

Improving health with the power of purple

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A purple tomato grown by Professor Zheng-Hui He as part of his biology research.

Tomato plants, bearing rich purple fruit, line the inside of Biology Professor Zheng-Hui He's lab in the San Francisco State University Greenhouse. The unusually colored plants are the result of He's research, exploring how to grow purple fruits and vegetables, enriched with the same health-promoting pigment that gives blueberries their purple color.

"What's special about this purple pigment is that scientists have found that it is a powerful antioxidant, helping the human body to fight diseases, such as cancer and [cardiovascular disease](#), and to deal with stress," He said. "We're testing how to grow purple tomatoes without

genetic modification."

The tomatoes are tested in the lab, to see how different water, soil and light conditions affect the amount of purple pigment in the fruit, and Professor He will also be investigating what [genes](#) regulate the pigment production.

"We believe that having tasty, purple produce available, which is organic and affordable, can do a great good for people's health," He said.

Watch the video of Professor He's purple tomatoes research:

Provided by San Francisco State University

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