

## Tech &amp; Science

# Scientists Work to Stop Chocolate From Going Extinct by 2050

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Chocolate might be facing a not-so-sweet future.

Business Insider [reports](#) that cacao plants could disappear by as early as 2050 as a result of warmer temperatures and weather conditions, prompting scientists at the [University of California–Berkeley](#) to team with Mars, Inc. – a food and candy company known for Snickers and M&M's – to work toward a solution.

Berkeley researchers are reportedly exploring the use of a new gene-editing technology, CRISPR, to manipulate the DNA of cacao plants. If successful, scientists say the crop's seedlings would be able to survive in drier and hotter climates.

Cacao plants, according to [the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#), are sensitive. In fact, cacao trees can only grow about 20 degrees north and south of the equator, and need rainforest-like conditions, or "fairly uniform temperatures, high humidity, abundant rain, nitrogen-rich soil, and protection from wind."

Cacao is particularly vulnerable to global warming because of its dependence on that "narrow strip of rainforested land" and little forgiveness for small shifts in climate, Business Insider notes. The West African countries of Côte d'Ivoire and [Ghana](#) are currently among the [leading producers of chocolate](#), generating more than half of the world's supply, according to NOAA.

Barry Parkin, Mars' chief sustainability officer, [told Business Insider](#) the company is "trying to go all in" in its efforts to support sustainability and combat climate change.

"There are obviously commitments the world is leaning into but, frankly, we don't think we're getting there fast enough collectively," he said.