

# Ozone thinning having impact on plants

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The pollution that causes ozone depletion is declining, but the warming of the atmosphere will see a global thinning of the ozone layer, says a U.N. panel.

The panel of 24 scientists, meeting in Alexandra, New Zealand, is preparing to report to the United Nations on changes to the ozone layer and subsequent consequences.

The scientists say one discovery has turned traditional thinking on its head -- food plants across the world are developing a poisonous protective layer to shield against harmful ultraviolet rays, the Wellington Dominion Post reported.

It had been believed that radiation only had a negative effect on plants, but scientists now say a screening pigment produced by most plants can be toxic to predators and help with disease prevention -- which could result in less use of pesticides and fungicides.

Scientists have not detected negative effects on humans, but are uncertain if the increased levels of toxins might have impact the wider food chain.

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