



Some of the most widely used anti-inflammatory drugs, which are inadvertently finding their way into the environment, have been shown to significantly affect crop growth.

Researchers from the University of Exeter say this is especially worrisome because waste management systems are unable to remove drugs like diclofenac and ibuprofen from sewage in treatment plants.

Sewage sludge is increasingly being used as fertilizer, while waste water is often used to irrigate crops.

“The huge amounts of pharmaceuticals we use ultimately end up in the environment, yet we know very little about their effects on flora and fauna,” said Clare Redshaw, one of the scientists leading the project at the Medical School’s European Center for Environment and Human Health.

The researchers focused on lettuce and radish plants and how several commonly prescribed drugs affected them.

They found that drugs from the fenamic acid class affected the growth of radish roots, while ibuprofen had a strong influence on the early root development of lettuce.

Photo: Archive



Sewage sludge used in agriculture may contain prescription drugs that are affecting plant growth, according to new research.