Dear Mr Corum

We are early career scientists, conducting research around the UK on a variety of topics including plant genetics and food security. We write firstly to applaud the Horniman Museum for engaging young people in the debate on GM crops and the wider issues of food security via your interactive and accessible exhibition ‘Plantastic’.

However, we hold some concerns over particular aspects of the exhibition that provide non-evidence based information. We feel that some of the material displayed brings out past misconceptions and unhelpful misrepresentations of GM crops.

Specifically in the ‘Thorny Issues’ section:

- **Scientist and doctor**: For most scientists GM is not unnatural in any way as we have been altering crops for thousands of years via breeding. With regards to toxicity and allergenicity GM crops must go through a rigorous safety assessment by The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).
- **Farmer**: Using GM varieties can result in decreased use of fertiliser and pesticide which decreases the environmental impact of their farming practices and is therefore an additional benefit.
- **Trade organisation**: Plant breeder’s rights and patents apply equally to non-GM varieties and hence IP and monopolisation are not GM specific issues or reasons to not use them.
- **Agronomist**: We face a significant challenge comprising several factors that need to be addressed using numerous scientific, ecological, technical and social approaches. GM provides us with only one tool.

Voice of Young Science (VoYS) is a network for early career researchers (PhD students, post-docs or equivalent in first job) in all sciences, engineering and medicine. Many of our members are plant scientists both highly knowledgeable on GM crops and able communicators who would be more than willing to assist the Horniman Museum in increasing the weight of sensible, evidence-based opinion in its exhibit. You will also find more information on the [www.senseaboutscience.org](http://www.senseaboutscience.org) website where we have published a ‘Making sense of GM’ guide.

Would you be willing to meet with some of us and discuss how we can help to improve the exhibition?
Yours sincerely

Matt Audley  
Plant scientist & VoYS member

Chelsea Snell  
Food scientist & VoYS member

and fellow VoYS members who are calling on you to improve the exhibition

Suvi Honkanen  
PhD student in plant genetics & VoYS Member

Kevin Duggan  
PhD candidate in cognitive neuroscience & VoYS Member

Anna Tiley  
Plant Pathologist & VoYS Member

Dr Marc Jones  
Physicist & VoYS Member

Tsvetomila Mateeva  
PhD student in Earth science & VoYS Member

Luke Bell  
Food & Plant Scientist & VoYS Member

Megan De Ste Croix  
Genetic Microbiologist & VoYS Member

Kristina Popova  
Biochemist and Data journalist & VoYS Member

Imrane Shurdhani  
Biochemical Engineer & VoYS Member

Frances Crane  
Biomedical Engineer & VoYS Member

Theresia H Mina  
Clinical Scientist & VoYS Member

Dale Knight  
Biochemist & VoYS Member

Mabon Elis  
Plant Scientist & VoYS Member

Gabriel Kaufman  
Immunologist & VoYS Member

Mrs Shona Whittam  
Radiotherapy Physicist & VoYS Member

Dr Margaret Heslin  
Epidemiologist & VoYS Member

Dr K Shipman  
Medical doctor & VoYS Member

Lucy Ford  
Evolutionary Biologist & VoYS Member

Janine Bowring  
Microbiologist & VoYS Member

Romy Lorenz  
Neuroscientist & VoYS Member

Naomi Penfold  
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Dominic Thorrington  
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Caroline Wood  
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Rebecca Gladstone  
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Stephanie Smith  
PhD student in Plant Science & VoYS Member

Lauren Biermann  
Earth Systems Scientist & VoYS Member

Dr Philip B. Sellars  
R&D Chemist & VoYS Member

Stefan Piatek  
Molecular Biology and Epigenetics & VoYS Member

Clement Gravouil  
Plant Pathologist & VoYS Member

Arsalan Khan  
Food Technologist & VoYS Member

Robert Temperton  
Physicist & VoYS Member

Gene Nolis  
Materials Scientist & VoYS Member