

Can color-changing flowers help change minds of GMO skeptics?

Nikolai Braun and Keira Havens, the two entrepreneurial scientists behind the Fort Collins, Colorado-based company [Revolution Bioengineering](#), are in pursuit of a flower that changes color, from pink to blue and back again. While it does not exist yet, they are calling the bloom “Petunia Circadia,” because they intend to link the expression of pigment molecules called anthocyanins to the plant’s circadian rhythm. This way, the flower will change color every 12 hours.

So far, the duo has successfully engineered a petunia that changes color on demand. Instead of transforming on its own, this early version is activated by ethanol.

Braun and Havens have their own message in mind. “For almost everyone outside of the farming world, it will be the first time they will have interacted with a genetically modified organism, and by engineering traits for consumers—flower colors, shapes, smells—we hope to normalize that technology to eventually fully realize the promise of plant biotech to provide food, fuels, and fibers in a sustainable way,” says Braun.

“It can be hard to connect to the reality of people struggling in far-away places,” plant geneticist Pam Ronald told [UC Davis Today](#). “So when you tell people that genetic engineering can be used to fight hunger by increasing vitamin content and reducing crop loss to insects, sometimes it just doesn’t register. Maybe seeing this technology at work in your own backyard can make the science more accessible.”

Read full, original article: [Would You Like to Grow Color-Changing Flowers?](#)