

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Purdue Develops Possible Roundup Alternative

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Researchers at Purdue University have developed a herbicide compound they say is effective against weeds while being safe for people and the environment. As a bonus, they've developed a simple system for breeders to create plants that will be resistant to the new herbicide—meaning it could open up herbicide-resistant crop technology to many companies all around the world, not just the multi-national giants.

“Herbicide use is essential for modern agricultural production worldwide,” said Chunhua Zhang, an assistant professor of botany and plant pathology in Purdue University’s College of Agriculture. “The herbicide we developed can contribute to global food production and security, and is expected to be safer for the environment than conventional herbicides because of its selective nature.”

Like Roundup, the Purdue herbicide targets and kills a broad spectrum of weed species while not affecting crops that carry the resistance to the herbicide. It works by targeting a particular site of an enzyme required for plant growth. They also found that by changing a single nucleotide in the gene encoding the enzyme, they could easily produce crops that are resistant to the new herbicide.

The Purdue Office of Technology Commercialization is working on patenting their technology and is looking for additional research partners. **GT**