ON THE COVER

Soybean seed comes in a wide variety of colors and shapes. Although not visually apparent, the composition and quantity of seed components also vary widely among varieties. Sayama et al. (pages 2123–2138) identified a new UDP-sugar-dependent glycosyltransferase gene that is responsible for the bitterness and astringent aftertastes of soy products. The authors show that multiple alleles of the gene locus differ only slightly in their sequences, which regulate sugar donor specificities for the terminal sugar moieties of group A saponins. This genetic diversity provides not only useful tools for improvements in the taste and uses of soybean products, but also new insights for engineering the biochemical activity of the enzyme. The cover image of diverse soybean seeds was taken by Yasutaka Tsubokura.

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