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## Of ozone holes and Triffids

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William Wells

Email: wells@biotext.com

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Depletion of stratospheric ozone increases the amount of ultraviolet-B (UV-B) irradiation experienced on Earth. Now Ries *et al.* report in the 6 July *Nature* that increased UV-B exposure can reduce the genomic stability of plants (*Nature* 2000, **406**:98-101). They use a reporter gene inserted as a tandem or inverted repeat as a probe to detect 1.7-fold to 14-fold increases in homologous recombination after increasing UV-B levels. The plant germline is protected from UV-B for much of its life, and yet the higher levels of UV-B also cause a 4-10-fold increase in germline recombination.

## References

1. Increased summertime UV radiation in New Zealand in response to ozone loss.
2. *Nature*, [<http://www.nature.com/nature/>]