

What is black carrot concentrate?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Black carrot concentrate is the concentrated juice of black or purple carrots. Sweet makers use it as a natural colour, to turn sweets red, pink or purple without artificial colours. On an ingredients list it appears by name, as black carrot concentrate or black carrot juice concentrate, rather than as an E number.

Carrots were not always orange

Carrots have not always been orange. The eastern type of carrot was domesticated in Persia, probably in the lands of modern Iran and Afghanistan, during the 10th century or possibly earlier, and the eastern carrots that survive today are commonly purple or yellow. Their purple colour comes from pigments called anthocyanins. In Britain, the carrots of Old English times were typically white.

The orange carrot we know emerged in the Netherlands in the 16th or 17th century. There is a popular story that the Dutch favoured orange carrots in honour of the House of Orange, but there is little evidence for it beyond tradition. Another suggestion is that orange carrots won out because purple ones turn soups and stews brown.

Where the colour comes from

Anthocyanins are the pigments that colour blueberries, raspberries, black rice, black carrots and many other red, purple and blue plants. Their name comes from the Greek words for flower and dark blue. Depending on how acidic their surroundings are, they can appear red, pink, purple, blue or black.

Black carrots are especially useful because they are rich in a particular kind, called mono acylated anthocyanins, which give the colour better stability, so it holds up better in food.

In sweets

Colours from black carrots are used in soft drinks, fruit juices, jellies and sweets, and researchers describe black carrot extract as a replacement for synthetic colours such as allura red, E129. Allura red is one of the six artificial colours that must carry a warning about children's activity and attention, which is one reason makers look for alternatives: see [why do some sweets have a warning about children?](#)

Anthocyanins colour some old sweets too. Parma Violets, the violet flavoured tablets made in Derbyshire, list anthocyanin among their ingredients.

Why there is no E number

Under European guidance adopted in 2013, which came into force in November 2015, a colour made from a food, using simple physical processes and without selectively extracting the pigment, counts as a colouring

food. Colouring foods are treated as ingredients, not additives, so they appear on the label by name. Black carrot juice concentrate is one of the examples, alongside spirulina, the source of a natural blue: see [what is spirulina doing in my sweets?](#)

Purified anthocyanins used as an additive are a different matter. They have the E number E163. In 2013 a panel of the European Food Safety Authority said that anthocyanins from many fruits and vegetables had not been studied enough to approve them as food additives, with red grape skin and blackcurrant extracts the exceptions, because they had a long safe history of use.

Vegan and plant based

Because it comes from a vegetable, black carrot concentrate suits vegans and vegetarians. That makes it a useful alternative to carmine, the traditional red made from insects: see [what is carmine?](#)

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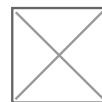
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