

## India: Modifying banana genome

India is the largest producer of bananas globally. Bananas are the fourth most important food crop after wheat, rice and corn in terms of gross value of production. Now Indian scientists have used the latest gene editing techniques to modify the banana genome, for the first time.

By using the CRISPR/Cas9 gene editing technique, moves can be made to improve nutritional quality, agronomically important traits as well as pathogen resistance in bananas, scientists claim.

Thehansindia.com reported on the research being done by a group of Indian researchers at the National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute in Mohali. The study results have been published in the Functional & Integrative Genomics journal. This is the first ever research study published on genome editing in any fruit crops from India, according to Dr Siddharth Tiwari, who led the research team.

CRISPR/Cas9 technology lets scientists remove or replace specific parts of DNA with precision. CRISPR stands for “Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats” which basically finds the targeted DNA. Cas9 stands for “CRISPR Associated protein 9” which is basically an endonuclease or a sort of ‘biological scissors’ with which DNA can be edited accurately.

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