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# 1 Cabbage

## *A Storehouse of Nutraceuticals*

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Vegetables are an intrinsic part of the human diet. They are the richest and cheapest source of minerals and vitamins. Besides being nutritious, vegetables also act as powerful medicines and offer preventive health benefits. The discovery of phytochemicals in vegetables and their strong antioxidant potential in scavenging free radicals has generated tremendous attention among scientists, horticulturists and plant breeders (Chu et al. 2002; Proteggente et al. 2002; Sun et al. 2002). Antioxidants are free radical scavengers; antioxidants are naturally formed inside the body as a byproduct of different metabolic reactions. Free radicals are molecules with unpaired electrons and are highly reactive. They can easily react with lipids, nucleic acid, enzymes and proteins, causing tissue injury (Thrombino et al. 2004; Ohr 2004). Vitamin C, carotenoids and phenolics are the major sources of antioxidants found in