



The origin of species

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Virtually all of the crops that feed the world are significantly different from the plants initially subjected to domestication. Through selective breeding several genetic mutants were selected in order to achieve greater productivity and better characteristics. In fact, the sequencing of the genome of different crops as well as the genome of their feral counterparts illustrates well the magnitude of the genetic difference that was imposed during domestication. Therefore, what we consider “natural” today is already the product of human intervention over thousands of years*.

The recent development of genome editing tools, such as CRISPR-Cas9 technology, allows efficient modification of the genomic content of organisms in a highly controlled way. The Origin of Species brings CRISPR-Cas9 technology as an art media, allowing the edition of mutations selected by domestication. Such mutations are identified with bioinformatics tools, comparing the genome of modern organisms and the feral counterparts from which it was selected. This way a precise genetic intervention is used to create an organism more “natural”.

* This work was inspired by “Breeding for Wildness” by George Gessert, consisting on the selective breeding of ornamental flowers towards their ancestral characteristics.

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