

BASMATI RICE GENOME SEQUENCED

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Scientists have mapped the complete genome of two basmati rice varieties, including one that is drought-tolerant and resistant to bacterial disease. The findings, published in the journal *Genome Biology*, also show that basmati rice is a hybrid of two other rice groups.

Despite the economic and cultural importance of basmati and related aromatic rice varieties, their evolutionary history is not fully understood, the researchers said.

The researchers focused on two basmati rice varieties: Basmati 334 from Pakistan, known to be drought tolerant and resistant to rice-killing bacterial blight, and Dom Sufid from Iran, an aromatic long-grain rice that is one of the most expensive on the market.

Most genetic material in basmati comes from japonica —a rice group found in East Asia — followed by the rice group aus found in Bangladesh.

The researchers aim to work with the scientific and rice breeding communities to identify important genes, see what makes the basmati group unique, and even develop molecular markers to help breed new varieties.

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