

From artificial to natural, the food industry makes a major shift

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Extracts from algae, rosemary and monk fruit could soon replace synthetic ingredients and food additives such as Blue No. 1, BHT and aspartame that label-conscious grocery shoppers are increasingly shunning. Research is enabling this shift from artificial colors, sweeteners and preservatives to naturally derived ones, and could soon yield many more natural options, reports *Chemical & Engineering News*, the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society.

Melody M. Bomgardner, senior editor at C&EN, notes that the trend has built momentum as concern over negative health effects of artificial ingredients and additives grows. Recent studies have suggested a link between some artificial colorings and hyperactivity in children. Others have suggested that certain synthetic [preservatives](#) may cause cancer in rodents. These results are sinking into the consumer psyche. By 2013, almost a quarter of U.S. consumers reported that they read food labels to check for artificial colors and flavors. That's 15 percent more than the year before. In Europe, regulations spurred a faster changeover and have largely driven the dramatic shift in global sales toward natural colors. In the \$1.5 billion market, growth of the latter has overtaken synthetics, which have plateaued.

Now many food manufacturers are turning to colors derived from foods, such as turmeric; to new fermentation routes for natural yellows, reds and purple dyes; and to rosemary and monk fruit as a preservative and [sweetener](#), respectively, the article states. Natural green and blue food colorings are harder to come by, but researchers are finding sources for

these as well. Last summer, M&Ms candy maker Mars got the OK from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to color their blue treats with an extract from blue-green [algae](#). Scientists are also investigating new natural ways to preserve meat, produce vanilla and sweeten foods without the calories.

More information: "The New Naturals"
cen.acs.org/articles/92/i6/New-Naturals.html

Provided by American Chemical Society

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