Read in 3 Minutes. Take Notes.

Scientists have been testing vegetable oil as a source of fuel for cars since the early 1900s. However, some key factors indicate that vegetable oil is not an ideal source of fuel.

First, using vegetable oil as fuel requires the installation of special equipment in a vehide, which can be quite costly. A person can expect to pay as much as $1,600 for basic equipment,-including a fuel tank, filters, fuel lines, and sensors. Also, when vegetable oil is used as fuel, impurities within the oil can cause the equipment to become dogged over time. These pieces of equipment must be fixed or replaced, which makes regular maintenance more expensive.

Next, using vegetable oil as fuel for cars can be a complicated process. In order for the vehicle to function properly, the special equipment must be turned on when first starting the vehicle and turned off several minutes before stopping. The amount of detail required to use the equipment requires a high level of attention.

Another issue is that using vegetable oil as fuel has the potential to reduce the availability of food crops. Most vegetable oil used for fuel comes from crops that are also used for food, such as corn and sunflowers. In regular production, it takes more than 400 sunflower plants to make just one gallon of sunflower oil. If this vegetable oil were to be used primarily for fuel, then the price of some foods that use the oil, such as french fries or salad dressings, could increase dramatically.

Source: Collins