

# A new sense of urgency for energy cane and other energy crops

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"Energy cane" may sound like a trendy sports drink, but it actually is among a new generation of energy crops that could yield up to 5 times more ethanol per acre than corn. They are the topic of the cover story in this week's *Chemical & Engineering News*. C&EN is the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, the world's largest scientific society.

C&EN Senior Editor Melody M. Bomgardner explains that energy cane is a new, high-fiber variety of sugarcane now being grown in California's Imperial Valley. Scientists bred it specifically as an "energy crop," a genre that includes the giant reed *Arundo donax*, napier grass, switchgrass and hybrid poplar. Far beyond providing raw material for biobased fuels, such crops also have potential for supplying inexpensive, abundant, sustainable raw materials—"feedstocks" in chemical parlance—like ethylene and propylene. They become ingredients in hundreds of everyday products, ranging from smartphones and televisions to clothing, carpeting and batteries.

The story explains how the biobased fuels and chemicals industry envisions substituting [energy crops](#) for oil and natural gas, the traditional sources of such feedstocks. It describes how those efforts are taking on a new sense of urgency because abundant, less-expensive shale gas may make it difficult for biobased feedstocks to compete.

**More information:** "Chasing Cheap Feedstocks"  
[cen.acs.org/articles/91/i32/Se ... dstocks-Compete.html](http://cen.acs.org/articles/91/i32/Se...dstocks-Compete.html)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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