Limulus polyphemus* (PDB code 1LL1) [to be published], were used as templates to build up to 25 different models



for each of the modelled hexamerins from *Apis mellifera*, *Galleria melonella*, *Locusta migratoria* and *Tenebrio molitor*. Finally, hybrid models of hexamerins were built up from the different previous models. Similarly, the three-dimensional structures of odorant binding proteins (OBP) from *Apis mellifera* (PDB code 3S0D) [55], *Anopheles gambiae* (PDB code 3R1P) [63], AtrAPBP1 from *Amyelois transthyella* (PDB code 4INW) [64], *Antheraea polyphemus* PBP1 (PDB code 2JPO) [65], *Bombyx mori* GOBP2 (PDB code 2WCJ) [56] and chemosensory protein 1 from *Bombyx mori* (PDB code 2JNT) [53]), were used as templates for the building of other OBP models from *Locusta migratoria* and *Onthophagus taurus*. Finally, hybrid models of were built up from the different previous models. Apolipophorin III from *Locusta migratoria* (code PDB 1AEP) [51], was used as a template to build the three-dimensional models of apolipophorin III from *Acheta domesticus*, *Bombyx mori*, *Galleria melonella*, *Schistocerca gregaria*, and *Tenebrio molitor*. Similarly, a single protein template, the crystal structure of p53 epitope-scaffold of a cysteine protease in complex with human MDM2 protein (5SWK) [66] available at the PDB, was used to build the 3D-models for the larval cuticle proteins (LCP) of *Tenebrio molitor*, *Bombyx mori*, *Locusta migratoria*, *Musca domestica*, and *Tribolium castaneum* (red flour beetle). PROCHECK [67], ANOLEA (Atomic NOon-Local Environment Assessment) [68], and the calculated QMEAN scores [69,70] were used to assess the geometric and thermodynamic qualities of the homology built three-dimensional models. Using ANOLEA, only a few residues essentially located in loops connecting the  $\alpha$ -helices or  $\beta$ -sheets in the models, were found to exhibit an energy value over the fixed threshold. Similarly, the calculated QMEAN scores for all the models, gave values below 0.5.

The superposition of insect proteins was performed with Chimera [71]. Molecular cartoons were drawn with Chimera. The detection of potential cleavage sites to pepsin, trypsin and chymotrypsin, was performed at pH 1.3 for pepsin and pH 8.5 for trypsin/chymotrypsin, respectively, with the PeptideCutter web server ([https://web.expasy.org/peptide\\_cutter/](https://web.expasy.org/peptide_cutter/)) [72], from the amino acid sequences of chemosensory proteins, odorant binding proteins, and apolipophorins III. Finally, the cleavage sites were represented on the molecular surface of the proteins, using Chimera.

### 3. Results

The nano-LC-MS/MS approach performed on insect protein extracts allowed the identification of a variable number of proteins, depending on the edible insects analyzed: 314 distinct proteins for *Bombyx mori*, 73 proteins for *Locusta migratoria*, 62 proteins for *Zophobas morio*, and only 46 proteins for *Acheta domesticus*, and 42 proteins for *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*. In a previous study, a similar approach allowed the detection of 106 distinct protein in protein extract from *Tenebrio molitor*.

As an example, (Table 1) shows the complete list of proteins identified in the silkworm (*Bombyx mori*) pupa protein extract.

**Table 1.** List of proteins identified in the silkworm (*Bombyx mori*) pupae protein extract. Proteins are ranked by decreasing scores. Uncharacterized proteins and fragments from identical proteins were discarded from the list.

1. Sex specific storage protein 1	55. Mitochondrial aldehyde dehydrogenase	cysteine
2. Arylphorin I	56. Hemocytin	108. Paralytic peptide binding protein
3. Sex specific storage protein 2	57. Antichymotrypsin-1	109. ATP-dependent (S)-NAD(P)H-hydrate dehydratase
4. Silkworm storage protein	58. Pyruvate kinase	110. Chymotrypsin inhibitor fb
5. Arylphorine 2	59. Fructose-1,6-biphosphatase	111. 30K protein 14
6. Apolipophorin	60. 30 kDa protein	112. Glucosamine-6-phosphate isomerase
7. Vitellogenin	61. Chemosensory protein 7	113. Thioredoxin
8. Vitellogenin	62. Nucleoside diphosphate kinase	114. Adenosylhomocysteinase
9. Antitrypsin isoform 1	63. Thiol peroxiredoxin	115. Proteasome subunit $\alpha$ type
10. Aliphatic nitrilase	64. Tropomyosin I	116. Carboxypeptidase
11. Antichymotrypsin-2	65. Promoting protein	

Table 1. Cont.

12. 30K protein 3	66. Phosphatidylethanolamine binding	117. Immune-related protein 1
13. Hemolin	protein isoform 2	118. Glutathione S-transferase $\delta$
14. 30K protein 7	67. Obstructor-A	119. Heat shock protein 70-3
15. Low molecular 30 kDa lipoprotein	68. Mitochondrial aldehyde dehydrogenase	120. 30K protein 13
16. Hemolin	69. Actin-1	121. Heat shock cognate 70 protein
17. Major plasma protein 30K	70. Mesencephalic astrocyte-derived neurotrophic factor	122. DJ-1 $\beta$
18. Hemolin	71. Malate dehydrogenase	123. Chemosensory protein 9
19. Chitooligosaccharidolytic $\beta$ -N-acetylglucosaminidase	72. Transaldolase	124. Allergen
20. Odorant binding protein	73. Malic enzyme	125. 14-3-3 protein $\zeta$
21. Odorant-binding protein 6	74. Glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase	126. 32 kDa apolipoprotein
22. Aliphatic nitrilase	75. Chitinase 3	127. Carboxypeptidase inhibitor
23. Dihydrolipoyl dehydrogenase	76. Chemosensory protein-1	128. Lysozyme
24. 30K protein 4	77. Serine hydroxymethyltransferase	129. tRNA-nucleotidyltransferase 1
25. Carboxylic ester hydrolase	78. Acyl-CoA binding protein	130. Serpin-11
26. 27 kDa glycoprotein	79. Isocitrate dehydrogenase [NADP]	131. Myosin heavy chain, non-muscle
27. Carboxylic ester hydrolase	80. Cuticle protein	132. Heat shock 70 kDa protein cognate 3
28. Tropomyosin-1 isoform 2		133. Chemosensory protein 8
29. Low molecular mass 34 kDa lipoprotein	81. Cationic peptide CP8	134. Fructose-1,6-biphosphatase 1
21G1	82. Tropomyosin-1 isoforms 33/34	135. Ubiquitin
30. Putative peptidase	83. $\beta$ -galactosidase	136. N-acetylglucosamine-6-phosphate deacetylase
31. Saposin-like protein	84. Odorant binding protein	137. Mitochondrial cytochrome C
32. Hydroxypyruvate isomerase	85. Glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase	138. Pro-phenol oxidase
33. Serpin-2	86. Tenebrin	139. Catalase
34. Serpin-6	87. Aminoacylase	140. Glutathione-S-Transferase 1
35. Glucosamine-6-phosphate isomerase	88. ARP-like protein	141. Thioredoxin peroxidase
36. Serpin-9	89. Serpin-7	142. Peroxiredoxin 1
37. Serpin-2	90. Serpin-3	143. Glutamate dehydrogenase
38. Hemolymph juvenile hormone binding protein	91. Calmodulin	144. Nucleoplasmin-like protein
39. Molting fluid carboxypeptidase A	92. Imaginal disk growth factor	145. Angiotensin converting enzyme
40. Superoxide dismutase [Cu-Zn]	93. Actin-depolymerizing factor 1	146. DNA supercoiling factor
41. Fructose-biphosphate aldolase	94. Chymotrypsin inhibitor SCI-III	147. Nucleoside diphosphate kinase
42. Fibrillin-like protein	95. Myosin light chain 2	148. HSP70
43. Bm8 interacting protein 2d-4	96. POX-C	149. Sericin 2
44. Superoxide dismutase [Cu-Zn]	97. Scarface	150. Molting carboxypeptidase A
45. Type IV collagen	98. Proteasome subunit $\alpha$ type	151. Fibrillin-1
46. Glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase	99. Chymotrypsin inhibitor SCI-I	152. Small heat shock protein 20.8
47. Serpin-5	100. Kazal-type proteinase inhibitor	153. $\beta$ -glucuronidase
48. Superoxide dismutase [Cu-Zn]	101. Polyubiquitin-c isoform x7	154. Trehalase
49. Actin	102. Chymotrypsin inhibitor SCI-II	155. DNA (apurinic or apyrimidinic site) lyase
50. Thioredoxin	103. Carboxylic ester hydrolase	156. Cuticlin-1
51. Glucosamine-6-phosphate isomerase	104. Prophenoloxidase subunit 2	157. Kv-channel-interacting protein
52. Cystathionine $\gamma$ -lyase	105. Thiol peroxiredoxin	158. Ferritin
53. Retinoic acid binding protein	106. Ubiquitin/ribosomal protein S27 Ae fusion protein	159. Chemosensory protein 5
54. Putative actin-related protein	107. Secreted protein acidic and rich in	160. Arylphorin subunit $\alpha$
		161. Pterin carbinolamin dehydratase

Most of the potential allergens frequently distributed in edible insects, correspond in fact to IgE-binding cross-reactive allergens that occur in other groups of arthropods (acari, crustaceans), mollusks, and nematods. However, a few potential allergens including apolipophorin III, the chemosensory protein, the cockroach allergen-like protein, hexamerin, the larval cuticle protein, the odorant binding protein and the receptor for activated protein kinase, appear as being apparently most specifically distributed in insects (Table 2).

