

NATURAL POLYMERS HARVESTED TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURE



With the IAEA's help, scientists use irradiated natural polymers including seaweed, shrimp shells, cassava starch, and palm oil to make products that help plants grow faster and protect them from diseases. For example, plants treated with oligoalginate (radiation-processed alginates derived from brown seaweed) grow faster and 13% to 56% bigger. Oligoalginates also stop the spread of the tobacco mosaic virus, which infects over 350 different plant species.

Text and Photo: Sasha Henriques, IAEA Division of Public Information