

At their best papayas can create phenomenal eating experiences, but at their worst the fruit can be quite astringent and leave an unpleasant aftertaste.

Researchers at Griffith University in the state of Queensland, Australia, have been working for many years to develop varieties that leave a lasting - and importantly positive - impression on consumers.

While the scientists are not using transgenic genetic modification techniques, it is using molecular science to unlock gene sequences that code 'the secret of sweetness' in the tropical fruit, known in Australia as 'pawpaw'.

The research from [Professor Rebecca Ford](#), Dr Chat Kanchanaudomkan and their team seeks to find varieties that could be so sweet that they compete directly with honeydew melons and mangoes.

This is a fairly ambitious goal in Australia, where according to Nielsen research mangoes recorded the fastest dollar sales of any fresh produce item last year, well ahead of the second-fastest riser blueberries.

"We're unravelling the sweetness pathway using traditional breeding and advanced molecular gene selection and this knowledge could then be applied to other crops," says Professor Ford.

"We're are also producing papaya that leaves the existing bland or astringent tasting varieties far behind.

"Mango is going to get a run for its money."



Professor Rebecca Ford.