



Mango harvesting practices

There are various options for growers when harvesting mangoes. Atchar fruit can be harvested early when the fruit are still small and the seed are not hard yet.

The fruit harvested for the local market can be left to mature for longer on the tree which will result in better flavour as well as external colour.

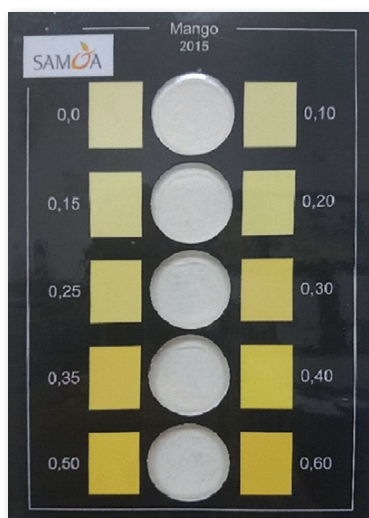
André Botha

SUBTROP

EXPORT FRUIT HAS to be of the best quality because of the time it takes to reach the final destination at overseas markets. Export fruit should be harvested according to the SAMGA colour chart. Cultivars prone to lenticel damage should be picked at a more mature stage when the incidence decreases with a more advanced maturity stage. Continues cold chain management is of very high importance at all times.

Drying and juice consist usually out of fruit not utilised for other purposes or from damaged fruit.

Physiological maturity is at the so-called mature-green stage while still allowing time for handling and marketing. Maturity and ripeness are not the same thing, the fruit are ripe when it is ready to eat. The mature fruit will ripen properly while immature fruit won't. The internal quality and the speed of ripening will depend on the maturity stage when harvested.



SAMGA colour chart

Prior to harvesting commences it is important to ensure easy access to the trees by cutting grass and removing of weeds. Reduce the soil moisture levels to about -50 kPa for the cultivars that are prone to lenticel and other damage during handling.

Picking maturity is one of the most important factors determining the quality of the fruit. After physiological maturity, the fruit are able to undergo a ripening process triggered by ethylene, in which respiration rates rises, skin and flesh colours change, starch converts to soluble sugars and organic acid levels decrease. The fruit reach commercial maturity when it is acceptable to the consumer – for mango, when the fruit are partly ripened. The extent of ripening will depend the market, allowing the consumer some control over the ripening at consumption. Producers must avoid the early fruit ripening on the tree as they are usually triggered to ripen because of internal problems or insect damage.

HARVESTING PRACTICES

For export and local market, the fruit must be harvested with long stems with clippers or secateurs and immediately de-stemmed and de-sapped in the orchard.

Fruit must not be placed on the ground, it could lead to skin damage and postharvest diseases. Cultivars that are not sensitive to latex burn and lenticel damage ('Kent') can be harvested with shorter stems and placed directly in bins or lug boxes.

Make sure that the pickers have short finger nails to prevent fruit damage. The pickers should avoid smearing the latex over the fruit with their hands or dripping on other de-stemmed fruit. Latex can cause severe burn on the skin and will cause that the fruit cannot be graded as Class 1.

The fruit that are exported should be selectively picked since it is going to take weeks before they reach the consumer.

Take care in transporting the fruit to the pack house and try not to exceed 12 hours from picking to arrival at the pack house. Cover fruit if transported for long distances to avoid sunburn and dust accumulation. Offload fruit gently and keep in a shaded area before packing can commence.

REFERENCES

The cultivation of mango

– ARC-ITSC

Achieving sustainable cultivation of mangoes – Burleigh Dodds ♦

