

Banana apocalypse? GM one of few options to save threatened cavendish

Scientists are experimenting with genetic modifications to protect Cavendish bananas from a variant of the banana wilt fungus. If the fungus jumps the Atlantic, it could devastate supplies pretty quickly, researchers say.

“Progress in creating bananas fully resistant to [the fungus], either by classical breeding or genetic engineering, has so far been limited. The wild Asian banana *Musa acuminata malaccensis* seems to be resistant, and researchers are experimenting with putting its resistance genes into the Cavendish,” according to a report in [Nature](#). The disease costs farmers in Africa’s Great Lakes region an estimated half a billion dollars every year.

The fungus has been found in plantations in Mozambique and Jordan, raising fears that it could spread to major producers and decimate supplies. The fungus has now been found in Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, China, and Australia, and it seems likely that it will soon spread to Latin America, producer of 80 percent of the world’s bananas.

Read the full, original story: [World’s Top Banana Under Threat](#)