India develops wilt-resistant guava

Plant scientists in the Indian city of Lucknow have been trialling guava plant hybrids to create a variety resistant to wilt disease.

Guava is the sixth most cultivated fruit in India but in recent years the prevalence of wilt disease has been the bane of growers in the country.

Now the Central Institute for Sub-tropical Horticulture (CISH) in Lucknow has developed a hybrid variety of wilt-resistant guava plants, Indian Express reported.

Wilt is a soil-borne disease that is caused by several pathogens and plant death occurs quickly after infection.

The new plant hybrid is expected to help increase the lifespan of guava orchards in northern India, where the problem of wilt is more common.

"An inter-specific hybrid rootstock of guava has been derived by crossing the normal variety of guava with its wild relative called psyllium molle, which has a wilt-resistant gene in it," said CISH principal scientist Dr Shailendra Rajan.

"Its field results were encouraging."