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ALGAL CARBON SINK RESEMBLES PARISIAN ADVERTISING COLUMN

 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The city of Paris is testing a Morris column filled with micro algae that uses photosynthesis as a carbon capture method.

One of the less obvious sources of biofuel currently being researched involves harnessing the power of algae, which we recently covered being used as a **fuel** for a wooden motorcycle, and in France another potential use for the versatile organisms is being tested — carbon capture.

The project is a collaboration between **Fermentalg** and **SUEZ**, both France-based, and aims to improve air-quality on two fronts: cleaning pollutants from localized areas and providing an alternative to fossil fuel reliance (thereby reducing future ‘dirty’ fuel output). The project has seen the micro algae (large water-filled objects with the green algae inside) placed inside a huge column resembling the famous Morris column at a busy intersection in the 14th arrondissement in Paris. The green urban furniture harnesses the power of the algal biomass to capture the carbon pollutants produced by the thousands of vehicles that travel by daily. The algae are microscopic organisms that use photosynthesis like plants in a process that uses up carbon dioxide to produce oxygen. The energy from this reaction can then be used to drive the second phase of the project: after the algal population has grown and transformed that carbon dioxide into useful biomass for a few months, the algae themselves can then be used to produce clean energy by entering sewage treatment facilities and being transformed into natural gases. The whole process simply requires a column filled with water and algae, with the algal photosynthesis driven naturally by the sun each of which, Fermentalg claim, will be capable of capturing the same amount of carbon as a hundred trees per year. If tests this year prove successful, more columns will be deployed in urban centres soon.

So algae is a versatile source of innovation — even when algal blooms take over streams, an often deadly process for other organisms, one company we've covered is removing that algae and making shoes out of them. Where else could we see the power of these microorganisms being used in business?

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