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Cutting down Scarecrows

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Micro-RNAs (miRNAs) have been found in plants, animals and microorganisms, but very few have been functionally characterized. In the September 20 *Science*, Llave *et al.* describe a specific function for the *Arabidopsis* miRNA 39, which accumulates in inflorescence tissue and is produced from an intergenic region in chromosome III (*Science* 2002, **297**:2053-2056). The miRNA 39 sequence is perfectly complementary to an internal sequence in mRNAs encoding three members of the Scarecrow-like (SCL) transcription factor family. Llave *et al.* show that miRNA 39 guides the internal cleavage of target *SCL* mRNAs; they propose that miRNA 39 activity might involve the RISC complex (RNA-induced silencing complex) used in RNA silencing.

References

1. microRNAs: tiny regulators with great potential.
2. *Science* , [<http://www.sciencemag.org>]
3. Endogenous and Silencing-Associated Small RNAs in Plants