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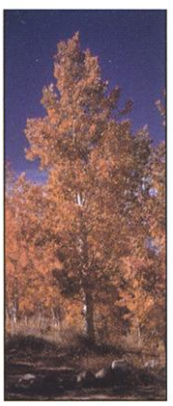
Trees, Homologs, and Poisons

I AM QUOTED OUT OF CONTEXT IN THE recent news article on forest biotechnology (News Focus, 1 Mar., p. 1627) by Charles Mann and Mark Plummer. I indicated that "a tree is essentially a mountain of poisons" to give some context to considerations of the possible ecological effects of new, taxon-specific transgenes that increase pest resistance—not to indicate that dicotyledonous trees such as poplars (genus Populus) are not extensively genomically homologous to well-studied annual dicot plants like *Arabidopsis*. In fact, I recently submitted a proposal for which a primary goal is a detailed comparative genomic analysis of the full *Arabidopsis* and the soon-to-be-determined poplar genome sequences. Woody species such as poplar will certainly have embellished and at least somewhat distinctive genomic content compared with *Arabidopsis* as a result of their different adaptive and phyletic histories, but making use of the structural and functional homologies between annual and woody plants—whether for basic tree physiology or biotechnology—can easily keep generations of tree-loving scientists productively occupied.



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Stocking the Stacks

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES' BATTLE TO KEEP scientific journals on their shelves despite soaring subscription costs and unfavorable exchange rates is the subject of Dennis Normile's recent article ("Libraries seek ways to keep costs down," News of the Week, 18 Jan., p. 429). This scenario is common in developing countries, where university libraries are not able to maintain

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