ON THE COVER

Common wild rice (Oryza rufipogon), the wild relative of Asian cultivated rice (Oryza sativa), typically bears long, barbed awns, which aid in seed dispersal and deter bird predation. By contrast, O. sativa cultivars have either no awns or short and barbless awns, which facilitate seed processing and storage and suffer from significant bird predation. Hua et al. (pages 1875–1888) characterized the genetic variation and evolutionary mechanism underlying the transition from the long, barbed awns in wild rice to the short, barbless awns in cultivated rice, providing new insights into rice domestication. The image by Linguo Ye depicts the awnless cultivated rice being pecked by white-rumped munias.

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