

Title The effects of blanching and drying on postharvest quality and shelf life of miding fern (*Stenochlaena palustris*)

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Abstract

The tender fronds of miding fern (*Stenochlaena Palustris*) are consumed as vegetable by local people of Sarawak. The fern which is originally wild is now being cultivated widely due to its increasing popularity as they make savory dishes when fried with anchovies, 'sambal belacan' or in 'ulam'. However, miding can only be enjoyed locally due to its short postharvest shelflife. A method to extend the shelf life of the miding fern was tested by blanching and then dehydrating through oven drying at 60°C for 15 hours. Results showed that there were no significant differences in terms of L*, a*, b* value for miding blanched for different duration (30sec, 1 min, 2 min, 3 min, 4 min and 5 min). Hedonic scoring for miding blanched at 1 min showed best results in terms of firmness and crisp-ness. Dehydrated miding soaked in hot water for 15 min were able to reconstitute its original taste and texture without any color degradation. Microbial analysis showed that the shelflife of miding was extended to 4 months at room temperature. The improvement of the shelflife through dehydrated miding plays an important role for marketing of this famous vegetable, particularly for export market.