

Open-source seeds: Breeders release tomato, wheat strains that aren't allowed to be patented

There's open-source software, [open-source pharma research](#), and [open-source beer](#). Now, there are open-source seeds, too. Breeders from Göttingen University in Germany and Dottenfelderhof agricultural school in Bad Vilbel, Germany, have released [tomato](#) and [wheat](#) varieties under an open-source [license](#). Their move follows similar schemes for sharing plant material in India and the United States, but is the first that provides legal protection for the open-source status of future descendants of plant varieties.

The idea behind the open-source license is that scientists and breeders can experiment with seeds—and improve them—unimpeded by legal restrictions. The license “says that you can use the seed in multiple ways but you are not allowed to put a plant variety protection or patent on this seed and all the successive developments of this seed,” says agricultural scientist [Johannes Kotschi](#), who helped write the license....

An allied U.S. group called the [Open Source Seed Initiative](#) (OSSI) tried for several years to write a similar binding license but concluded in 2014 that it was too unwieldy to gain widespread acceptance among breeders and seed companies, says plant geneticist and OSSI Executive Director [Claire Luby](#) of the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Because patents play a bigger role in plant intellectual property in the United States, breeders are more hemmed in than in Europe.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [German breeders develop 'open-source' plant seeds](#)