A tomato that requires no pesticides to grow?

West Virginia University researcher [Vagner Benedito] believes he will be able to develop a tomato that requires little to no pesticides.

…

“Some wild tomatoes that are closely related to domesticated tomatoes have resistance to insects in very high levels,” Benedito said in a release. “This trait, which is insect resistance, is linked to a structure on the leaves of plants called glandular trichomes that have specific chemicals that will give resistance to a very broad range of pests.”

Glandular trichomes are small, hair-like growths that give tomatoes their “fuzzy” feeling.

Backed by a $400,000 National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant, Benedito is working to understand the genes that make both trichomes and eventually bring the insecticide-resistant trait to the domesticated tomato.

“The final product I’m quite curious and excited about,” Benedito said in a release. “The tomato crop will not require a lot of pesticides as it does today.”

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