

Field trials of GM oranges show promise in the fight against citrus-greening

Field trials of oranges genetically modified to contain a gene found in spinach are showing promise in resisting citrus greening—a devastating disease that threatens Florida’s orange crop and orange juice industry. The US Department of Agriculture [contributed](#) \$1 million to the effort last week, and says it is going to “provide a unified emergency response framework” to the spread of the disease.

The spinach gene produces a protein that attacks the bacteria, according to Erik Mirkov, a Texas A&M University plant pathologist who’s leading the study. And no, it does not make the orange taste like spinach, he says.

Citrus greening has already cost Florida more than \$4 billion in lost economic output and thousands of jobs since 2005, economists at the University of Florida estimate. Despite promising field trials, the GM orange’s success on the market could be challenged by consumer concerns about the effect of genetically modified foods on health and the environment.

Read the full, original story: [Can Genetically Modifying an Orange With a Spinach Gene Save Florida’s Crop?](#)