

## Israeli scientists develop Drought-Resistant tomato variety

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Israeli researchers Shai Torgeman and Professor Dani Zamir from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have developed a new tomato variety that is more resistant to drought conditions and could help with the destructive impact of climate change.

The scientists crossbred two species of tomatoes, a wild variety from the deserts of western Peru, with a common commercial cultivar that is widely available. They identified interactions between two areas of the tomato's genome that lead to increased yield and resistance to dry conditions. The study found that these specific areas in the plant's genome led to a 20 per cent-50 per cent increase in the overall yield in both regular and dry conditions. The scientists also observed that plant size improved.

According to the researchers, their findings show that using wild species is an effective way to enhance agricultural output. They could also prove to be widely applicable to other plants in the future.

“The new tomato breed being developed in Israel could help soften the blow. It is expected to hit supermarket shelves in the near future and likely will be used as a processing tomato in the production of ketchups and sauces”, Torgeman said.

Torgeman also added that we’re now in the stage of cultivating the first crossbred species for commercial purposes and I believe that this will be available on the market in the next 2-3 years.