

WHY BILIRUBIN, AN ANIMAL PIGMENT, IS NEEDED FOR PLANTS?

Summary

Bilirubin-IX α was found as the main pigment in orange seed arils of the bird-of paradise tree *Strelitzia nicolai* and in sepals in *Strelitzia reginae*. It changed the idea that bilirubin is the compound which is only synthesized in animals. Bilirubin is

present as the primary pigment synthesized in the tetrapyrrole pathway which functions to produce colour in plants. Whether providing colour for plants is the only function of bilirubin or it may play other roles still needs elucidation.