CLAIMS

1. A preserved and flavor augmented cut fresh produce product comprising

(1) a piece of cut fresh produce (i),

(2) a preservative (ii) comprising calcium ascorbate, calcium erythrobate or a mixture thereof, the concentration of citric acid in the preservative, if any, being not greater than 10 wt. % on a dry weight basis, this preservative being present in an amount sufficient to preserve at least one of the texture, firmness, flavor, appearance, crispness and color of the piece of cut fresh produce, and

(3) one or more flavor augmenting chemicals (iii) impregnated into the piece of cut fresh produce, this one or more flavor augmenting chemicals being present in an amount which is sufficient to compensate for a loss of flavor notes the cut fresh produce product will experience during storage but not so much as to introduce foreign flavor notes into the cut fresh cut produce product.

2. The cut fresh produce product of claim 1, wherein the identity and amount of the one or more flavor augmenting chemicals is determined by carrying out a chemical analysis on two different test samples of the same cut fresh produce and then comparing the results of these two different chemical analyses, the first of these chemical analyses being carried on a first test sample before storage, the second of these chemical analyses being carried on a second test sample after storage.

3. The cut fresh produce product of claim 2, wherein the first chemical analysis is carried out immediately after the first test sample is formed by cutting.

4. The cut fresh produce product of claim 2, wherein the first chemical analysis is carried out within 1 week after the first test sample is formed by cutting.

5. The cut fresh produce product of claim 4, wherein the first chemical analysis is carried out within 1 day after the first test sample is formed by cutting.

6. The cut fresh produce product of claim 4, wherein the first test sample on which the first chemical analysis is carried out is obtained from a piece of whole produce which has been harvested no greater than 2 weeks before the first chemical analysis is done.

7. The cut fresh produce product of claim 6, wherein the first test sample on which the first chemical analysis is carried out is obtained from a piece of whole produce which has been harvested no greater than 1 day before the first chemical analysis is done.

8. The cut fresh produce product of claim 4, wherein the fresh produce product is intended to be stored under a predetermined set of storage conditions including at least one of a particular period of storage time and a particular manner of storage, or both, and further wherein the second test sample on which the second chemical analysis is carried out is subjected to the same predetermined set of storage conditions before the second chemical analysis is carried out.

9. The cut fresh produce product of claim 8, wherein the predetermined set of storage conditions includes both a particular period of storage time and a particular manner of storage.

10. The cut fresh produce product of claim 2, wherein the fresh produce product is intended to be stored under a predetermined set of storage conditions including at least one of a particular period of storage time and a particular manner of storage, or both, and further wherein the second test sample on which the second chemical analysis is carried out is subjected to the same predetermined set of storage conditions before the second chemical analysis is carried out.

11. The cut fresh produce product of claim 10, wherein the predetermined set of storage conditions includes both a particular period of storage time and a particular manner of storage.

12. The cut fresh produce product of claim 1, wherein the cut fresh produce product is intended to be stored under a predetermined set of storage conditions during which storage the fresh cut produce product will inherently experience a loss of one or more flavor notes, and further wherein both the identity and amount of the one or more flavor augmenting chemicals (iii) that are present in the cut fresh produce product have been determined by

(a) carrying out a first chemical analysis on a first test sample, this first test sample comprising a piece the same fresh produce as produce (i), thereby identifying the particular flavor-producing chemicals responsible for imparting flavor to this fresh produce, this first chemical analysis being carried out immediately after the fresh produce forming this first test sample has been cut,

(b) carrying out a second chemical analysis on a second test sample, this second test sample also comprising a piece the same fresh produce as produce (i) as well as a preservative (ii), the identity and amount of this preservative (ii) in this second test sample being the same as the identity and amount of the preservative (ii) in said fresh produce product, the second test sample also having been stored under the same set of target storage conditions as the cut fresh produce product intended to be stored, and

(c) comparing the results of the chemical analysis of step (a) with the results of the chemical analysis of step (b) to determine the identities and amounts of flavor-producing chemicals that are anticipated to be lost from the piece of fresh fruit as a result of cutting and storage for the predetermined period of time.

13. The cut fresh produce product of claim 1, wherein the loss of one or more flavor notes is due to the loss of a particular naturally-occurring flavor-producing chemical which is present in the fresh produce before it is cut, and further wherein at least one of the flavor augmenting chemicals (iii) is identical to this naturally-occurring flavor-producing chemical.

