

## Breakthrough GM photoreceptor technology could help food crops thrive in crowded fields

Scientists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison are working on genetically modifying plant photoreceptors to allow crops to grow in tightly packed fields, where the available light for each plant is low.

“Phytochrome is the main photoreceptor that allows plants to tell when the lights are on and when they’re off, says Richard Vierstra. ‘And it also allows a plant to sense whether it’s in full sun or whether it’s being shaded by other plants.’”

“[Richard Vierstra’s team has found a number of mutants that are extremely sensitive to light. These mutant phytochrome molecules, if genetically engineered into food crops, could trick the plants into thinking they are getting plenty of light, even when they’re growing in a crowded field.]”

**Read the full, original story here: [“New technology could help food crops thrive in crowded fields”](#)**