## Discovery of 'softening gene' may allow for riper tomatoes in produce aisle

To reduce wastage, hybrid tomatoes are often bred to include natural mutations that slow the whole ripening process, but such longevity comes at a cost, in the form of flavour and colour.

The question of how the tomato fruit disassembles its cell walls and softens during ripening has perplexed researchers for over two decades, but [a new study] published in the journal Nature Biotechnology, has revealed the key to uncoupling softening from the other aspects of fruit quality.

.... the researchers have identified a gene that encodes a pectate lyase, which normally degrades the pectin in the tomato cell walls during ripening.

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Paul Fraser, Professor of Biochemistry . . . said: 'The study also shows how you can precisely alter fruit ripening properties without adverse effects on the chemical composition of the fruit.

'... traits such as taste, colour, and nutritional quality are not adversely affected and in some cases enhanced'.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: Could we soon have tomatoes that never go soft? British scientists 'turn off' gene that makes fruit decay