

EADS to unveil algae-powered aircraft

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A scientist oversees tests on algae specimens. The technical director of European aerospace giant EADS said it is poised to unveil a "hybrid" aircraft which runs on algae fuel, a world first.

European aerospace giant EADS is poised to unveil a "hybrid" aircraft which runs on algae fuel, a world first, its technical director said on Friday.

The firm will present the machine at the Berlin Air Show (ILA) that runs from June 9 to 13, Jean Botti told the Die Welt daily.

"At the ILA, we are going to fly for the first time a craft with biofuel that has been made 100 percent from algae. That is a world premiere," Botti said.

"We need a paradigm shift in the aviation industry. We soon need an

alternative to kerosene," he said, adding: "If 10 percent of our fleet is flying with biofuel in 2040, I would be extremely happy."

Die Welt had reported the aircraft was a helicopter, but company spokesman Gregor Kursell later told AFP that the technology would be used only in planes.

Slimy, fast-growing and full of fat, algae is quickly gaining ground as a potential renewable energy source.

Experts say it is also potentially useful for its ability to gobble up carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, while living happily in places not needed for food crops.

"I have high hopes for algae," said Botti.

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