

Chinese scientists complete genome sequencing for coconut

Chinese scientists announced Thursday that they had completed sequencing the genome of the coconut.

Scientists from the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences sequenced and assembled the genome of the coconut, laying solid foundations for further research of functional genes of the coconut and Palmae family.

A genome is the full complement of an organism's DNA – complex molecules that direct the formation and function of all living organisms. The size of an organism's genome is measured by the number of bases it contains – base pairs being the building blocks of DNA.

"We found 282 unique genome families in the coconut," said Yang Yaodong, a researcher with the academy.

"The completion of the genome sequencing is like finishing drawing a map of coconut genes," Yang said. "Following the map, scientists will be able to breed more high-yield, drought-enduring, and disease-resistant species, with a shorter breeding cycle."

Scientists began the genome sequencing project more than 4 years ago. The research paper was published in Giga Science journal.