INTRODUCTION

Capsicums are important edible plants of Central South America. The fruits of Capsicum annuum L. Family Solanaceae (some times merged with Capsicum frutescens) are known as Chillies or Red peppers and are dried and ground to provide cayenne pepper.

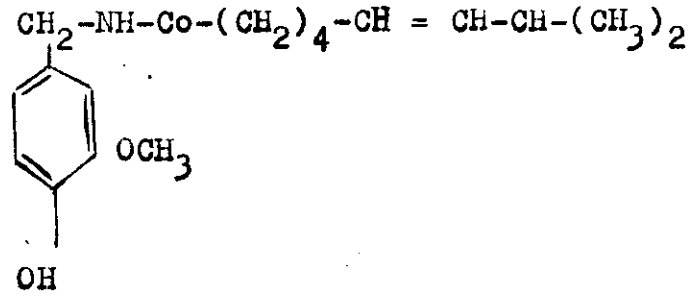
Different parts of the world cultivate peppers which are commercially sold under the name of Capsicum, Cayenne pepper, Red pepper, Paprika, Tabasco, Chilli.

Capsicum annuum L. has numerous varieties, some grown as vegetables or condiments, some as ornamental pot plants, medicinal plants and some for two or more purposes.

Capsicum contains capsaicin as extremely pungent principle, also contains volatile oil, a fixed oil, carotenoids, and ascorbic acid (vitamin C).

It is used medicinaly for its pungent alkaloid "Capsaicin" which is found mainly in the inner walls of capsicum fruits, the pungent flavor being determined by the capsaicin content.

Chemically, Capsaicin is N-(3-methoxy-4-hydroxy benzyl) -8-methylnon-trans-ó-enamid.



This ingredient is used externally as a counter irritant, in the form of ointment, plaster, meticated wool, etc. for the relief of rheumatism, lumbago, etc. It is used as a rubefacient and also as a stimulant.

Sometimes the whole fruit is cooked to prepare some dishes or dried and ground in foods as condiment for its colouring and pungency on table or industrial foods.

Liquid extracts of capsicum fruits resulting from the solvent extraction called "oleoresin" has found widespread acceptance in commercial food preparation (Nagle et al., 1979).

Therefore, this investigation aimed to increase fruit yield and capsaicin content by stuydingthe effects of water regime combined with cytokinins on the Capsicum annuum L. plants.