

**Title** Postharvest for wealth and health

**Author** Shiow Y. Wang

**Citation** Abstracts of 7<sup>th</sup> International Postharvest Symposium 2012 (IPS 2012). 25-29 June, 2012. Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. 238 pages.

**Keywords** fruits; vegetables; postharvest losses; postharvest techniques; phytonutrients; health benefits

### **Abstract**

Postharvest research plays an important role in increasing the wealth of farmers, growers, shippers and those involved in the fresh produce industry. An important goal of postharvest research is to reduce losses of fruits and vegetables after harvest. Postharvest losses have been a serious problem in every country of the world. The magnitude of losses varies in different regions depending on location, climate, commodity, and handling systems. The reduction of postharvest losses will result in increased quantity available to consumers, which in a sense is increasing production without using more land. Therefore, reducing postharvest losses is especially critical for food security in countries where land is scarce. The increased quantity available to consumers due to reduced losses is also made without any additional use of labor, fertilizers, water or other inputs needed for production. This results in more profit and wealth to farmers as well as more preservation of natural resources and the environment. Another goal of postharvest research is to maintain quality of fresh produce after harvest. An increasingly important aspect of produce quality is nutritional value. Consumption of fruits and vegetables has been linked to a reduction in the risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and age-related disorders. In addition to vitamins, minerals and other nutrients, fruits and vegetables are a source of many phytochemicals, which are responsible for health maintenance and disease prevention. Several postharvest techniques have been found to enhance flavonoids, carotenoids and other antioxidants. Significant increases in the concentration of health-promoting phytochemicals and nutritional quality of fruits and vegetables are achievable through proper postharvest handling.