

Dutch Researchers Grow Carbon-Hungry Plants to Suck Up Pollution

Source: inhabitat.com

Published: July 29, 2016



The Green Junkie could be able to suck up more pollution due to its many 'hairs.'

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[Air pollution](#) is a problem most cities face, and [plants](#) can be incredibly helpful. But what if there was a super plant even better at sucking up pollution? While some types of ivy and grass already reduce particle pollution and nitrogen dioxide by around 60 and 40 percent respectively, one type of honeysuckle plant may be able to reduce pollution even more. Researchers from the [AMS Institute, MyEarth](#), and [Wageningen UR](#) are looking at the Green Junkie, a plant that reportedly craves [carbon dioxide](#).

The Green Junkie has lots of “hairs,” which take in pollutants. Dutch company MyEarth draws on an organic fertilizer made with [Amsterdam](#) plant waste to turn a gene in the Green Junkie on to increase its number of plant hairs. AMS Institute funded the plant, and together the two groups are collaborating with Wageningen UR. They’re starting to test the Green Junkie on Amsterdam city streets.

Amsterdam has already taken steps to combat [vehicle pollution](#). By 2025, their bus fleet will run on wind and [solar energy](#). Selling gas-guzzling cars won’t be allowed in about ten years. But

AMS Institute's Emily Parry notes tackling air pollution by targeting vehicles is a long-term process. The plants may be able to help clean city air far sooner.

Now tests will show how the plants perform in actual city conditions. Parry told Co.Exist, "Plants are living organisms, and weather is so changeable, that's something very difficult to simulate in the lab. Out in the open, you might have kids kicking their ball against the plant, or maybe people will start picking flowers. It's really exciting to see what will happen."

The Green Junkie may be able to take in more pollutants than other plants, but will it really make a difference overall in cities? That's what Wageningen UR scientists will scrutinize closely as they continue to study the plant.
