

Title Effects of curing periods on fruit characteristics of winter squash
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Abstract

Winter squash was dried for 20 days at field temperature after harvest, and then cured for 5, 10, 15, and 20 days. Samples for control treatment were not cured. Samples were cured at room temperature (25-30°C) with a relative humidity of 70-80%. All samples were stored at 12°C after curing. Samples showed a weight loss of 2.3% and 4.7% after 5 and 20 days of curing respectively. However, after 6 months at 12°C, weight loss among treatments was not significantly different and was in the range of 14.0-14.3%. Fruit decay did not appear during 3 months of storage; symptoms appeared only after the fourth month. Several fungi and bacteria were found in decayed fruits; these included gray mold, anthracnose, sclerotinia and penicillium rot. Fruit decay appeared in 9.6% of control samples; 23.0, 24.0, 38.4, and 62.3% of 5-, 10-, 15- and 20- day cured fruit showed decay, respectively, after 5 months in storage. Incidence of fruit decay increased rapidly after 6 months in storage. Soluble solids content was not significantly different between treatments during the entire storage period. Fruit hardness also showed no difference between treatments after 4 months in storage. Results indicated that storage should be limited to 6 months or less. Furthermore, curing for more than 10 days is not recommended due to increasing fruit decay.