

Plant-based bottles could help slash 300 million tons of plastic pollution

Beer and soft drinks could soon be sipped from “all-plant” bottles under new plans to turn sustainably grown crops into plastic in partnership with major beverage makers.

A biochemicals company in the Netherlands hopes to kickstart investment in a pioneering project that hopes to make plastics from plant sugars rather than fossil fuels.

The plans, devised by renewable chemicals company Avantium, have already won the support of beer-maker Carlsberg, which hopes to sell its pilsner in a cardboard bottle lined with an inner layer of plant plastic.

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Avantium’s plant plastic is designed to be resilient enough to contain carbonate drinks. Trials have shown that the plant plastic would decompose in one year using a composter, and a few years longer if left in normal outdoor conditions.

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The bio-refinery plans to break down sustainable plant sugars into simple chemical structures that can then be rearranged to form a new plant-based plastic – which could appear on supermarket shelves by 2023.

The path-finder project will initially make a modest 5,000 tons of plastic every year using sugars from corn, wheat or beets. However, Avantium expects its production to grow as demand for renewable plastics climbs.

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