

**Title** Postharvest handling of Habanero pepper, in Yucatan Mexico

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### **Abstract**

The Habanero Pepper (*Capsicum chinense* Jacq.), is a product of great importance in the agriculture of Yucatan, Mexico. Generally, is commercialized in fresh for direct consumption or as a raw material for industrial processing. The beginning of the harvest depends on the destiny of the production. For the direct consumption (as fresh product), orange peppers are generally used, in this case; the first pick is made when the fruits have a shining green color and are hard to the tact. This happens approximately 75 days after the transplant. The following picks should be done every week. After the harvest, Habanero Peppers need special handling for its sale, depending on the final destination: kitchen, retail or wholesale level and supermarkets. The postharvest handling has become an essential stage for fresh fruit and vegetables commercialization. It includes all a series of cleaning techniques, disinfection, waxed, conservation and maturation that prolong the life of the product and allow their arrival to the consumer in the best conditions. The operations for the preparation of a product that goes to the market are essentially four: (1) Elimination of nonmarketable parts, (2) Separation by size and/or maturity, (3) Classification by quality, and (4) Packing. The small producers do the product separation according only to their size in the crop field. Big producers make all postharvest handling stages in the place of the harvest, trying that the product is less manipulated possible.