

WHERE **PECTIN** COMES FROM

The history of pectin can be traced back to the 18th century when, in 1750, recipes for jellies made from apple, currant and quince – all fruits rich in gelling pectin – were published in the *London Housewife's Family Companion*.

However, it wasn't until many years later, in the 1820s, that pectin was first isolated and shown to be the key to making jams and jellies.

Taking advantage of this discovery, many people began to mix pectin-rich fruits or fruit extracts with fruits that did not offer such powerful gelling properties, such as gooseberries and redcurrants.

Extracts of apple peels and cores were used for jams that were considered to be particularly difficult to set.



COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION

With pectin's benefits now receiving widespread recognition, commercial jam producers began to look for further supplies.

In response, apple juice producers in Germany saw an opportunity. They began to dry the pomace residue that was left over after pressing their juice and then sold it on to jam makers. In turn, the jam companies would cook the pomace in water, with or without fruit juice, to make a jellying juice.

The first commercial production of a liquid pectin extract was recorded in 1908 in Germany, and news of the process quickly spread to the USA, where a patent was obtained by the Douglas Pectin Corporation (US Pat. 1.082,682, 1913).

This was followed by rapid growth of the pectin industry in America and, a little later, in Europe. In recent years, pectin production has also become well established in Latin American citrus fruit-growing countries like Mexico and Brazil. China has also emerged as a major supplier, thanks to its large apple growing industry, which provides an abundant source of pectin.



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Today, most commercial pectin is produced from apples, oranges, lemons and limes. Producers don't extract the pectin directly from the fresh fruit. Instead, they get it from the pomace and peel left over after fruit juice production.

Since these raw materials would otherwise go to waste, it is a great example of a circular economy in action in the food supply chain.

More than 250 years after the first recorded use of pectin, it remains one of the world's most valuable and versatile natural ingredients.

Want to know more? Read our other factsheets:

- How Pectin is Made
- The Molecular Structure of Pectin