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VANILLA

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1.0 Introduction

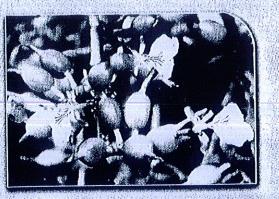
Vanilla, the most important and popular flavoring material and spice of commerce is primarily obtained from the fully grown but unripened fruits (capsules, commonly referred to as beans) of the climbing orchid Vanilla planifolia Andrews (syn. V. fragrans Salisb.), after fermentation-curing process produce the characteristic aroma. Orchids are best known for their beautiful flowers, which are economically valuable to the horticultural industry. However, Vanilla is the only genus of Orchidaceae which is useful as a spice and has a real economic value in the food industry and perfumery, owing to its unique flavor and pleasant aroma. Other species of Vanilla which are capable of producing vanilla beans are V. pompona Shiede. (West Indian vanilla) and V. tahitensis J. M. Moore (Tahiti vanilla).But, vanilla produced by these species are considered to be inferior in quality compared to the high quality vanilla produced by V. planifolia (Mexican vanilla). There are few other species which have more or less fragrant pods, but none of which ever seem to have valued as spices. The most extensively cultivated species is V. planifolia, a native of South-eastern Mexico, British Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica (Ridley 1912). This plant has been introduced into all parts of the tropics, and has been cultivated extensively in Malagasy Republic (Madagascar), Reunion and the Comoro Islands (Purseglove et al. 1981). At present, the major vanilla growing countries are Madagascar, Indonesia, Mexico, India, China, The Comoros and Réunion. Other countries where vanilla is cultivated to a limited extent are French Polynesia, Tonga, Guadeloupe

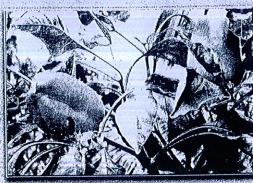
SPICE CROPS

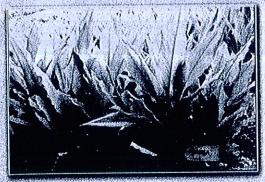
Major Spices

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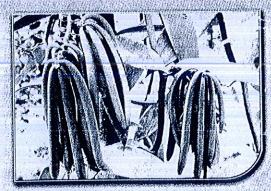












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