**Table 2.** List of IgE-binding cross-reactive allergens identified (+) in edible insects (Bm: *Bombyx mori*, Tm: *Tenebrio molitor*, Ad: *Acheta domesticus*, Lm: *Locusta migratoria*, Zm: *Zophobas morio*, Rf: *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*) shared (X) with crustaceans (C), acari (Ac), insects (I), mollusks (M), worms (W), fungi (F), plants (P) and animals (A). The allergens more specifically distributed in insects are black boxed X.

Allergen	Bm	Tm	Ad	Lm	Zm	Rf	C	Ac	I	M	W	F	P	An
Acidic ribosomal protein				+	+	+	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Actin $\alpha$	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Actinin		+	+				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Adenosylhomocysteinase	+								X				X	X
$\alpha$ -Amylase		+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Apolipoprotein III	+	+	+						X	X	X	X	X	X
Apolipoprotein	+						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Arginine kinase	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	X	X	X	X			X
Arylphorin, Hemocyanin	+	+		+	+		X		X					
Aspartic protease		+					X	X	X			X	X	X
ATP synthase			+	+	+		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Carboxypeptidase	+						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Catalase	+						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chemosensory protein	+			+		+	X	X	X				X	X
Chitinase	+	+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cockroach allergen-like protein		+							X					
Cystatin proteinase inhibitor	+						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cytochrome C	+				+	+	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Enolase	+	+	+	+	+		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fatty acid-binding protein	+	+		+		+	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ferritin	+						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fructose-1,6-biphosphate aldolase	+	+	+	+	+	+			X	X		X		
Glucosamine-6-phosphate isomerase	+						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Glutathione S-transferase	+	+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hexamerin	+	+		+	+	+	X		X				X	
HSP 70	+	+	+	+	+		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Larval cuticle protein	+	+				+	X	X	X		X			X
Lipocalin		+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lysosomal aspartic protein		+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lysozyme	+						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Malate dehydrogenase	+	+	+				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mitochondrial aldehyde dehydrogenase	+						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
$\alpha$ -Myosin		+	+	+	+	+			X					X
Myosin heavy chain	+	+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 2. Cont.

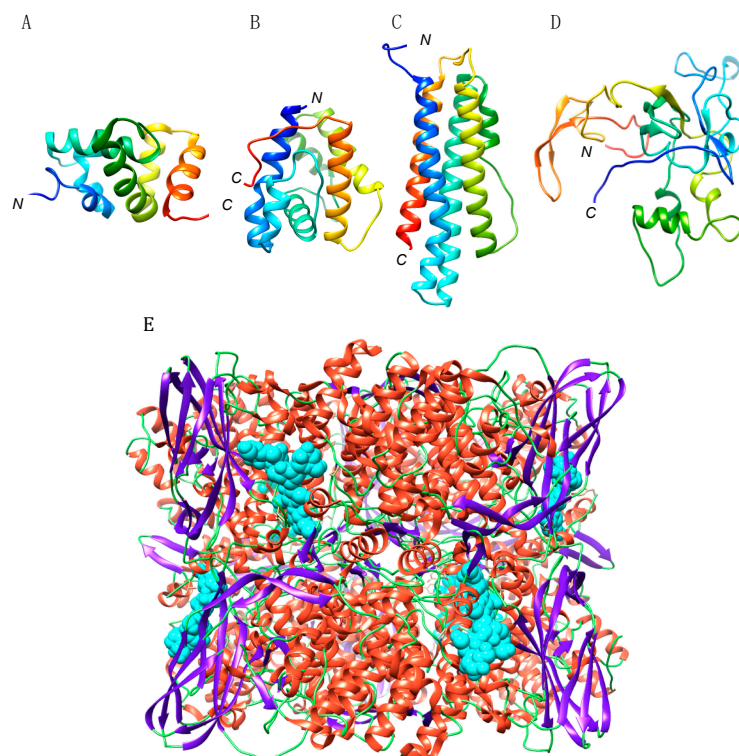
Allergen	Bm	Tm	Ad	Lm	Zm	Rf	C	Ac	I	M	W	F	P	An
Myosin light chain	+	+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nucleoside diphosphate kinase	+						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Odorant-binding protein	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	X	X	X			X	X
Paramyosin long form		+	+				X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Paramyosin short form		+	+				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Peroxiredoxin	+	+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pyruvate kinase	+	+	+				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Receptor for activated protein kinase		+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sarcoplasmic calcium-binding protein		+					X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Serine protease		+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Serpin	+	+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Superoxide dismutase [Cu-Zn]	+	+	+				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Thioredoxin	+	+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Transaldolase	+						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Triosephosphate isomerase		+			+		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tropomyosin 1	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tropomyosin 2		+	+	+			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Troponin C		+			+		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Troponin T		+	+		+		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Trypsin		+					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tubulin $\alpha$		+	+				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tubulin $\beta$		+	+	+	+		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vitellogenin	+	+		+			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Chemosensory proteins, odorant binding proteins and hexamerins, emerge as three groups of proteins essentially distributed in insects ( $\geq 98\%$ ), together with apolipoporphins III, larval cuticle proteins and receptors for activated protein kinase, which are preferentially distributed in insects (80–85%) (Table 3). The cockroach allergen-like protein holds a unique place since its apparently occurs only in the yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*).

**Table 3.** Number and proportion (expressed as %) of specific proteins identified in insects, crustaceans, mollusks and nematods. N/I: protein not identified. Green: highly specific insect proteins.

Protein:	Insects:	Crustaceans:	Mollusks:	Nematods:
Apolipoporphin III	549 (79.7%)	6 (0.8%)	26 (3.8%)	108 (15.7%)
Chemosensory protein	17,207 (98%)	142 (0.8%)	47 (0.2%)	180 (1%)
Cockroach allergen-like protein	1	N/I	N/I	N/I
Hexamerin	395 (99.5%)	2 (0.5%)	N/I	N/I
Larval cuticle protein	3971 (84.7%)	315 (6.7%)	1 (0.02%)	399 (8.5%)
Odorant binding protein	14,318 (99.8%)	13 (0.08%)	N/I	19 (0.13%)
Receptor for activated protein kinase	313 (79%)	16 (4%)	17 (4.4%)	50 (12.6%)

Chemosensory proteins (CSP), consist of small globular proteins of 110–120 amino acids, built from 6–7  $\alpha$ -helices connected by short loops. They usually contain four cysteine residues forming two adjacent disulfide bridge, which contribute to the tight packing of the protein (Figure 1A).



**Figure 1.** (A–E). Ribbon diagram of the three-dimensional structure/model of chemosensory protein (A), odorant binding protein (B), apolipophorin III (C), larval cuticle protein (D) and hexamerin (E), from *Bombyx mori*. N and C correspond to the N- and C-termini of the polypeptide chains. Fatty acids complexed to hexamerin are represented in spheres colored cyan.

Chemosensory proteins from different insect species, exhibit rather conserved amino acid sequences, especially at the N-terminal end of the polypeptide chain whereas their C-terminal end appears as less conserved (Figure 2). However, in spite of these amino acid sequence discrepancies, CSP from different insects display very similar structural organizations that are readily superposable (Figure 3).

However, in spite of these amino acid sequence discrepancies, CSP from different insects display very similar structural organizations that are readily superposable (Figure 3).

Odorant binding proteins, also known as pheromone-binding proteins, are small globular proteins with structure very similar to that of CSP, that have been recognized as potential IgE-binding proteins in yellow mealworm extracts. They typically consist of small polypeptide chains of about 120–130 amino acid residues (13–14 kDa) built up from 6  $\alpha$ -helices tightly packed by 3 conserved disulfide bridges (Figure 1B).

Despite a very conserved three-dimensional structure, they differ by their amino acid sequences which show a low degree of both identity and similarity (Figure 4). Accordingly, their three-dimensional core structures are readily superposable (Figure 5).

Hexamerin consists of an insect storage protein synthesized in body fat, resulting from the non-covalent oligomerization of protomers exhibiting a hemocyanin-like domain (Figure 1E). Their amino acid sequences exhibit a high degree of identity and homology (Figure 6), which is in accordance with their very structurally conserved character. In this respect, hexamerins from different edible insects exhibit nicely superposed three-dimensional core structures, with the exception of a few exposed loops, the conformation of which differs from one structure to another (Figure 7).



