

FLAVOUR - MATURE - COMPETE RECOGNISE - EXTEND - KNOW -  
SUPPLY - THREAT - CONSEQUENCE - EMERGE - RIPE

## VANILLA

Thanks to the ubiquitous use of vanilla as a (0) ..... flavouring in ice creams and cakes the world over, its taste is more (16) ..... to the majority of people than the appearance of the plant.

The plant itself is actually a native of the tropical forests of Central America and is the only variety of orchid to be grown on a commercial scale. Its delicate white flowers open in the early morning and, after pollination by insects or humming birds, a narrow bean-like pod forms and (17) ..... , taking a period of five to seven months to reach (18) ..... . It is this pod which is harvested to provide the food crop we know as vanilla.

Despite its American origins, for decades it was only cultivated (19) ..... on the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar, where it was introduced at the end of the nineteenth century. It soon became clear that the vanilla grown there was of a quality (20) ..... in other areas, and the island quickly became one of the world's major (21) ..... .

In recent years, however, new (22) ..... have entered the vanilla market and, (23) ..... , Madagascar's importance has started to slip. Of course, the (24) ..... of new producers means a smaller market share, whilst the development of artificial substitutes is (25) ..... to undermine demand for the real thing.