

**Title** Influence of harvest time and after-ripening on the seed quality of eggplant  
**Author** H.C. Passam, S. Theodoropoulou, T. Karanissa and I.C. Karapanos  
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### **Abstract**

Eggplant cv. Emi and Tsakoniki were cultivated for seed in an unheated greenhouse and fruits were harvested at 25–65 days after anthesis (DAA) in order to determine the optimum harvest time. In addition, the effect of after-ripening on seed quality (i.e. seed size and germination) was examined by storing harvested fruit at 25 °C for 20 days prior to seed extraction. From the results, it was concluded that the optimum time of harvest for seed production is 55 DAA. Seeds extracted from fruits that were harvested at 25–35 DAA did not germinate, but when fruits harvested at the same age were stored for 20 days at 25 °C prior to seed extraction (i.e. seeds were after-ripened) germination was induced. Seeds extracted from fruits harvested at 45 DAA showed a high percent germination, which decreased after storage at 25 °C for 3 months. This decrease, however, was reduced by after-ripening prior to extraction. It is concluded that although eggplant is a non-climacteric species and fruit do not ripen after harvest, nevertheless seeds within the fruit continue to fill and mature after harvest; hence storage of prematurely harvested fruit prior to seed extraction permits the seeds of these fruits to after-ripen *in situ* and thereby increases seed size and germination. The implication of this result for eggplant seed production is discussed.