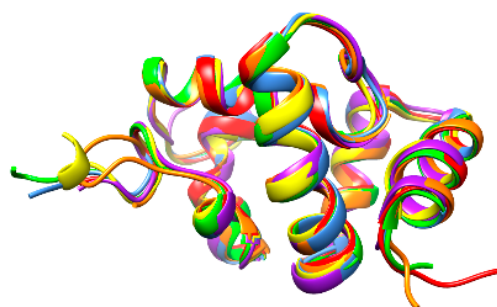
```

Apis m.      -----EDYTTKYDDMDIDRILQNGRILTNIIKMLD--EGPCTNEGRELKKILPDALS
Bombyx m.   -----EKYTDKYDNIDVDEILENRKLLVPIIKCVLD--EGRCPTPDGKELKAHIDGMQ
Locusta m.  -----YTTKYDNIDLDVLDHNDRLKKYHECLLSDSDASCTPDGKELKAAIPDAL
Schistocerca g.  -----EEKYTTKYDNVNLDEILANDRLLNKYVQCLLEDDENCTADGKELKSVIPDALS
Batrocera d.  -----EDKYTTKYDNIDVDEILKSDRLFNMYFKCLIE--TGKCTPEGRELKKTLPDALK
Rhynchophorus f.  --KPADTYTTKYDNIDLDQILKSDRLLRNLYNCLLE--KGKCTPDGSELKRVLPDALE
Tenebrio m.  -----DEVLPV-QNINVDDIIKSDRLMRNLYDCVLG--KGKCTPEGELKDIPEALQ
Vespa v.     NNSDDTKYITKYDNINVDEILNTPRLRNQYVDCYVG-RTPCVTPKAKFLKDVLPVVLV

Apis m.      TGCNKCNEKQKHTANKVVNYLKTTRPKDWERLSAKYDSTGEYKKRYEHGLQFAKNN-
Bombyx m.   TACAKCTDKQKVSARKIVKHIIQHEADYWEQMKAKYDPKDEFKEIYEG--FLAGQN-
Locusta m.  NECAQCNEKQKAGAEKIVRFLIKEKPDWTPLEKKYDPTGSFRQKYDQELKRVSA--
Schistocerca g.  NECAKCNEKQKEGTTKKVLKHLINHKPDVWAQLKAKYDPDGTYSKKYEDREKELHQ--
Batrocera d.  TECSKCSEKQKQNTDKVIRYVIDNKPDEWKQLQAKYDPEGIYAAKYKKEAEKQGITI
Rhynchophorus f.  TECSKCNEKQ-----GRSQESNSLPHR-----
Tenebrio m.  NECAKCNEKQKKEGIIKKVLHHIIENKPEWVEEVQAKFDPKGEYKQKYSNLFEEGLIR
Vespa v.     TKCKKSDKQKQKVIDKVIWTFEENDKETWKVILAKSINEHVNVRSSR-----

```

**Figure 2.** Multiple amino acid sequence alignment of chemosensory proteins from *Apis mellifera* (*Apis m.*), *Bombyx mori* (*Bombyx m.*), *Locusta migratoria* (*Locusta m.*), *Schistocerca gregaria* (*Schistocerca g.*), *Batrocera dorsalis* (*Batrocera d.*), *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus* (*Rhynchophorus f.*), *Tenebrio molitor* (*Tenebrio m.*), and *Vespa velutina* (*Vespa v.*). Identical amino acids are displayed in white letters highlighted in blue, homologous amino acids are displayed in black letters highlighted in cyan, and putative N-glycosylation sites are highlighted in red.



**Figure 3.** A. Superposition of the ribbon diagrams of chemosensory proteins from *Apis mellifera* (blue), *Bombyx mori* (red), *Batrocera dorsalis* (green), *Locusta migratoria* (purple), *Schistocerca gregaria* (yellow) and *Tenebrio molitor* (orange).

```

Tenebrio m.  ---ETPQQK-----LRQYSDACLVSQSVQESLRKVRNREHVDDPKLWEHAVCIVQKGE
Onthophagus t.  --DYNNEYD-----DSYFYDDFLGGNERNQTENDKETTTETIFNHPGRCTYHCIFKKLN
Locusta m.     -MDVNMKLTGRIMDAAKEVVDHTCRSSTGVPRDMLHRYAEGQTVDDDDFKCYLKCIIMVEFN
Apis m.        ---APDWVPPEVFDLVAEEDKARCMSSEHGTQAQIDDDVKGNLVNEPSITCYMYCLLEAFS
Schistocerca g.  -----IINKCKAEHEPTEDLKGIMMMKVPESEHKGCFMGCVLQEVG
Bombyx m.      SQEVMKNNLSLNFQKALDECKKEMTLTDAINEDFYNFWKEGYETKNRETGCALMCLSTKLN

Tenebrio m.  FIDSNQDFLVDNITKTKFKQDYDHP-----EKVDDLVAKCAVKK--DTLQNTCFEFVKC
Onthophagus t.  IIDQDGFPPDEHKVSQNLKVEAKNDELKDFLQDSTDECFQVTQAE--LDVCDFSYNFKC
Locusta m.     SLSDGQVFVLEEELENVPEETKEE-----GHRVVHSCKHINH--DEACETAYQTHQC
Apis m.        LVDDEANVEDIMLGLPLDQLQER-----AQSVMGKCLPTSG--SDNCNKIYNLAKC
Schistocerca g.  VVK-DGKFDKEEAKKHAAAKMSDK--DELEKHMQLIDKCSQEVGGETDSCGIGPKLMEC
Bombyx m.      MLDPECNLHHGNAMFEAKKHGADET--MAQQLIDIVHGCEKSTPANDDKCIWTLGVATC

Tenebrio m.  THR-NRSKVGDLE-----
Onthophagus t.  LAEKARDNCSDWPLTDSLVDLDF
Locusta m.     YKQSDPELYSLVVRAFDATIGD-
Apis m.        VQESAPDVWFVI-----
Schistocerca g.  IKQ-----
Bombyx m.      KKAETIKLNWAPSMDVAVGE---

```

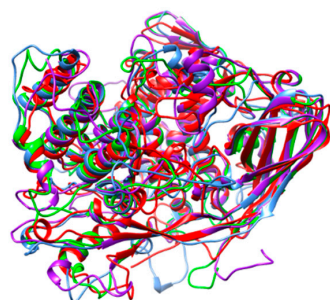
**Figure 4.** Multiple amino acid sequence alignment of odorant binding proteins (OBP) from *Tenebrio molitor* (*Tenebrio m.*), *Onthophagus taurus* (*Onthophagus t.*), *Locusta migratoria* (*Locusta m.*), *Apis mellifera* (*Apis m.*), *Schistocerca gregaria* (*Schistocerca g.*) and *Bombyx mori* (*Bombyx m.*). Identical amino acids are displayed in white letters highlighted in blue, homologous amino acids are displayed in black letters highlighted in cyan, and putative N-glycosylation sites are highlighted in red.



**Figure 5.** A. Superposition of the ribbon diagrams of odorant binding proteins from *Apis mellifera* (red), *Bombyx mori* (blue), *Locusta migratoria* (green), *Onthophagus taurus* (yellow) and *Tenebrio molitor* (purple).

<i>Locusta m.</i>	TINPAPHVTADKDFLLROKKILQHFHVGOPLD-TELKALADSEKLEEHAGDEKDFELVKITVKKY
<i>Apis m.</i>	--EYDTKTADKDFLLROKKVYNLYRVAQPALANLWYNEGOAWNTEANIDSVTNAAAVKEEHSY
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	-CTYPQVQISDFRLLOKOFHVLNLFYVNIPISYC-KDSNEIAQSYDISEHYNDYSNQVAKHYYQY
<i>Galleria m.</i>	DPVKKLQRTVLDQTVLDROVYKLLTLEFHPHEPIHI-KEQOEIAASWDLKKNICGLYENATAVHLTIQML
<i>Locusta m.</i>	SHGYFKKRGEPPFSIHFKYDFLOAKALVDLLYOAKDFDTFYKTALWARENENQGLFVYAFNVAKLHRD
<i>Apis m.</i>	KHGMLEFGEFSLVYYPQLREMSALFKLFYHAKDFDIFFKTALWAKNNINBAQVITYSLTYAVITRP
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	QYELLP-RGQVFSIFVQEQLOALALYRLFYAKDYQTFVNTAVWAROHVNEGVLVYLSLVAIVHRP
<i>Galleria m.</i>	HNHYQVPRGVPPFVLESVHRFEISVYISLLYSAKTYDTFYKTAVELRQHVNENLFFNVLSVVLHRHS
<i>Locusta m.</i>	DVFDVVIPIPEYELPHLYVSPDIVREAW---AATLEG---KTFDESK---PYVIRANYSGY--PHAH
<i>Apis m.</i>	DTKFTQLPPLVEMCPYFFENSEVLOKAN---HALIFGKLDTKTSQKVK---EYVITANYSQWYLNHDY
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	DTYGFVLPPIYEVYPPYFNNEVIOQAVRYKQOYVQOQOQNDHSQFNQNTINTNYSGY--VLYL
<i>Galleria m.</i>	DTQDIRIPPIYDVPSVYFENGELYDDSPKNNYSWSTNVRLTPINICLG-EQCCIRHNLTAMP-VYCN
<i>Locusta m.</i>	NADELISYTTEDIGLCAYLDVWHYRYPFWAKLDEYNQANYRRGDHFYVIGIKATLSRYVLERLSNGL
<i>Apis m.</i>	NLENKLVVFTEDIGLNTYFFPRLQAFPPWPSKEVDLPDYR--GEEVLYSHKLLNRYVLERLSNGL
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	NPEQSLSYFTEDVRLNSFYVYNTYYPYWLGGQERNYONDRR-GELFYITIQOLLPRYVLERLSNGF
<i>Galleria m.</i>	TESMPVSYFTEDVTLNALYYNKLAYPIWLRSDACAIKEKR--GELFEFVNWQLIARVYMERLSVGL
<i>Locusta m.</i>	YPDIEPVDYKKPIPG---SKPYG-----PFVQVLCGL-----ERRL
<i>Apis m.</i>	PHLEEFDDWQKPPYGGYPTMTYSNGLPFPORPWSNFPPIYKYVIREIMNK-----ESRI
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	GEIETVFNVEVPQTGYPSLOYSNGLPFPTRPNYANLYEYFYNQORYGNNRYASYTRYQDVERRI
<i>Galleria m.</i>	SEIPPELGLNEVEEG-YVSGLLVHNSIFYPVRPNHLVNLHQTHAAAEIEIEVY-----ENRI
<i>Locusta m.</i>	WEAIDSGFVFDKEFKKYSIRDLESTIEFGRIVEGNADSINKDYVGSFYNGLLKYLGHGDPIKKNVHE
<i>Apis m.</i>	SAADSGYLLNNDGKWHNIYSEKGLNIGLNIIEGNADSYNTEEGSIDTLARKILGY-NLEAASKYQ
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	RDAIDRGVYSFDGQVRNLNSQGLNVLGNLRESNPSPTQYQYCALQVYACHLLGY-SYQPLYKYQ
<i>Galleria m.</i>	RDIMIDQGHYITNTGHEVSIINSEPSIDVLGRLLHEANVDSNPVQYVKDEISTWKKVGLGNSLVHESVAFN
<i>Locusta m.</i>	---EFPSELDRPASTFRSPVYKIVKRIISVILDQKKNHLPYTKELALPGVEVKSITVDKLVITYF
<i>Apis m.</i>	---IVPSALEIFSTSMKDPAPYRLYKRILDYVHSVAMHOKPYNKDEHLYVEMKLETESITVDKLTITYF
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	---IVPSALEQVETSLRDPAPYQFYKRVLYVFOQYQSNLFAVTPEDLSFGQGVQVTVNVEFNRLVITYF
<i>Galleria m.</i>	IPLVPSVLEQYQALRDPAYYIMMKRVLKLLENLWHEHLPHYITKELSVPSVKLEKVEVDKLTITYF
<i>Locusta m.</i>	EDYDFELNNAIPVAS-IEQAKK--LNVVARVPELTHKPFNYHVKVTSDKDIDVFRFVGPFRYDVHG
<i>Apis m.</i>	EQFDTTNNELLLEEQRNDDP--FLIKIRQYRLNHKPFNEHITINADKPMKAATRIPIGPKYDSHH
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	DYFYSDLGNAYVYTPPEVYSDR--VQVRAQYRLNHKAFTYKIVVKSNEEQCASWMIYIGPEYDEYG
<i>Galleria m.</i>	EYTNELVFNHLEHNEIECNVINTKSLVQRTRLNHKVFTRVNVKSGVAKVTVRPFELAPKYDSVG
<i>Locusta m.</i>	KEISLNEKRHHNFVYIDSFVYKIKOGENELVRNSKDFNYVYQGLPLSGKLYOATBAALVGDAQPYIDD
<i>Apis m.</i>	KLIETIEEDLKYFYIEDNWMLDLNSGLNKITRNSLDCFTMNDLEPSEIYVEKLETESLNSKPFITYNE
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	RYITLSONRQNFVQDFHFRYSYSGENVFERNRCONMFYQNDRTSVRELQYQVLCALYNGQDSVEA
<i>Galleria m.</i>	NEIPLNVNTQNELLIDIEFYBELKESDNLITRVSQNLVLTDELISASVLENKVDLSALCHQGMMLAM
<i>Locusta m.</i>	FVHKYGDIERLALPRGTRSGLEPLSTFVIT---PETHKTISR-SNPYTDVGS-----KVSF-FPF
<i>Apis m.</i>	RIFGEP--GRLLLPCKKEGMPFQLFYVS---PVSSEYNOYNSRIWGGYKFD-----KRSFGFPI
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	NEAVFGFPRRELPLPKGTYGQYDYCFYVVSPPVYQGGQQQVDTSKYVYPRVGSQAQYIDNYPLGYPF
<i>Galleria m.</i>	KQNILKTPRELPLPKGRVGGMFFVLMVYIS---EMHAPNDVHRGTETSTIND-TIRITSDTLEGFV
<i>Locusta m.</i>	DRPINELDFV--VFNVHFGAVVLRNADEVARP----
<i>Apis m.</i>	DRPLDYENYE--GPNMLFKDLITYHKDEFDMNTY----
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	NRPIYVQVYNNHNPAYVNAKIYHRDVEDINASVRE
<i>Galleria m.</i>	DRPLFPMLTG-VENIFLODVCIYH-----

