

NEOBETANIN: A NEW NATURAL PLANT CONSTITUENT?

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Abstract—Neobetanin, recently reported as a natural constituent of beetroot, is not present in fresh beet juice and hence appears to be an artifact of the isolation process.

As reported in a recent publication, Alard *et al.* [1] not only isolated and characterized neobetanin but also claimed it to be a natural constituent of the root of red beet and other members of the Caryophyllales (= Centrospermae) family. I wish to point out that neobetanin is frequently encountered in *aged solid* betanin samples. Indeed, in a publication on betalain biosynthesis [2], we have previously reported its UV spectrum as well as a convenient separation of the compound from other betalains by chromatography on a Sephadex ion-exchanger.

Moreover, as described in a recent paper [3] on cyclodopagluconide, a metabolite of *Beta vulgaris*, we took particular care to ensure that the metabolite was

present in *fresh* juice. Following our efficient procedure, we would certainly have encountered neobetanin as the first eluant had it been present. However, no trace of it was detectable and we suggest that the neobetanin characterized by Alard *et al.* is probably an artifact formed during the isolation process.

REFERENCES

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