

Ignition for Colombian yucca car

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Yucca plants, seen here in California in 2008. After a three-year slog Colombian scientists have revved up a car that runs on yucca-derived ethanol, spurring hopes that the Latin American staple could be transformed into an abundant fuel.

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Boffins at the International Center for Tropical [Agriculture](#) (CIAT) have adopted a commercial car to run on hydrated [ethanol](#), based on [yucca](#) -- a carbohydrate-rich plant root that is also known as cassava or manioc.

The vehicle has clocked up 700 kilometers (435 miles) without major hitches CIAT said.

The tuber is more commonly found on plates in low-land and tropical regions of [Latin America](#), where it is deep fried, boiled or mashed to make a sweeter and starchier alternative to the potato.

Cars can be adopted to use the fuel with a 120 dollar kit that can be bought over the Internet CIAT said, although their pilot refinery, in western Colombia, is currently producing just 300 liters (79 gallons) a day.

Brazil, which has long led in the charge on biofuels, is Latin America's largest yucca producer, with 12 percent of world production.

Nigeria and Thailand are also large producers.

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