**Figure 6.** Multiple amino acid sequence alignment of hexamerins from *Locusta migratoria* (*Locusta m.*), *Apis mellifera* (*Apis m.*), *Tenebrio molitor* (*Tenebrio m.*) and *Galleria mellonella* (*Galleria m.*). Identical amino acids are displayed in white letters highlighted in blue, homologous amino acids are displayed in black letters highlighted in cyan, and putative N-glycosylation sites are highlighted in red.

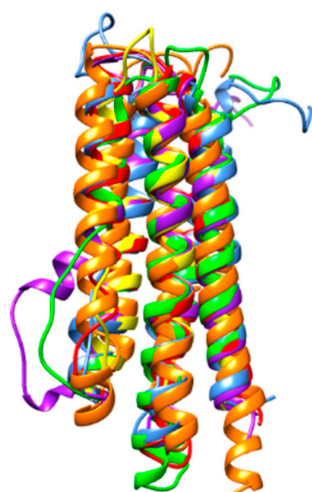


**Figure 7.** Superposition of the ribbon diagrams of hexamerin from *Apis mellifera* (red), *Galleria mellonella* (blue), *Locusta migratoria* (green), and *Tenebrio molitor* (purple).

As previously reported, other less specific potential allergens such as apolipophorin III and larval cuticle protein, exhibit rather well conserved amino acid sequences but share a highly conserved three-dimensional structure. As an example, the multiple alignment of amino acid sequences of apolipophorin III from different edible insects shows a moderate degree of identity and similarity (Figure 8), even though their three-dimensional structures are nicely superposed (Figure 9).

<i>Galleria m.</i>	GI	VRRDASTFLQDLEKHAAEFQRTFS	QOLNAPNSK	---DTKEFNTALKEGSDSVLQQLNA
<i>Bombyx m.</i>	AM	VRRDAPDFFKDTEHHTKEFHKTLEQQFNSLT	KSK	---DAQDFSKAWKCGSESVLQQLNA
<i>Schistocerca g.</i>	-----	-----DIEVILMEITNBSLT	KAK	---SLEEQADAARACAGILETAKL
<i>Acheta d.</i>	-R	VRRDAGTGTGADFNSTFEAAORHFQNTL	ATLQNALP	-SQEEVRTOLQTHAOTFANNLOA
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	-K	PKGKATQEKSALEELAANTQTLVNNVT	TLGIKELPD	SKKIVEVLTNTNTQNLANHVQE
<i>Locusta m.</i>	---	AAGHVNIAEAVQQLNHTIVNAAEELHETL	GLPT	---PDEALNLTTEQANAFKTKIAE
<i>Galleria m.</i>	L	ASSLOKALNDANGKAKEALEQTRTNLER	TAEELRAH	-PVERQAGLRDRLOCTAVOAT
<i>Bombyx m.</i>	F	ASLQALGDANGKAKEALEQSRQNTERT	AEEELRAH	-PVEKATATREKLOAAVONT
<i>Schistocerca g.</i>	V	VDALEEAQ-DAODKAEADATRKAN	-----	NDTSVAG-RDITQIASGTEDAQKANEV
<i>Acheta d.</i>	A	ATQFNEKFAELSCDAQTAVRCAAQQL	EQQVSNLRQOF	-PDGAQAADKTKASIESALAE
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	I	VDKLKTEAKAHQCEVDNVIKQVQEK	LSQTAACLQQAAGPEATAKAKEL	KKNLDDGLKTA
<i>Locusta m.</i>	V	TSLSKQEEKHQCSVAEQLNAFARN	NNSITHDAATSL	-----NLQDQLNSLQSALTNV
<i>Galleria m.</i>	V	QETQKLAKTVCANLEETNKKLAPQIKS	AYDDFVKQAQEVOKKLEHAA	-SKQ-----
<i>Bombyx m.</i>	V	QESQKLAKVSSNVOETNERLAPKIKAA	YDDFAKNTQEVTKKIQEAAANAKQ	-----
<i>Schistocerca g.</i>	VE	VN-----FLQARLKPLQTOFLQNAH	DAEEVAQEAELAEAV	-----
<i>Acheta d.</i>	A	RRVQEAQVP---HADAVAESLKTART	AVEQATVITNQVQOSVQQAANA	H-----
<i>Tenebrio m.</i>	V	AQVEKLVKAVEPDATKAKTDIONAOT	LLNQIAEVSNNLONOVKTIIAE	HEKTHKH
<i>Locusta m.</i>	G	HQWODIAPKTQASAEAWAPVQSALQ	EAEKTKPAANLQNSIQSAVQKPA	-----

**Figure 8.** Multiple amino acid sequence alignment of apolipophorin III from *Galleria mellonella* (*Galleria m.*), *Bombyx mori* (*Bombyx m.*), *Schistocerca g.* (*Schistocerca g.*), *Acheta domesticus* (*Acheta d.*), *Tenebrio molitor* (*Tenebrio m.*) and *Locusta migratoria* (*Locusta m.*). Identical amino acids are displayed in white letters highlighted in blue, homologous amino acids are displayed in black letters highlighted in cyan, and putative N-glycosylation sites are highlighted in red.



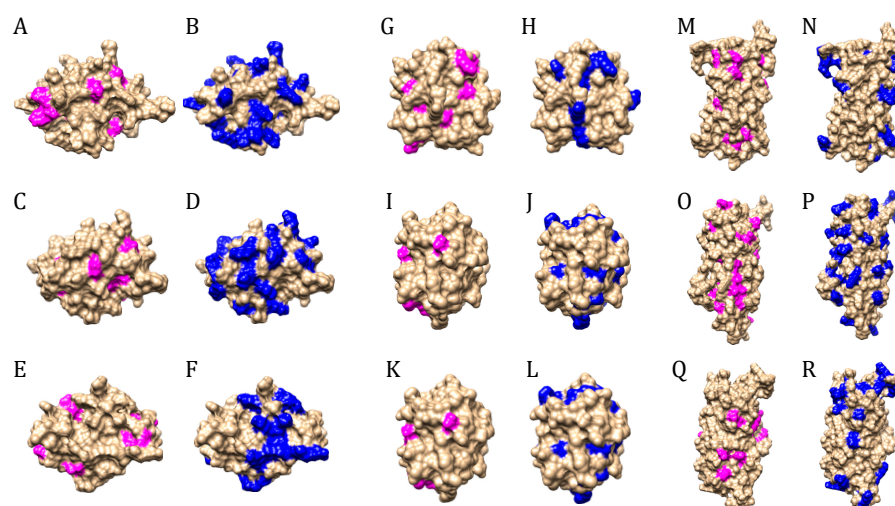
**Figure 9.** Superposition of the ribbon diagrams of apolipophorin III from *Acheta domesticus* (blue), *Bombyx mori* (green), *Locusta migratoria* (red), *Galleria mellonella* (purple), *Schistocerca gregaria* (yellow), and *Tenebrio molitor* (orange).

