RNA could replace toxic chemical spraying to protect fruits and vegetables from mold

Botrytis cinerea [or gray mold is] , a fungal pathogen that can infect… almost every fruit and vegetable…

A team of researchers, led by Hailing Jin… have developed a new strategy that could provide an… environmentally friendly fungicide to fight *B. cinerea* and other fungal pathogens that harm crops.

The findings were just published in the journal Nature Plants.

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…The researchers... found three years ago… that *B. cinerea* can deliver small RNA[s]… to the host cells to induce… RNA interference (RNAi) to suppress host immunity.

Building on that work… they discovered that… small RNAs can flow from the pathogen to the host and from the host to the pathogen.

Furthermore, they found that *B. cinerea* is capable of taking up RNA molecules from the environment, which makes it possible to use such external RNAs in fungicidal sprays…

The researchers… found that applying those pathogen gene-targeting RNA molecules to the surface of fruits and vegetables… can control gray mold diseases.

…Currently, fungicides and chemical spraying are still the most common disease control strategy. But, these treatments pose serious threats to… environments. RNA… doesn't present problems for human health and it naturally degrades in soil.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: Fighting Plant Pathogens with RNA