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Long-term stability of marker gene expression in *Prunus subhirtella*: a model fruit tree species.

Maghuly F, da Câmara Machado A, Leopold S, Khan MA, Katinger H, Laimer M

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PLANT BIOLOGY



New Finding

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The debate on the long-term effects of genetic engineering on tree species still goes on, and this paper offers important data on the stability of transgenic marker genes. The authors examined transgenic traits in 34 stone fruit trees (*Prunus subhirtella* autumnosa) over a period of 9 years and did not find a single gene-silencing effect - remarkable proof of stability of the inserted genes in enhanced fruit trees in the environment. However, tissue analysis of the mature stone fruit trees revealed that, while they contained one or two copies of the agrobacterium-mediated transgenes, various lengths of the bacterial plasmid backbone were also discovered in 91% of the transgenic events. This means that, although agrobacterium-mediated transgenes are very efficient and remarkably stable, the method is not as precise as previously reported.

Competing interests: None declared

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