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THE DISTILLERY

This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Drug platforms			
Modifying medicinal plants to generate new halogenated natural products	Plants engineered to express bacterial enzymes could be used to generate modified natural product–derived therapeutics. In *Catharanthus roseus*, the source of the microtubule-inhibiting alkaloid drug vincristine, expression of genes encoding bacterial halogenases led to the production of new chlorinated and brominated alkaloids. Next steps include adapting the technique to other plant species and screening newly generated analogs. *SciBX* 3(45); doi:10.1038/scibx.2010.1368 Published online Nov. 18, 2010	Unpatented; licensing status unavailable	Runguphan, W. *et al. Nature*; published online Nov. 4, 2010; doi:10.1038/nature09524 **Contact:** Sarah E. O'Connor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass. e-mail: soc@mit.edu