

## Natural colours for food additives

**Geeta Biradar, Pavithra C.B. and Vinaya Kumar Reddy P**  
Indian Institute of Horticulture Research, India

Natural food colours refer to the dyes obtained from vegetables, animals or minerals, capable of colouring food, drugs or cosmetics. The name 'natural food colours' stands correct as all these natural food colours are obtained using only naturally available products. Usually they are extracted from natural things like seeds, fruits, vegetables, leaves, insects, algae, etc. As per FDA colour pigments having a natural origin are exempt from certification. There are 26 colours permitted to be used in food and 28 to be used in cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. A few commonly used natural colours are Annatto (seed), turmeric, beet juice (root), red Cabbage (vegetable), spinach (leaf) and caramel. All these colours are obtained from some or the other natural products. Easy availability of these food dyes is also one of the reasons for their popularity. They are also easy to prepare at home. For example, saffron and dark yellow colour can be prepared easily by boiling saffron in water for around ten minutes, red colour can be extracted from carrot, deep red from beet root, so and so forth. Spices like turmeric and saffron were traditionally used in households for cooking everyday meals. They lend an appealing colour to the food. Another very important characteristic of the natural food colours is that they are safe to use as food additives. Since they are natural derivatives, they are free of any harmful side effects. Due to these reasons there is growing demand for natural food colours compared to synthetic food colours.

b4ugeeta@gmail.com