



PBL NEWS



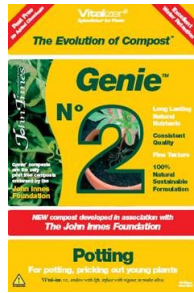
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The Genie is out! The first peat-free compost endorsed by the John Innes Foundation. **Genie™ - The Evolution of Compost™**

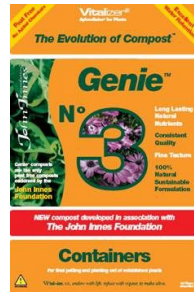
PBL has developed a novel range of garden composts which are peat-free, soil-free and made completely from recycled, UK-sourced materials. The new range, brand-named Genie™, overcomes the environmental disadvantages of the original John Innes composts, which were developed in the 1930's. The formulations have been rigorously tested at the John Innes Centre and will be manufactured by Vital Earth (Derby) Ltd under licence from PBL and marketed under the Genie™ brand-name. The range comprises:



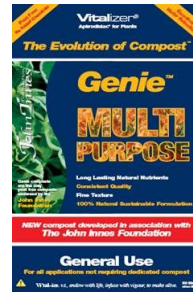
Genie™ No 1 for sowing seeds



Genie™ No 2 for potting



Genie™ No 3 for established plants and containers



and the versatile Genie™ Multipurpose compost

The Genie™ range was launched in September 2006 at the GLEE garden and leisure exhibition at the NEC Birmingham.

PBL launches the IFR Model Gut services to the Food and Pharma industries

The IFR Model Gut, the development of which has been funded and managed by PBL for the last 2 years has recently generated significant press coverage as a result of its launch as a service operation based in the Norwich BioIncubator. Please see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/6136546.stm>.

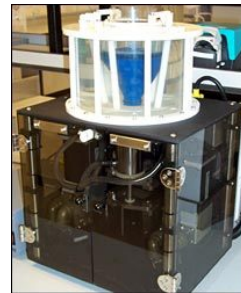
PBL and the BBSRC have provided the funds to design and build this innovative instrument that simulates the chemical, biochemical and physical processes at work in the human stomach and small intestine during digestion.

The Model Gut has numerous possible applications within the food and pharmaceutical industries and is now being marketed as a service to evaluate novel and existing foodstuffs as well as new pharmaceuticals and/or drug delivery systems.

Dr Peter Ellis, an independent nutritionist from King's College, London commented that "This is an important tool that will allow us to understand what happens in the gut".

The project has already attracted interest from a number of large food and pharmaceutical companies and aim is to generate further business opportunities in the near future. PBL is looking to form a select number of key, strategic, development relationships with industrial partners in target user sectors.

For more information contact Dr Jan Chojcecki (ajsc@pbltechnology.com).



JIC scientists develop revolutionary tool to predict Heterosis in hybrid crops

Prof Ian Bancroft and colleagues at the John Innes Centre, UK have developed a revolutionary new method to predict heterosis. The method can be used to accurately predict hybrid vigour for a range of important crop performance traits, including yield. PBL has funded the development of this work, extending from the original work in Arabidopsis, to prove that the technology also worked accurately in the globally important crop, maize. PBL is now offering licences to the seed and plant breeding industry to use this technology to assist the breeding and development of a wide range of crops, worldwide.

For more information contact Dr Jan Chojcecki (ajsc@pbltechnology.com).

Innovation in life sciences

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IP protection

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Young scientists from Rothamsted Research win national competition with idea for controlling garden slugs

Scientists from Rothamsted Research have won this year's Biotechnology Young Entrepreneur's Scheme business plan competition. The team were advised on intellectual property aspects of their plan by PBL's patent manager, Gerard Bencen. This is the third time in four years that the winner of this prestigious competition has been coached by PBL.

The young Rothamsted scientists walked away with prizes including £1,000 after impressing judges at the final of Biotechnology YES with their hypothetical business plan for a company called PhytoFend and its revolutionary product called SlugFast, a genetically modified Hosta plant proven to be a highly effective means of slug control. Hosta is naturally attractive to slugs and the SlugFast variety has been transformed to express a novel appetite suppressing protein, the plant attracts slugs and, upon ingestion, causes them to stop feeding.

New research published on novel enzyme involved in producing antifungal compound in oats

New research led by Professor Anne Osbourn at the John Innes Centre (Norwich UK) has recently been published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS Dec 5, 2006, vol 103, no 49, pp18,848-18,853) describing a novel cytochrome P450 enzyme found in oats, called Sad2, that is involved in the synthesis of avenacin in the roots which protects the plant against the fungal disease "take-all."



Oat root producing avenacin

The Sad2 gene technology is the subject of a pending worldwide patent application (Publication Number WO 2006/044508) assigned to PBL, who are working closely with Dupont to develop the commercial applications of this technology.

For more information contact Dr Adam Hajjar (adam@pbltechnology.com).

PBL spin-outs

Chameleon Biosurfaces has secured a new £0.5m investment led by London Seed Capital Polymer coatings company Chameleon BioSurfaces has secured a further £500,000 of investment funding, enabling it to continue development of its patented polymer coatings. This innovative technology addresses the key adhesion, biocompatibility and drug elution issues plaguing the \$5bn Drug Eluting Stent market. The funding will be used to advance the development of the next generation of medical device coatings for drug eluting stents through the application of world-leading surface and electrochemistry expertise developed by Prof Chris Pickett while at the John Innes Centre.

Joint winners of EEDA Running the Gauntlet competition

Two spin-out companies established by PBL out of John Innes Centre technology have been announced as joint winners in the East of England Development Agency's Running the Gauntlet Competition. Chameleon Biosurfaces Limited (chameleonbio.com) and Novacta Biosystems Limited (novactabio.com) are among the six winning companies that between them will receive a total of £1m investment from the regional venture fund, CREATE. To have two winners is a significant recognition of PBL's enterprise establishment activity.

Novel Wound Dressing Materials Produced from Pea Starch

A team of researchers led by Professor Cliff Hedley at the John Innes Centre (Norwich, UK) has developed range of novel starch-based films with potential applications as wound dressing materials.



The films comprised of pea starch, glycerol and water, have a unique combination of characteristics making them suitable for use in a wound dressing environment.

PBL has teamed up with Polymer Health Technology, a manufacturer and supplier of materials for the wound dressing industry, in order to transfer the technology out of the laboratory.

For more information contact Dr Adam Hajjar (adam@pbltechnology.com).

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