

Scientists Develop 'Wind Tree' With Plastic Leaves That Can Generate Electricity

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A group of French engineers has produced a prototype of an artificial tree that uses leaf-shaped turbines to generate power from air currents.

The 'Wind Tree' prototype stands at nearly eight metres tall and is currently planted in the Pleumeur-Bodou commune in Brittany, northwestern France.

Plastic 'leaves' adorn the tree's branches and house tiny blades that move in the breeze, enabling the units to turn, regardless of wind direction.

According to the project's founder, Jérôme Michaud-Larivière, the blades will respond to wind as low as 2 meters per second.

The process is completely silent, making the tree less obtrusive than other wind turbines and suitable for a range of locations, such as gardens, squares, parks, streets and shopping centres.

Mr Michaud-Larivière hopes the tree can one day be combined with other means of power generation such as photovoltaic, and geothermal, combined with energy-efficient buildings.

The Wind tree will be on display in Paris Place de Concorde in May 2015 and is expected to sell for nearly \$43,000.

