

How genetics can bring flavor back to tomatoes

[Harry J. Klee](#), a professor of horticultural sciences at the [University of Florida](#), thinks he can put [the taste] back in [tomatoes] within a couple of years.

In ...the journal Science, Dr. Klee and his colleagues [describe flavor chemicals that are deficient](#) in most modern varieties of tomatoes. In addition, they have located genes that produce these chemicals, and identified heirloom and wild varieties of tomatoes that possess better versions of these genes.

Work has begun to breed a hybrid that restores much of the flavor yet retains the traits — large size, sturdy enough for shipping — that growers need to succeed.

The researchers are using traditional breeding to create the better tasting tomato, even though genetic engineering would be much quicker. “I don’t want people to not eat a great-tasting tomato because they’re scared of it,” Dr. Klee said.

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The researchers identified 26 genes involved in producing flavorful volatiles. Modern tomato varieties had versions of the genes that produced smaller amounts of the volatiles....Because the tomato plants produce small quantities of these volatiles, restoring the good versions of the genes should not greatly affect the other traits that growers demand.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [A Genetic Fix to Put the Taste Back in Tomatoes](#)