



Edible packaging

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KOMBUCHA IS BEING USED TO CREATE EDIBLE PACKAGING

 SUSTAINABILITY

Design student has developed a way of using the kombucha process to produce edible food packaging.

Kombucha has become a popular drink. The fermented tea is believed to bring health benefits, and now it could be used to reduce packaging waste with a ‘growing pack’.

Roza Janusz has developed a modified version of the kombucha process. Making kombucha involves using a yeast starter to drive bacterial fermentation. This yeast starter is known as a ‘scoby’. Janusz’s process, which takes two weeks, creates large thin layers of these scobies. The scoby is completely edible. Once removed from the growth tanks, the scoby can dry out and is flexible enough to wrap around other objects.

Janusz has shown that the scoby layer can successfully replace plastic packaging in food products. Furthermore, the packaging could even cook with the contents inside, adding an extra ingredient to pre-prepared meals. The slight acidity of the scoby helps preserve it over a long period — Janusz claims that her first prototype scoby is still edible six months after she made it.

The process is easy to replicate almost anywhere, requiring little more than shallow tubs and the basic ingredients. Because of this, farmers and other fresh food distributors could make their own scoby packaging on-site. Users could also make it at home, as the scoby grows at room temperature and doesn’t require any light or much attention.

Janusz developed her growing packaging as part of her studies as a design student. Janusz is seeking commercial partners to trial her system.

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