

## Are shrooms the new pesticide?

Scientists in Ireland have found that growing fungus inside barley helps the plants ward off disease. Brian Murphy, a botanist at Trinity College Dublin, has also shown that an inoculation of fungus allows plants to thrive in harsh conditions.

ClimateWire, which has [a nice write-up here](#), quoted Murphy explaining that the fungal treatment helped when plants were exposed to drought, stress, and disease all at once:

“We found fantastic benefits,” he said. “We hit these plants with them all at the same time, and we really made them suffer. The plants treated with [fungi] had six times the survival rate as those without. It’s literally the difference between life and death.”

If this technology pans out, it could replace pesticides in some situations. Instead of buying seeds coated in neonicotinoids, farmers might buy seeds coated with the spores of fungi, which would then make their way inside the crop. There are already several [research groups](#) and [companies](#) playing around with fungal treatments for ag.

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