Science & Technology

The Next Trend in Eco Fashion

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|
Spring/Summer 2018



AlgiKnit

The next trend in eco fashion could be footwear made of kelp, whose fibrous blades a team of Columbia researchers has turned into a strong and supple thread. The researchers, led by Theanne Schiros, who teaches at both Columbia Engineering and the Fashion Institute of Technology, say that algae-based fabric could be used to produce any number of biodegradable types of clothing. The mass harvesting of kelp, meanwhile, would give coastal communities around the world incentive to preserve their local ecologies and provide work for fishermen in the off-season. A startup co-led by Schiros, called AlgiKnit, recently won twenty-five thousand dollars in *National Geographic*'s Chasing Genius Challenge to perfect its plans for manufacturing kelp-based sneakers (a prototype of which is pictured above), shirts, and accessories.

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