

Could lab-grown plants offset agriculture's environmental footprint?

Researchers at [MIT have developed a new method for growing plant tissues in a lab](#) — sort of like how companies and researchers are approaching lab-grown meat. The process would be able to produce wood and fiber in a lab environment, and researchers have already demonstrated how it works in concept by growing simple structures using cells harvested from zinnia leaves.

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If the work of these researchers can eventually be used to create a way to produce lab-grown wood for use in construction and fabrication in a way that's scalable and efficient, then there's tremendous potential in terms of reducing the impact on forestry globally. Eventually, the team even theorizes you could coax the growth of plant-based materials into specific target shapes, so you could also do some of the manufacturing in the lab, by growing a wood table directly for instance.

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Lab-grown meat is still in its infancy, and lab-grown plant material is even more nascent. But it has tremendous potential, even if it takes a long time to get there.

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