In addition, it is noteworthy that different isoforms often exist for the specific allergens identified in *Bombyx mori*, *Locusta migratoria* and *Tenebrio molitor*, as shown from the corresponding genome assemblies available for the three edible insects (Table 4). Depending on the potential allergens, the number of identified isoforms shows important variations. In this respect, proteins involved in recognition function towards environmental factors such as chemosensory proteins and odorant binding proteins, exhibit the higher diversity. This extreme diversity of both groups of chemosensory proteins and odorant binding proteins in insects, has been known for a long time.

**Table 4.** Number of specific protein isoforms identified in *Bombyx mori*, *Locusta migratoria*, and *Tenebrio molitor*, from the genome assemblies available at the NCBI database.

Protein:	<i>Bombyx mori</i>	<i>Locusta migratoria</i>	<i>Tenebrio molitor</i>
Chemosensory protein	16	28	12
Odorant binding protein	23	26	19
Hexamerin	0	7	2
Apolipophorin III	3	6	1
Larval cuticle protein	9	3	10

Moreover, a bioinformatics identification of the potential cleavage sites for pepsin and trypsin on the molecular surface of chemosensory proteins, odorant binding proteins, and apolipophorin III, suggests the occurrence of a great number of exposed cleavage sites to trypsin and chymotrypsin, compared to the reduced number of cleavage sites accessible to pepsin (Figure 10). Accordingly, these insect protein allergens are suspected to exhibit an enhanced resistance to the proteolytic attack by pepsin and other aspartic proteases, whereas they should be further degraded at alkaline pH, in the presence of trypsin and trypsin-like proteases.



**Figure 10.** (A–F). Distribution of potential cleavage sites for pepsin (magenta) and trypsin (blue) on the molecular surface of chemosensory protein from *Apis mellifera* (A,B), *Locusta migratoria* (C,D) and *Tenebrio molitor* (E,F). (G–L). Distribution of potential cleavage sites for pepsin (magenta) and trypsin (blue) on the molecular surface of odorant binding protein from *Bombyx mori* (G,H), *Locusta migratoria* (I,J) and *Tenebrio molitor* (K,L). (M–R). Distribution of potential cleavage sites for pepsin (magenta) and trypsin (blue) on the molecular surface of apolipophorin III from *Acheta domesticus* (M,N), *Bombyx mori* (O,P) and *Tenebrio molitor* (Q,R).

#### 4. Discussion

Using an appropriate combination of SDS-PAGE and nano-LC-MS/MS proteomic analyses of proteins extracts from various insect species including the crickets *Acheta domesticus* and *Locusta migratoria* (Orthoptera), the silkworm *Bombyx mori* (Hymenoptera), and



the mealworms *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*, *Tenebrio molitor* and *Zophobas morio* (Coleoptera), we have revealed the great variety of proteins occurring in insect extracts. Depending on the insect species, the number of identified proteins may vary considerably, from up to 314 distinct proteins for the *Bombyx mori* extract to only 42 proteins for the *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus* extract. These discrepancies observed in (2) the very limited availability of genome sequencing data for edible insects and, (3) possible variations in the protein content and isoform diversity among different insect species. In this respect, the more complete protein data were obtained for the well known insects *Bombyx mori* (161 distinct proteins identified), *Locusta migratoria* (73 distinct proteins identified) and *Tenebrio molitor* (106 distinct proteins identified), for which the genome sequencing data are available.

Insect allergens responsible for either contact allergies or food allergies, have been reviewed in detail by de Gier & Verhoeckx [31]. By reference to this review, it appears that most of the potential edible insect allergens consist of pan-allergens widely distributed in other arthropods, acari, chelicerates (spiders) and crustaceans, mollusks and nematods. As such, they are far from being usable as probes to detect the occurrence of insect flour in food products, due to the lack of specificity. Hopefully, a few insect allergens have been characterized as rather specific for (edible) insects since they primarily occur in insects and are much less abundant or lacking in other organisms phylogenetically-related to insects. These specific insect allergens essentially correspond to proteins dedicated to the recognition of environmental chemical signals, such as the chemosensory proteins and the odorant- or pheromone-binding proteins [73], Bla g 3 from the German cockroach (*Blattella germanica*) [74], and Per a 3 from the American cockroach (*Periplaneta americana*) [75], hexamerin from the edible cricket *Gryllus bimaculatus* [76], hexamerin from the maggot fly *Caliphora erythrocephala* [77], hexamerin from the fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster* [78], and hexamerin from the yellow mealworm *Tenebrio molitor* [79]. Except for CSP and OBP, which usually are poorly glycosylated, other specific allergens of insects contain *N*-glycosylation sites and apparently consist of glycosylated proteins. Due to the different *N*-glycosylation pathways and linkage of sugar units in the insect oligosaccharides, compared to that occurring in human glycans [80,81], specific allergens from insects should act as non self CDD, responsible for some non specific immunologic-reactivity.

In spite of sharing poorly conserved amino acid sequences, all these allergens exhibit extremely well conserved three-dimensional structures. Accordingly, all these proteins are sufficiently closely-related to display an IgE-binding cross-reactivity allowing their use as specific probes for insects. Additionally, most of the identified insect specific allergens are built from a tightly packed structural fold, strengthened by disulfide bonds, that should enhance their resistance to heat denaturation susceptible to occur during the transformation processes of insect flour-containing food products. Join to their predicted resistance to acidic proteases susceptible to occur in foods and food products, all these features favor their use as particularly stable specific probes for the detection of insect flour in food products. In this respect, both processing and in vitro digestion of three mealworm species including *Tenebrio molitor*, *Zophobas atratus*, and *Alphitobius diaperinus*, and *Gryllus bimaculatus*, was reported to readily influenced their allergenic cross-reactivity [82–84].

With the exception of the receptor for activated protein kinase, other proteins have been previously identified as IgE-binding allergens, and could therefore be used as specific immuno-probes for the detection of added insects or insect flours to food products, in complement to other detection methods such as the genomic detection of insect proteins using polymerase chain reactions (PCR) [45] or DNA barcoding authentication [85]. Recently, functional biological bioassays based on tropomyosin as immuno-probes, have been proposed to assess the tropomyosin allergenicity of novel animal foods [86]. However, even though its allergenic character has been demonstrated [87], the cockroach-like allergen protein, which is apparently restricted to the yellow mealworm, could not serve as a relevant immuno-probe for the detection of insect proteins.

Moreover, beside the safety aspect associated to the consumption of edible insect and insect products, other important aspect dealing with the use of edible insects as food and



feed, and as a protein ingredient added to improve the nutritional balance of various food products, should be considered [88,89]. Especially, the ecological and legislation aspects deserve to be discussed. Facing the increasing demand for animal proteins, edible insects and insect proteins were seen early on as a sustainable source of proteins whose production was susceptible to cause less negative impact on the environment, compared to other sources of animal proteins, e.g., the conventional forms of livestock [90,91]. Compared to the conventional sources of animal proteins, the production of insect proteins at an industrial scale, requires less energy use, releases less greenhouse gas and uses less surface area. However, while the industrial-scale production and processing of microbially- and parasitically-safe insect proteins is apparently assured, their production at a reasonable price remains a current challenge in comparison to meat or plant proteins [92,93]. In addition, outside of countries where entomophagy is traditionally developed, the reluctance to consume edible insect often observed in other countries, especially in European countries and in USA, could be an obstacle to the development of the industrial farming of edible and insect-containing food products [94–97].

As part of the safety assessment of novel foods, two scientific opinions have been recently published by EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) on the “risk profile of insects as food and feed” [98], and on the “safety of dried yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor* larva) as a novel food pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2015/2283” [99]. Both opinions, intended to help European politicians to put in place a regulation for the authorization of edible insects on the European market, mention the allergenic risk associated to the consumption of edible insects for allergic people. They point out the risk of reactions to either insect-specific allergens, allergens cross-reacting with other arthropods, or contaminant allergens from insect feeding such as gluten.

## 5. Conclusions

Potential IgE-binding allergens identified in edible insects, correspond essentially to pan-allergens developing some IgE-binding cross-reactivity with other homologous proteins present in other arthropods (acari, crustaceans), mollusks and nematods. Owing to this lack of specificity, they are not suitable for being used as relevant probes for the specific detection of insect flours, added as ingredients to different food products. However, a few other proteins occurring in insect protein extracts, emerge as specific allergens essentially distributed in insects whilst they are much less abundant or even lacking, in other phylogenetically-related organisms such as acari, crustaceans, mollusks and nematods.

These specific insect allergens include chemosensory proteins (CSP), odorant or pheromone-binding proteins (OBP), and hexamerin, the main storage protein of insect fat bodies. Three other proteins, apolipophorin III, the larval cuticle protein, and the receptor for activated protein kinase, could be used as specific probes since they are preferentially distributed in insects and, to a much more lesser extent, in crustaceans and nematods. The cockroach allergen-like protein is apart, because it only occurs in the yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*).

