

Title Colour and pigments of medicinal plants and the postharvest practices for their preservation: a review

Author S. Mohana Lakshmi, C.K. Ashok Kumar, R.A. Dickson and Subhash C. Mandal

Citation Stewart Postharvest Review, Volume 2, Number 5, October 2006, pp. 1-6(6)

Keyword Medicinal plants; colour and pigments; postharvest practices

Abstract

Purpose of the review: In addition to colouring foods, natural plant pigments are medically active. Different colours appearing in different parts of the plants indicate the presence of various secondary metabolites. The intensity of the colour is directly proportional to the quantity of the secondary metabolites, which are known for their considerable medicinal value. The present review focuses on the different plant pigments known for their pharmacological significance and their recently-documented postharvest practices.

Main findings: It is desirable to maintain the colour of medicinal plants until they reach the point of consumption. Good postharvest practices can maintain the colours in medicinal plants.

Direction for further research: Conventional plant breeding, agronomic practices or genetic manipulation of these plants can be used in conjunction with postharvest practices to optimise the production of the medicinally active colour and pigments.