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# Biodiesel from algae

High oil prices and advances in biotech over the past decade have refueled the algae biofuel race.

## The process

- 1 After initial growth, algae is deprived of nutrients to produce a greater oil yield
- 2 Extraction of oil  
A press produces 70-75% of the oils from the plant
- 3 Solvents used to separate sugar from oil; solvents then evaporate
- 4 Oil is ready  
Can be used as oil directly in diesel engines or refined further into fuel

**Yield of various plant oils**  
(Gallons per hectare)

Soy	118
Safflower	206
Sunflower	251
Castor	373
Coconut	605
Palm	1,572
Algae	26,417

**About algae**

- Among the fastest growing plants; about 50% of their weight is oil
- Contains no sulfur; non toxic; highly biodegradable
- Algae fuel is also known as algal fuel or oilgae

Source: oilgae.com, MCT Photo Service  
Graphic: Scott Bell

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