

## UK firm grows potato and tomato on the same plant

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**Singapore:** Here is a great news for French fries fans and ketch-up lovers. Imagine a single plant yielding juicy cherry-sized tomatoes and delicious white potatoes simultaneously in a single plant! This real hybrid variety called as 'TomTato', has been developed by Thompson & Morgan, a UK-based seed and plant company.

TomTato is a grafted plant, giving out tomatoes on top and potatoes underneath the ground. This hybrid is simply produced by grafting a tomato and potato plant together, a technique that is already very common amongst several crops, such as roses and fruit trees.

Talking about the research behind creating this Frankensteinian hybrid plant, Mr Michael Perry, product manager, Thompson & Morgan, told *BioSpectrum*, "We investigated professional grafting companies for a few years before finding a company we trusted in carrying out the technical grafting process. Once we had this, we trialed a range of varieties to make sure we had two compatible varieties."

The TomTato hybrid has been a success as both, potato and tomato, are close relatives, descending from the same plant family and having same number of chromosomes.

TomTato is said to be easily cultivable either in containers or in the open ground just as any other tomato plant. They can be grown in any climate that potatoes and tomatoes are usually grown in. Mr Perry said that these hybrid crops are identical to the usual tomatoes and potatoes, and that the crops have been certified to be safe for human consumption.

A TomTato plant takes four months to produce tomatoes and about five months to produce potatoes. Mr Perry assured that there were no genetic modifications carried out in the creation of TomTato. Currently, TomTato is available by mail order only in the UK, and is priced at \$24.05 (£14.99).