

## Saving chocolate: Scientists develop disease-resistant hybrid cacao clones that dramatically increase yields

[F]ew cacao varieties are widely cultivated, and that's a problem: Like many other crops, cacao is under constant threat from diseases and environmental challenges exacerbated by our tendency to grow only a few varieties with similar or identical genetic traits and defects.

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In the early 1980s, Dr. Phillips-Mora worked to identify the most naturally tolerant and productive cacao trees, then painstakingly hybridized the candidates to create novel varieties.

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In terms of disease resistance and yield, the differences were astonishing. Dr. Phillips-Mora's six hybrids produce on average about three times more cacao than standard varieties; under ideal conditions, the most prolific hybrids can produce six times more cacao.

After an 11-year trial, a hybrid called C.A.T.I.E.-R6 experienced a 5 percent frosty pod rot infection rate, compared to 75 percent infection for a control variety....Trees that buck this trend could make the family business look more enticing to the next generation of cacao growers.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [A Battle to Save the World's Favorite Treat: Chocolate](#)**