With the exception of the receptor for activated protein kinase, other proteins have been previously identified as IgE-binding allergens, and could therefore be used as specific immuno-probes for the detection of added insects or insect flours to food products, in complement to other detection methods such as the genomic detection of insect proteins using polymerase chain reactions (PCR) or the DNA barcoding authentication.

**Author Contributions:** Investigation, C.P., M.S.; Resources, A.B., H.B., O.B.-S.; Writing—original draft, P.R.; Writing—review & editing, P.R. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This project was supported in part by the Région Occitanie, European funds (Fonds Européens de Développement Régional, FEDER), Toulouse Métropole, and by the French Ministry of Research with the Investissement d’Avenir Infrastructures Nationales en Biologie et Santé program (ProFI, Proteomics French Infrastructure project, ANR-10-INBS-08).

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

- Nadeau, L.; Nadeau, I.; Franklin, F.; Dunkel, F. The potential for entomophagy to address undernutrition. *Ecol. Food Nutr.* **2015**, *54*, 200–208. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- van Huis, A. Edible insects are the future? *Proc. Nutr. Soc.* **2016**, *75*, 294–305. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Grau, T.; Vilcinskas, A.; Joop, G. Sustainable farming of the mealworm *Tenebrio molitor* for the production of food and feed. *Z. Naturforsch. C J. Biosci.* **2017**, *72*, 337–349. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Feng, Y.; Chen, X.M.; Zhao, M.; He, Z.; Sun, L.; Wang, C.Y.; Ding, W.F. Edible insects in China: Utilization and prospects. *Insect Sci.* **2018**, *25*, 184–198. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Raheem, D.; Carrascosa, C.; Bolanle Oluwale, O.; Nieuwland, M.; Saraiva, A.; Millán, R.; Raposo, A. Traditional consumption of and rearing edible insects in Africa, Asia and Europe. *Crit. Rev. Food Sci. Nutr.* **2019**, *59*, 2169–2188. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Fasolin, L.H.; Pereira, R.N.; Pinheiro, A.C.; Martins, J.T.; Andrade, C.C.P.; Ramos, O.L.; Vicente, A.A. Emergent food proteins—towards sustainability, health and innovation. *Food Res. Inter.* **2019**, *125*, 108586. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Schlüter, O.; Rumpold, B.A. Insects as food in Europe. *J. Insects Food Feed* **2019**, *5*, 1. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Salter, A.M. Insect proteins: A sustainable and healthy alternative to animal protein? *J. Nutr.* **2019**, *149*, 545–546. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Sorjonem, J.M.; Valtonen, A.; Hirvisalo, E.; Karhapää, M.; Lehtovaara, V.J.; Lindgren, J.; Marnila, P.; Mooney, P.; Mäki, M.; Siljander-Rasi, H.; et al. The plant-based by-product diets for the mass-rearing of *Acheta domesticus* and *Gryllus bimaculatus*. *PLoS ONE* **2019**, *14*, e0218830.
- Pali-Schöll, I.; Binder, R.; Moens, Y.; Polesny, F.; Monsó, S. Edible insects—Defining knowledge gaps in biological and ethical considerations of entomophagy. *Crit. Rev. Food Sci. Nutr.* **2019**, *59*, 2760–2771. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Carcea, M. Quality and nutritional/textural properties of durum wheat pasta enriched with cricket powder. *Foods* **2020**, *9*, 1298. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- van Huis, A. Insects as food and feed, a new emerging agricultural sector: A review. *J. Insects Food Feed* **2020**, *6*, 445–455. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Eriksson, T.; Andere, A.A.; Kelstrup, H.; Emery, V.J.; Picard, C.J. The yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*) genome: A resource for the emerging insects as food and feed industry. *J. Insects Food Feed* **2020**, *6*, 27–44. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Jantzen da Silva Lucas, A.; Menegon de Oliveira, L.; da Rocha, M.; Prentice, C. Edible insects: An alternative of nutritional, functional and bioactive compounds. *Food Chem.* **2020**, *311*, 126022. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Hawkey, K.J.; Lopez-Viso, C.; Brameld, J.M.; Parr, T.; Salter, A.M. Insects: A potential source of protein and other nutrients for feed and food. *Ann. Rev. Anim. Biosci.* **2020**, in press. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Houbraken, M.; Sprangers, T.; De Clercq, P.; Cooreman-Algoed, M.; Couchement, T.; De Clercq, G.; Verbeke, S.; Spanoghe, P. Pesticide contamination of *Tenebrio molitor* (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae) for human consumption. *Food Chem.* **2016**, *201*, 264–269. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Schlüter, O.; Rumpold, B.; Holzhauser, T.; Roth, A.; Vogel, R.F.; Quasigroch, W.; Vogel, S.; Heinz, V.; Jäger, H.; Bandick, N.; et al. Safety aspects of the production of foods and food ingredients from insects. *Mol. Nutr. Food Res.* **2017**, *61*. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Testa, M.; Stillo, M.; Maffei, G.; Androlo, V.; Gardois, P.; Zotti, C.M. Ugly but tasty: A systematic review of possible human and animal health risks related to entomophagy. *Crit. Rev. Food. Sci. Nutr.* **2017**, *57*, 3747–3759. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Poma, G.; Cuykx, M.; Amato, C.; Calaprice, C.; Focant, J.-F.; Covaci, A. Evaluation of hazardous chemicals in edible insects and insect-based food intended for human consumption. *Food Chem. Toxicol.* **2017**, *100*, 70–79. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Montowska, M.; Kowalczewski, P.L.; Rybicka, I.; Fornal, E. Nutritional value, protein and peptide composition of edible cricket powders. *Food Chem.* **2019**, *289*, 130–138. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Poma, G.; Yin, S.; Tang, B.; Fujii, Y.; Cuykx, M.; Covaci, A. Occurrence of selected organic contaminants in edible insects and assessment of their chemical safety. *Environ. Health Perspect.* **2019**, *127*, 127009. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Truzzi, C.; Illuminati, S.; Girolametti, F.; Antonucci, M.; Scarponi, G.; Ruschioni, S.; Riolo, P.; Annibaldi, A. Influence of feeding substrates on the presence of toxic metals (Cd, Pb, Ni, As, Hg) in larvae of *Tenebrio molitor*: Risk assessment for human consumption. *J. Environ. Res. Public Health* **2019**, *16*, 4815. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Garofalo, C.; Osimani, A.; Milanović, V.; Taccari, M.; Cardinali, F.; Aquilanti, L.; Riolo, P.; Ruschioni, S.; Isidoro, N.; Clementi, F. The microbiota of marketed processed edible insects as revealed by high-throughput sequencing. *Food Microbiol.* **2017**, *62*, 15–22. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Wynants, E.; Crauwels, S.; Verreth, C.; Gioanotten, N.; Lievens, B.; Claes, J.; Van Campenhout, L. Microbial dynamics during production of lesser mealworms (*Alphitobius diaperinus*) for human consumption at industrial scale. *Food Microbiol.* **2018**, *70*, 181–191. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Wynants, E.; Frooninckx, L.; Crauwels, S.; Verreth, C.; De Smet, J.; Sandrock, C.; Wohlfahrt, J.; Van Schelt, J.; Depraetere, S.; Lievens, B.; et al. Assessing the microbiota of black soldier fly larvae (*Hermetia illucens*) reared on organic waste streams on four different locations at laboratory and large scale. *Microbiol. Ecol.* **2019**, *77*, 913–930. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Gałęcki, R.; Sokół, R. A parasitological evaluation of edible insects and their role in the transmission of parasitic diseases to humans and animals. *PLoS ONE* **2019**, *14*, e0219303. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Barre, A.; Caze-Subra, S.; Gironde, C.; Bienvenu, F.; Bienvenu, J.; Rougé, P. Entomophagy and the risk of allergy. *Rev. Fr. Allergol.* **2014**, *54*, 315–321. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

