

Disease-resistant cassava research advances could help African farmers

Why are these two cassava varieties—Namikonga and Albert—grown by farmers in Tanzania, able to withstand the devastating Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) and Cassava Mosaic Disease (CMD), respectively, while other varieties cannot? A team of scientists that has been studying their DNA have successfully identified the genetic markers linked to their resistance to each of the viral diseases.

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“The studies have enabled us to better understand the location of genes we suspect are associated with resistance to CBSD in the DNA of the farmer-preferred cassava variety, Namikonga, and CMD in the variety Albert. Once validated, this will help speed up breeding through marker-assisted selection (MAS) which shortens the breeding cycle and reduces the offspring population that breeders have to work with. Breeders will be able to quickly narrow down from the thousands of offspring to only those with the desired markers,” says Esther Masumba, a molecular breeder from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Tanzania. She was part of the research team and conducted this study [read the full study [here](#)] as part of her PhD studies at the University of Pretoria, South Africa.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Scientists make breakthrough in identifying first-ever genetic markers associated with resistance to two deadly cassava viral diseases](#)