



New canola strain counters frost damage

Researchers within AFNS have developed a new strain of canola that matures earlier in the growing season, reducing the risk of loss of seed yield and low oil quality due to early frost.

Argentine canola is the most common canola crop grown in Canada and is popular with farmers due to its high yield. Unfortunately, it has a relatively long life cycle.

The Canadian climate always carries a measure of unpredictability, and early frost can often result in poor yields and seed oil quality. Researchers have been experimenting with crops that can be taken from seeding to harvest in a shorter time span in order to minimize the potential damages brought about when temperatures drop sooner than expected.

According to Dr. Habibur Rahman, the principal investigator of the project, some innovative thinking was initially required, but now that the plant has gone from the drawing board into potting soil, the results are looking very promising.

“We had to think untraditionally,” said Rahman. “Everyone thought that because the cabbage/cauliflower type plants flowers much later than canola, there was nothing to be worked on with that side of the plant, but I thought, ‘No, there has to be some earliness genes here that we can work with.’”

The new variety matures, on average, a full week earlier than the Argentine strain and could significantly reduce the instances of frost damaged canola crops, improving the bottom line for producers.

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