

# Tapping into the rubber plant genome

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Scientists have sequenced the draft genome sequence of the rubber tree *Hevea brasiliensis*, the major commercial source of natural rubber. Rubber is an indispensable commodity that is used in manufacture worldwide, billions dollar industry. The plant has played a vital role in the world economy since 1876. Currently Asia accounts for about 93% of global supply of rubber.

The manuscript describing the draft genome is published in [BMC Genomics](#). The team identify around 12.7% of the almost 70,000 genes as unique, and outline those associated with rubber biosynthesis, rubber wood formation, [disease resistance](#) and allergenicity.

The rubber industry is affected by rubber blight – a [fungal disease](#) – and natural rubber allergenicity, a global medical concern for those repeatedly exposed to latex-containing products (e.g., gloves).

Ahmad Yamin Rahman and colleagues believe that this draft genome information will accelerate the development of high-yielding natural rubber plants. This will lead to assistance in latex production, wood development, disease resistance and allergenicity.

**More information:**

[www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2164/14/75/abstract](http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2164/14/75/abstract)

Source: ResearchSEA

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