28. Belluco, S.; Losasso, C.; Maggioletti, M.; Alonzi, C.; Ricci, A.; Paoletti, M.G. Edible insects: A food security solution or a food safety concern? *Anim. Front.* **2015**, *5*, 25–30.
29. Verhoeckx, K.; Broekman, H.; Knulst, A.; Houben, G. Allergenicity assessment strategy for novel food proteins and protein sources. *Regul. Toxicol. Pharmacol.* **2016**, *79*, 118–124. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
30. Quirce, S.; Antolín-Amérigo, D.; Domínguez-Ortega, J. Hidden occupational allergens such as additives. *Curr. Opin. Allergy Clin. Immunol.* **2018**, *18*, 67–72. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
31. de Gier, S.; Verhoeckx, K. Insect (food) allergy and allergens. *Mol. Immunol.* **2018**, *100*, 82–106. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
32. Lee, Q.C.; Kim, S.R.; Park, K.H.; Lee, J.H.; Park, J.W. Clinical features and culprit food allergens of Korean adult food allergy patients: A cross-sectional single-institute study. *Allergy Asthma Immunol. Res.* **2019**, *11*, 723–735. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
33. Jeong, K.Y.; Park, J.W. Insect allergens on the dining table. *Curr. Protein Pept. Sci.* **2020**, *21*, 159–169. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
34. Beaumont, P.; Courtois, J.; Van der Brempt, X.; Tollenaere, S. Food-induced anaphylaxis to *Tenebrio molitor* and allergens implicated. *Rev. Fr. Allergol.* **2019**, *59*, 389–393. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
35. Gautreau, M.; Restuccia, M.; Senser, K.; Weisberg, S.N. Familial anaphylaxis after silkworm ingestion. *Prehosp. Emerg. Care* **2017**, *21*, 83–85. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
36. Verhoeckx, K.; van Broekhoven, S.; den Hartog-Jager, C.F.; Gaspari, M.; de Jong, G.A.; Wichers, H.J.; van Hoffen, E.; Houben, G.F.; Knulst, A.C. House dust mite (Der p 10) and crustacean allergic patients may react to food containing yellow mealworm proteins. *Food Chem. Toxicol.* **2014**, *65*, 364–373. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
37. Broekman, H.; Verhoeckx, K.; den Hartog Jager, C.F.; Kuizinga, A.G.; Pronk-Kleinjan, M.; Remington, B.C.; Bruijnzeel-Koomen, C.A.; Houben, G.F.; Knulst, A.C. Majority of shrimp-allergic patients are allergic to mealworm. *J. Allergy Clin. Immunol.* **2016**, *137*, 1261–1263. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
38. Broekman, H.C.H.; Knulst, A.; de Jong, G.; Gaspari, M.; den Hartog Jager, C.F.; Houben, G.H.; Verhoeckx, K.C. Is mealworm or shrimp allergy indicative for food allergy to insects? *Mol. Nutr. Food Res.* **2017**, *61*, 1601061. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
39. Barre, A.; Simplicien, M.; Cassan, G.; Benoist, H.; Rougé, P. Food allergen families common to different arthropods (mites, insects, crustaceans), mollusks and nematods: Cross-reactivity and potential cross-allergenicity. *Rev. Fr. Allergol.* **2018**, *58*, 581–593. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
40. Kamemura, N.; Sugimoto, M.; Tamehiro, N.; Adachi, R.; Tomonari, S.; Watanabe, T.; Mito, T. Cross-allergenicity of crustacean and the edible insect *Gryllus bimaculatus* in patients with shrimp allergy. *Mol. Immunol.* **2019**, *106*, 127–134. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
41. Francis, F.; Doyen, V.; Debaugnies, F.; Mazzucchelli, G.; Caparros, R.; Alabi, T.; Blecker, C.; Haubruge, E.; Corazza, F. Limited cross reactivity among arginine kinase allergen from mealworm and cricket edible insects. *Food Chem.* **2019**, *276*, 714–718. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
42. Pali-Schöll, I.; Meinlschmidt, P.; Larenas-Linnemann, D.; Purschke, B.; Hofstetter, G.; Rodríguez-Monroy, F.A.; Einhorn, L.; Mothes-Luksch, N.; Jensen-Jarolim, E.; Jäger, H. Edible insects: Cross-recognition of IgE from crustacean- and house dust mite allergic patients, and reduction of allergenicity by food processing. *World Allergy Organ. J.* **2019**, *12*, 100006. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
43. Duan, L.; Hoang, J.A.; Kothari, A.; Eiwegger, T.; Vadas, P. Shellfish allergy is a risk factor for cricket anaphylaxis. *J. Allergy Clin. Immunol. Pract.* **2020**, *8*, 2396–2398. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
44. Palmer, L.K.; Marsh, J.T.; Lu, M.; Goodman, R.E.; Zeece, M.G.; Johnson, P.E. Shellfish tropomyosin IgE cross-reactivity differs among edible insect species. *Mol. Nutr. Food Res.* **2020**, *64*, e1900923. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
45. Tramuta, C.; Gallina, S.; Bellio, A.; Bianchi, D.M.; Chiesa, F.; Rubiola, S.; Romano, A.; Decastelli, L. A set of multiplex polymerase chain reactions for genomic detection of nine edible insect species in foods. *J. Insect Sci.* **2018**, *18*, 1–6. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
46. Smith, P.K.; Krohn, R.I.; Hermanson, G.T.; Mallia, A.K.; Gartner, F.H.; Provenzano, M.D.; Fujimoto, E.K.; Goetze, N.M.; Olson, B.J.; Klenk, D.C. Measurement of protein using bicinchoninic acid. *Anal. Biochem.* **1985**, *150*, 76–85. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
47. Barre, A.; Pichereaux, C.; Valazquez, E.; Maudouit, A.; Simplicien, M.; Garnier, L.; Biennu, F.; Biennu, J.; Burlet-Schiltz, O.; Auriol, C.; et al. Insights into the allergenic potential of the edible yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*). *Foods* **2019**, *8*, 515. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
48. Bouyssie, D.; Hesse, A.M.; Mouton-Barbosa, E.; Rompais, M.; Macron, C.; Carapito, C.; Gonzalez de Peredo, A.; Dupieris, V.; Burel, A.; Menetrey, J.P.; et al. Proline: An efficient and user-friendly software suite for large-scale proteomics. *Bioinformatics* **2020**, *36*, 3148–3155. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
49. Thompson, J.D.; Gibson, T.J.; Plewniak, F.; Jeanmougin, F.; Higgins, D.G. The CLUSTAL-X windows interface: Flexible strategies for multiple sequence alignment aided by quality analysis tool. *Nucleic Acids Res.* **1999**, *15*, 4876–4882.
50. Risler, J.-L.; Delorme, M.O.; Delacroix, H.; Henaut, A. Amino acid substitutions in structurally related proteins. A pattern recognition approach. Determination of a new efficient scoring matrix. *J. Mol. Biol.* **1998**, *204*, 1019–1029. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
51. Breiter, D.R.; Kanost, M.R.; Benning, M.M.; Wesenberg, G.; Law, J.H.; Wells, M.A.; Rayment, I.; Holden, H.M. Molecular structure of an apolipoprotein determined at 2.5-Å resolution. *Biochemistry* **1991**, *30*, 603–608. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
52. Fan, D.; Zheng, Y.; Yang, D.; Wang, J. NMR solution structure and dynamics of an exchangeable apolipoprotein, *Locusta migratoria* apolipoprotein III. *J. Biol. Chem.* **2003**, *278*, 21212–21220. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
53. Jansen, S.; Chmelik, J.; Zidek, L.; Padrt, P.; Novák, P.; Zdráhal, Z.; Picimbon, J.F.; Löfstedt, C.; Sklenár, V. Structure of *Bombyx mori* chemosensory protein 1 in solution. *Arch. Insect Biochem. Physiol.* **2007**, *66*, 135–145. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
54. Rothmund, S.; Liou, Y.C.; Davies, P.L.; Krause, E.; Sönnichsen, F.D. A new class of hexahelical insect proteins revealed as putative carriers of small hydrophobic ligands. *Structure* **1999**, *7*, 1325–1332. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

