

Can CRISPR gene editing save chocolate from extinction?

Beyond the glittery glass-and-sandstone walls of the University of California's new biosciences building, rows of tiny green cacao seedlings in refrigerated greenhouses await judgment day.

Under the watchful eye of [Myeong-Je Cho](#), the director of plant genomics at an institute that's working with food and candy company Mars, the plants will be transformed. If all goes well, these tiny seedlings will soon be capable of surviving — and thriving — in the dryer, warmer climate that is sending chills through the spines of farmers across the globe.

It's all thanks to a new technology called CRISPR, which allows for tiny, precise tweaks to DNA that were never possible before. These tweaks are already being used to make crops cheaper and more reliable. But their most important use may be in the developing world, where many of the plants that people rely on to avoid starvation are [threatened by the impacts of climate change](#), including more pests and a lack of water.

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If all goes as planned, they could develop cacao plants that don't wilt or rot at their current elevations, doing away with the need to relocate farms or find another approach.

Read full, original post: [Chocolate is on track to go extinct in 40 years](#)