

Removing bitterness: Why do today's Brussels sprouts taste so much better than when we were children?

Indeed, it's not just in your imagination that the Brussels sprouts you ate in your adolescence were, uh, potent, to say the least. In fact, although you may have been attributing it to your mother's mediocre cooking skills or [your maturing palate that has developed with age](#) (hello, newfound love for black olives), it's likely not the case at all. Rather, innovations in science can be thanked for the more palatable Brussels sprouts we know and love today.

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[In] the 1990s a Dutch scientist named Hans Van Doorn [identified the chemicals that make Brussels sprouts bitter](#): sinigrin and progoitrin. After discovering this, the scientist worked to identify Brussels sprouts seeds and varieties with lower levels of these bitter chemicals. Then, Van Doorn bred out as much of the...ick factor...as possible (by using these less-bitter Brussels sprout seeds) and crossbred them with higher-producing varieties. The result? More Brussels sprouts that were less bitter. Genius.

Rants and Rocks goes on to point out that by the 2010s, the once nearly impossible-to-eat bitter sprouts were no longer to be found, otherwise known as an effective use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)