ble to teach evolution without creating anti-evolution activists. All that is required is respect for people's religious convictions and avoidance of dogmatic (and unprovable) statements indicating that evolution supersedes religion. If individual scientists and scientific organizations actively promoted this message rather than mobilizing for battle, I think the wind of public support would rapidly disappear from the sails of the anti-evolution movement.

Stephen B. Pruett
Department of Cellular Biology and Anatomy, Louisiana State University Medical Center, 1501 Kings Highway, Shreveport, LA 71130, USA. E-mail: spruet@lsumc.edu

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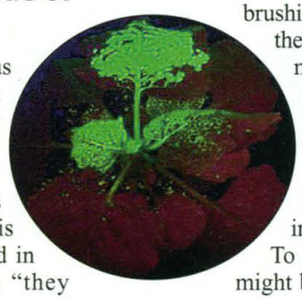
1. T. V. Rajan, *Scientist* **13**, 13 (1999).

Assessing the Spread of Engineered TMV



CREDIT: BIOSOURCE TECHNOLOGIES INC.

In Trisha Gura's News Focus article "New ways to glean medicines from plants" (27 Aug., p. 1347), tobacco mosaic virus (TMV) engineered by Biosource Technologies Inc. to carry human genes is said to be unlikely to spread in the environment because "they [Biosource] found no detectable virus outside of plants after 2 or 3 days...." Presumably the assays were done 2 or 3 days after the plants were sprayed with TMV to infect them. One cannot make any conclusions about the likelihood of engineered TMV spreading from the plants on the basis of such assays. A more meaningful test would be to look for the spread of TMV to susceptible plants (crop or weed hosts) growing near the experimental plants throughout the time these plants are grown.

TMV is not spread from plant to plant by a specific biological vector but, rather, by mechanical means that may involve such diverse agents as the claws of aphid's feet, the hoses used to water plants in the greenhouse, and the hands or clothing of workers who touch healthy plants after handling or brushing against infected plants. Furthermore, the virus can be transmitted mechanically from the dry residue of roots, shoots, or leaves of infected plants after they die and dry out. It also contaminates greenhouse structures, where it survives to infect the next susceptible crop.

To assess the risk of release, one might better ask how far experimental plants are grown from tobacco fields in Kentucky or tomato fields in California and the precautions taken to prevent "traffic" between said fields.

R. N. Campbell
Department of Plant Pathology, University of California, Davis, CA 95616, USA. E-mail: rncampbell@ucdavis.edu

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

In Jon Cohen's News Focus article "Philanthropy's rising tide lifts science" (8 Oct., p. 214), the table entitled "A selection of science-funding philanthropies" on page 215 included the Carnegie Institution of Washington. The Carnegie Institution, however, is not a foundation, but an operating research organization. It does not accept applications for funding from scientists who are not staff members of the institution.

In Eliot Marshall's News of the Week article "Scientific groups endorse test ban" (15 Oct., p. 387), the number of countries that have ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty should have been listed as 26 (not 51), and in the penultimate paragraph, it should have said that "decoupling" a bomb test from the surrounding environment may reduce the seismic signal by as much as a factor of 70 (not by half).