GM foods grow up

The following is an editorial summary.

Critics of transgenic crops tend to focus on the seemingly unnatural act of adding something new and alien to a plant’s genetic code. But genetic technology has advanced rapidly in the last few decades, and the new techniques of the more mature science offer not just transgenic innovation, but also ways of avoiding controversy.

Today, researchers gather information about individual plants through genome sequencing and then use that genetic information to inform older methods of crop optimization, like cross-breeding. What’s more, researchers are now using robotics to assist in the laborious process of screening and breeding plants, in an attempt to optimize crops using the plant’s own DNA.

Read the full story here: GM Foods Grow Up

Additional Resources:

- “Harvest of Fear: Interview-Joe Hotchkiss,” PBS
  — In this interview from 2002, Cornell professor Joe Hotchkiss compares traditional crossbreeding and genetic engineering.
- “Food: How Altered?,” National Geographic
  — A quick Q&A about the tradition of breeding and genetically altering plants for food.