14. A process for preserving and augmenting the flavor of a piece of cut fresh produce which is intended to be consumed a predetermined period of time after the fresh produce from which it is made has been cut, the process comprising (1) contacting the cut piece of fresh produce with an aqueous preservative composition, thereby producing a preserved cut piece of fresh produce, the aqueous preservative composition comprising calcium ascorbate, calcium erythrobate or a mixture thereof, the concentration of citric acid in the aqueous preservative composition, if any, being not greater than 10 wt. % on a dry weight basis, and (2) impregnating the preserved cut piece of fresh produce with one or more flavor augmenting chemicals in an amount which is sufficient to replace the flavor notes that are anticipated to be lost from the preserved cut piece of fresh produce as a result of being stored for the predetermined period of time but not so much as to introduce foreign flavor notes into the preserved cut piece of fresh produce.

15. The process of claim 14, wherein the identity and amount of the one or more flavor augmenting chemicals is determined by carrying out a chemical analysis on two different test samples of the same cut fresh produce and then comparing the results of these two different

chemical analyses, the first of these chemical analyses being carried on a first test sample before storage, the second of these chemical analyses being carried on a second test sample after storage.

16. The process of claim 15, wherein the first chemical analysis is carried out within 1 week after the first test sample is formed by cutting.

17. The process of claim 16, wherein the first chemical analysis is carried out within 1 day after the first test sample is formed by cutting.

18. The process of claim 16, wherein the first test sample on which the first chemical analysis is carried out is obtained from a piece of whole produce which has been harvested no greater than 2 weeks before the first chemical analysis is done.

19. The process of claim 16, wherein the first test sample on which the first chemical analysis is carried out is obtained from a piece of whole produce which has been harvested no greater than 1 day before the first chemical analysis is done.

20. The process of claim 14, wherein the cut fresh produce product is intended to be stored under a predetermined set of storage conditions during which storage the fresh cut produce product will inherently experience a loss of one or more flavor notes, and further wherein both the identity and amount of the one or more flavor augmenting chemicals (iii) that are present in the cut fresh produce product have been determined by

(a) carrying out a first chemical analysis on a first test sample, this first test sample comprising a piece the same fresh produce as produce (i), thereby identifying the particular flavor-producing chemicals responsible for imparting flavor to this fresh produce, this first chemical analysis being carried out immediately after the fresh produce forming this first test sample has been cut,

(b) carrying out a second chemical analysis on a second test sample, this second test sample also comprising a piece the same fresh produce as produce (i) as well as a preservative (ii), the identity and amount of this preservative (ii) in this second test sample being the same as the identity and amount of the preservative (ii) in said fresh produce product, the second test sample also having been stored under the

same set of target storage conditions as the cut fresh produce product intended to be stored, and

(c) comparing the results of the chemical analysis of step (a) with the results of the chemical analysis of step (b) to determine the identities and amounts of flavor-producing chemicals that are anticipated to be lost from the piece of fresh fruit as a result of cutting and storage for the predetermined period of time.

21. The process of claim 14, wherein the preservative and the one or more flavor augmenting chemicals are applied to the cut fresh fruit from the same aqueous solution.

22. The process of claim 14, wherein after the preserved cut piece of fresh produce is impregnated with the flavor enhancing chemical in step (2), it is stored.

23. The process of claim 22, wherein after the preserved cut piece of fresh produce is impregnated with the flavor enhancing chemical in step (2), it is stored under one or more of the following storage conditions:

(a) the impregnated, preserved cut piece of fresh produce is stored exposed to the ambient atmosphere,

(b) the impregnated, preserved cut piece of fresh produce is stored in a bag or container which is closed to the ambient atmosphere, wherein the atmosphere inside the bag consists of a controlled atmosphere having an elevated level of carbon dioxide, an elevated carbon dioxide leve, an elevated nitrogen level, a reduced oxygen level, an elevated ethylene level, a reduced ethylene levels or any combination thereof, and

(c) vacuum packaged.

24. The process of claim 14, wherein the concentration of citric acid in the aqueous preservative composition, if any, is not greater than 1 wt. % on a dry weight basis.

25. The cut fresh produce product of claim 1, wherein the concentration of citric acid in the aqueous preservative composition, if any, is not greater than 1 wt. % on a dry weight basis.

26. The cut fresh produce product of claim 1, wherein the one or more flavor augmenting chemicals (iii) is impregnated into the piece of cut fresh produce by at least one of dipping, inundating with a liquid sheet, spraying or sprinkling.

27. The process of claim 14, wherein the one or more flavor augmenting chemicals (iii) is impregnated into the piece of cut fresh produce by at least one of dipping, inundating with a liquid sheet, spraying or sprinkling.