55. Spinelli, S.; Lagarde, A.; Iovinella, P.; Legrand, P.; Tegoni, M.; Pelosi, P.; Cambillau, C. Crystal structure of *Apis mellifera* OBP14, a C-minus odorant-binding protein, and its complexes with odorant molecules. *Insect Biochem. Mol. Biol.* **2012**, *42*, 41–50. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
56. Zhou, J.J.; Robertson, G.; He, X.; Dufour, S.; Hooper, A.M.; Pickett, J.A.; Keep, N.H.; Field, L.M. Characterisation of *Bombyx mori* odorant-binding proteins reveals that a general odorant-binding protein discriminates between sex pheromone components. *J. Mol. Biol.* **2009**, *389*, 529–545. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
57. Sandler, B.H.; Nikonova, L.; Leal, W.S.; Clardy, J. Sexual attraction in the silkworm moth: Structure of the pheromone-binding-protein-bombykol complex. *Chem. Biol.* **2000**, *7*, 143–151. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
58. Pietrzyk, A.; Bujacz, A.; Mueller-Dieckmann, J.; Łochyńska, M.; Jalkolski, M.; Bujacz, G. Crystallographic identification of an unexpected protein complex in silkworm haemolymph. *Acta Crystallogr. D Biol. Crystallogr.* **2013**, *69*, 2353–2364. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
59. Berman, H.M.; Westbrook, J.; Feng, Z.; Gilliland, G.; Bhat, T.N.; Weissig, H.; Shindyalov, I.N.; Bourne, P.E. The protein data bank. *Nucleic Acids Res.* **2000**, *28*, 235–242. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
60. Krieger, E.; Koraimann, G.; Vriend, G. Increasing the precision of comparative models with YASARA NOVA—a self-parameterizing force field. *Proteins* **2002**, *47*, 393–402. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
61. Ryu, K.S.; Lee, J.O.; Kwon, T.H.; Choi, H.H.; Park, H.S.; Hwang, S.K.; Lee, Z.W.; Lee, K.B.; Han, Y.H.; Choi, Y.S.; et al. The presence of monoglucosylated N196-glycan is important for the structural stability of storage protein, arylphorin. *Biochem. J.* **2009**, *421*, 87–96. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
62. Masuda, T.; Baba, S.; Matsuo, K.; Ito, S.; Mikami, B. The high-resolution crystal structure of lobster hemocyanin shows its enzymatic capability as a phenoloxidase. *Arch. Biochem. Biophys.* **2020**, *688*, 108370. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
63. Lagarde, A.; Spinelli, S.; Tegoni, M.; He, X.; Field, L.; Zhou, J.J.; Cambillau, C. The crystal structure of odorant binding protein 7 from *Anopheles gambiae* exhibits an outstanding adaptability of its binding site. *J. Mol. Biol.* **2011**, *414*, 401–412. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
64. di Luccio, E.; Ishida, Y.; Leal, W.S.; Wilson, D.K. Crystallographic observation of pH-induced conformational changes in the *Amyelois transitella* pheromone-binding protein AtrPBP1. *PLoS ONE* **2013**, *8*, e53840. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
65. Damberger, F.F.; Ishida, Y.; Leal, W.S.; Wüthrich, K. Structural basis of ligand binding and release in insect pheromone-binding protein: NMR structure of *Antheraea polyphemus* PBP1 at pH 4.5. *J. Mol. Biol.* **2007**, *373*, 811–819. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
66. Jiménez-Sandoval, P.; Madrigal-Carrillo, E.A.; Santamaría-Suárez, H.A.; Maturana, D.; Rentería-González, I.; Benítez-Cardoza, C.G.; Torres-Larios, A.; Bribea, L.G. Mimicking a p53-MDM2 interaction based on a stable immunoglobulin-like domain scaffold. *Proteins* **2018**, *86*, 802–812. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
67. Laskowski, R.A.; MacArthur, M.W.; Moss, D.S.; Thornton, J.M. PROCHECK: A program to check the stereochemistry of protein structures. *J. Appl. Cryst.* **1993**, *26*, 283–291. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
68. Melo, F.; Feytmans, E. Assessing protein structures with a non-local atomic interaction energy. *J. Mol. Biol.* **1998**, *277*, 1141–1152. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
69. Benkert, P.; Biasini, M.; Schwede, T. Toward the estimation of the absolute quality of individual protein structure models. *Bioinformatics* **2011**, *27*, 343–350. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
70. Arnold, K.; Bordoli, L.; Kopp, J.; Schwede, T. The SWISS-MODEL workspace: A web-based environment for protein structure homology modelling. *Bioinformatics* **2006**, *22*, 195–201. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
71. Pettersen, E.F.; Goddard, T.D.; Huang, C.C.; Couch, G.S.; Greenblatt, D.M.; Meng, E.C.; Ferrin, T.E. UCSF Chimera—a visualization system for exploratory research and analysis. *J. Comput. Chem.* **2004**, *25*, 1605–1612. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
72. Gasteiger, E.; Hoogland, C.; Gattiker, A.; Duvaud, S.; Wilkins, M.R.; Appel, R.D.; Bairoch, A. Protein identification and analysis tools on the ExPASy server. In *The Proteomics Protocols Handbook*; Walker, J.M., Ed.; Human Press Inc.: Totowa, NJ, USA, 2005; Volume 52, pp. 571–607.
73. Pelosi, P.; Calvello, M.; Ban, L. Diversity of odorant-binding proteins and chemosensory proteins in insects. *Chem. Senses* **2005**, *30*, i291–i292. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
74. Khurana, T.; Collison, M.; Chew, F.T.; Slater, J.E. Bla g 3: A novel allergen of German cockroach identified using cockroach-specific avian single-chain variable fragment antibody. *Ann. Allergy Asthma Immunol.* **2014**, *112*, 140–145. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
75. Wu, C.H.; Lee, M.F.; Liao, S.C.; Luo, S.F. Sequencing analysis of cDNA clones encoding the American cockroach Cr-PI allergens. Homology with insect hemolymph proteins. *J. Biol. Chem.* **1996**, *271*, 17937–17943. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
76. Srinroch, C.; Srisomsap, C.; Chokchaichamnankit, D.; Punyarit, P.; Phiriyangkul, P. Identification of novel allergen in edible insect, *Gryllus bimaculatus* and its cross-reactivity with *Macrobrachium spp.* allergens. *Food Chem.* **2015**, *184*, 160–166. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
77. Just, N.; Lièvre, K.; Lallemand, K.; Leduc, V. Implication de l'hexamérine dans un cas d'allergie aux larves de pouches. *Rev. Fr. Allergol.* **2012**, *52*, 258. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
78. Colomb, S.; Bourrain, J.L.; Leduc, V.; Burmester, T.; Marin, G.; Lesage, F.X.; Dhivert-Donnadieu, H.; Demoly, P. Identification of the larval serum proteins as major fruit fly (*Drosophila melanogaster*) occupational allergens. *J. Allergy Clin. Immunol. Pract.* **2017**, *5*, 1153–1155. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
79. Broekman, H.C.H.P.; Knulst, A.C.; de Jong, G.; Gaspari, M.; den Hartog Jager, C.F.; Houben, G.F.; Verhoeckx, K.C.M. Primary respiratory and food allergy to mealworm. *J. Allergy Clin. Immunol.* **2017**, *140*, 600–603. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
80. Tomiya, N.; Narang, S.; Lee, Y.C.; Betenbaugh, M.J. Comparing N-glycan processing in mammalian cell lines to native and engineered lepidopteran insect cell lines. *Glycoconj. J.* **2004**, *21*, 343–360. [\[CrossRef\]](#)



81. Scheys, F.; Van Damme, E.J.M.; De Schutter, K.; Staes, A.; Gevaert, K.; Smagghe, G. Evolutionarily conserved and species-specific glycoproteins in the N-glycoproteomes of diverse insect species. *Insect Biochem. Mol. Biol.* **2018**, *100*, 22–29. [[CrossRef](#)]
82. van Broekhoven, S.; Bastiaan-Net, S.; de Jong, N.W.; Wichers, H.J. Influence of processing and in vitro digestion on the allergic cross-reactivity of three mealworm species. *Food Chem.* **2015**, *196*, 1075–1083. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
83. Broekman, H.; Knulst, A.; den Hartog Jager, S.; Monteleone, F.; Gaspari, M.; de Jong, G.; Houben, G.; Verhoeckx, K. Effect of thermal processing on mealworm allergenicity. *Mol. Nutr. Food Res.* **2015**, *59*, 1855–1864. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
84. Hall, F.; Johnson, P.E.; Liceaga, A. Effect of enzymatic hydrolysis on bioactive properties and allergenicity of cricket (*Gryllodes sigillatus*) protein. *Food Chem.* **2018**, *262*, 39–47. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
85. Frigerio, J.; Agostinetto, G.; Sandionigi, A.; Mezzasalma, V.; Berterame, N.M.; Casiraghi, M.; Labra, M.; Galimberti, A. The hidden ‘plant side’ of insect novel foods: A DNA-based assessment. *Food. Res. Int.* **2020**, *128*, 108751. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
86. Klueber, J.; Costa, J.; Randow, S.; Codreanu-Morel, F.; Verhoeckx, K.; Bindselev-Jensen, C.; Ollert, M.; Hoffmann-Sommergruber, K.; Morisset, M.; Holzhauser, T.; et al. Homologous tropomyosins from vertebrate and invertebrate: Recombinant calibrator proteins in functional biological assays for tropomyosin allergenicity assessment of novel animal foods. *Clin. Exp. Allergy* **2020**, *50*, 105–116. [[CrossRef](#)]
87. Nebbia, S.; Lamberti, C.; Giorgis, V.; Giuffrida, M.G.; Manfredi, M.; Marengo, E.; Pessione, E.; Schiavone, A.; Boita, M.; Brussino, L.; et al. The cockroach allergen-like protein is involved in primary respiratory and food allergy to yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*). *Clin. Exp. Allergy* **2019**, *49*, 1379–1382. [[CrossRef](#)]
88. Raheem, D.; Raposo, A.; Oluwole, O.B.; Nieuwland, M.; Saraiva, A.; Carrascosa, C. Entomophagy: Nutritional, ecological, safety and legislation aspects. *Food Res. Intern.* **2019**, *126*, 108672. [[CrossRef](#)]
89. Govorushko, S. Global status of insects as food and feed source: A review. *Trends Food Sci. Technol.* **2019**, *91*, 436–445. [[CrossRef](#)]
90. Oonincx, D.G.A.B.; de Boer, I.J.M. Environmental impact of the production of mealworms as a protein source for humans—A life cycle assessment. *PLoS ONE* **2012**, *7*, e51145. [[CrossRef](#)]
91. Lundy, M.E.; Parrella, M.P. Crickets are not a free lunch: Protein capture from scalable organic side-streams via high-density populations of *Acheta domesticus*. *PLoS ONE* **2015**, *10*, e0118785. [[CrossRef](#)]
92. Rumpold, B.A.; Schlüter, O.K. Potential and challenges of insects as an innovative source for food and feed production. *Innov. Food Sci. Emerging Technol.* **2013**, *17*, 1–11. [[CrossRef](#)]
93. Payne, C.L.R.; Dobermann, D.; Forkes, A.; House, J.; Josephs, J.; McBride, A.; Müller, A.; Quilliam, R.S.; Soares, S. Insects as food and feed: European perspectives on recent research and future priorities. *J. Insects Food Feed* **2016**, *2*, 269–276. [[CrossRef](#)]
94. Gmuer, A.; Nuessli Gith, J.; Hartmann, C.; Siegrist, M. Effects of the degree of processing of insect ingredients in snacks on expected emotional experiences and willingness to eat. *Food Quality Prefer.* **2016**, *54*, 117–127. [[CrossRef](#)]
95. House, J. Consumer acceptance of insect-based foods in the Netherlands: Academic and commercial implications. *Appetite* **2016**, *107*, 47–58. [[CrossRef](#)]
96. La Barbera, F.; Verneau, F.; Amato, M.; Grunert, K. Understanding Westerners’ disgust for the eating of insects: The role of food neophobia and implicit associations. *Food Quality Prefer.* **2018**, *64*, 120–125. [[CrossRef](#)]
97. Woolf, E.; Zhu, Y.; Emory, K.; Zhao, J.; Liu, C. Willingness to consume insect-containing foods: A survey in the United States. *LWT* **2019**, *102*, 100–105. [[CrossRef](#)]
98. EFSA Scientific Committee. Scientific Opinion on a risk profile related to production and consumption of insects as food and feed. *EFSA J.* **2015**, *13*, 4257. [[CrossRef](#)]
99. EFSA NDA Panel (EFSA Panel on Nutrition, Novel Foods and Food Allergens); Turck, D.; Castenmiller, J.; De Henauw, S.; Hirsch-Ernst, K.I.; Kearney, J.; Maciuk, A.; Mangelsdorf, I.; McArdle, H.J.; Naska, A.; et al. Scientific Opinion on the safety of dried yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor* larva) as a novel food pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2015/2283. *EFSA J.* **2021**, *19*, 6343.