

Unlocking the secrets of ripening for better tasting fruits and veggies

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Researchers worldwide are learning to control the key chemical processes involved in ripening, a development that will lead to longer lasting, better tasting tomatoes, apples, and other fruits and vegetables, according to an article scheduled for the Oct. 29 issue of *Chemical & Engineering News*, ACS' weekly newsmagazine.

In the article, C&EN associate editor Sarah Everts explains what scientists know about the phenomenon of ripening and how they are leveraging that knowledge to optimize the flavor, aroma and shelf-life of fruits and vegetables. That knowledge is emerging at a time of growing consumer demand for high-quality produce available year-round and in virtually any location.

Unfortunately, good taste and long shelf-life are often incompatible, but researchers are getting closer to this goal as they untangle the networks of hormones, genes and proteins that control fruit ripening, Everts notes.

The article points out, for instance, that ethylene has a profound effect on fruit development. Other important factors that influence ripening include sunlight and temperature, while some influential hormones probably remain to be discovered, the article states. "This research will aid the world-wide produce industry, which exports some 65 million tons of fresh fruits and vegetables annually. The U.S. retail produce industry alone made some \$56 billion in sales in 2006," Everts writes.

In a separate C&EN article and photo spread, managing editor Ivan

Amato discusses the psychology and environmental impact of cigarette smokers who discard used cigarette butts in public places - 50 million pounds worth annually in the United States alone.

Source: ACS

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