



Chile: Strawberries rich in antioxidants and more resistant to fungi

Strawberry (*Fragaria x ananassa*) is one of the most popular fruits worldwide. Scientists from the Institute of Biological Sciences (ICB) (Chile) created a method that allows increasing this fruit's content of anthocyanins, making it a much healthier food. Anthocyanins are polyphenolic compounds that serve as plant pigments and significantly contribute to increase the fruit's antioxidant capacity and, therefore, their healthy value.

Carlos Figueroa, professor at the Institute of Biological Sciences said that methyl jasmano, an organic compound that is produced by plants, can be applied to the fruit to improve its quality.

"We have observed that applying this compound increases the fruit's content of anthocyanins, which are bioactive compounds that have antioxidant characteristics and that are of great importance for human health. In addition, applying this compound helps protect the fruit from the attack of pathogenic fungi." Methyl jasmonate has been tested in both laboratory and field conditions, applied exogenously to developing fruits.

Inside the plant, the methyl jasmonate activates the synthesis of a bioactive hormone called jasmonate-isooleucine, which is in charge of activating responses in the plant. "Green fruits have a high level of these compounds, which begin to decrease as the fruit approaches its maturation," said Figueroa.

"We could improve the fruit's total antioxidant capacity and create a product with a higher added value. In addition, the application of this type of compounds is friendly to the environment," said the researcher.

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