



Algae energy?

Algae for biofuels was declared dead about a decade ago. It was said to be [physically impossible](#), unless genetic engineering was involved, which brings [the risk of runaway algal blooms](#).

That hasn't stopped people from trying, though. A species of nannochloropsis has recently been [stripped of redundant genes to create a cell factory](#) that can more efficiently produce oil, while in the UK, Phycobloom wants to [transform algae to continually produce fuel](#), rather than killing them to squeeze out the oil just once.

As the world of renewable energy turns towards green hydrogen, algae are seen [as a possible feedstock](#) here as well. Alternatively, [seaweed is also seen as a possible battery of the future](#).

None of these technologies are anywhere near production level, but the ever-increasing despair over the lack of viable options to decarbonise industries that are difficult to electrify means that we will continue to see research and start-ups trying to fill the gap.



Steven Hermans,
Editor

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BUSINESS

Microalgae scale-ups, seaweed for salty soils

Scottish MiAlgae, producing Omega-3 for the aquaculture industry, [eyes further expansion](#).

In Singapore, Sophie's Bionutrients [starts producing 10 tonnes of protein flour per month](#).

[Waddenwier](#) grows potatoes and carrots in soil that is normally too salty to do so, by adding seaweed. They also grow the salt-loving sea banana.

INVESTMENT

Seaweed altproteins to investor's taste

Akua, producer of the Kelp Burger, [has already raised 500 000\\$ through](#)

[crowdfunding](#), with 25 days to go. That fits in a larger trend: altprotein companies have seen [a 300% growth in investment](#) in 2020 vs 2019.

In similar news, the [Dutch Weed Burger](#) last month found its way to the shelves of The Netherlands' biggest supermarket chain.

SCIENCE

Seaweed vs Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's is caused by amyloid beta plaques in the brain, and certain seaweed sterols are [very good at removing those plaques](#) (use auto-translate captions for English - or [look here for a summary](#)).

[A Chinese Alzheimer's drug is being tested in the US right now](#). While it also uses seaweed extracts, it is actually not targeting the brain directly, but works by restoring balance to the gutbiome.

Also: a "kelp elevator" that brings seaweed to the surface and then into the deep during different stages of growth, [could yield 4 times more kelp](#).

P.S.

It's [an air-purifying algae chandelier](#).



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