

Atomic gardening: Breeding plants with gamma radiation

The following is an edited excerpt.

Did you know that the peppermint flavor in your chewing gum and toothpaste, and the red-ruby grapefruit on your plate, is the result of mutation caused by deliberate irradiation? Apparently, after World War II, there was a concerted effort to find peaceful uses for atomic energy. One of the ideas was to bombard plants with radiation and produce lots of mutations, some of which, it was hoped, would lead to plants that were disease or cold-resistant or just had unusual colors.

Modern genetic engineering has replaced the need for atomic gardening, but the legacy is still carried forward by the Institute of Radiation Breeding in Japan, which currently owns the largest, and possibly the only surviving gamma garden in the world, at Hitachi-miya in Ibaraki Prefecture.

Read the full post here: [Atomic gardening: Breeding plants with gamma radiation](#)