

Title Tabseel traditional date palm post-harvest method in Oman
Author Khamis A. Al-Habsi, Ali M.Al-Subhi, Mumtaz Khan
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Abstract

Date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera* L.) is the most important fruit crop in the Sultanate of Oman. At present there are more than 8 million date palm trees, occupying 35630 hectares of land which shares approximately 48.1 % of the total cultivated area in the Sultanate. Harvesting season of date in Oman is long starting from May to November because of having broader diversity in date palm varieties (>200) which are largely distributed in all northern parts of Oman. Some date varieties, "Mabsli, Abounarengah, Madloky" need special post-harvest processing method called "Tabseel", which are heat-treated before drying. Dates are cooked in massive quantities in a large boiling pan for about 45 minutes and when dates start showing symptoms like star shining, it is ready to be scooped out from the pan. Drying floors used are the ground, simple platforms, flat-rooftops and open containers and it is allowed to stay there for a week. Dry date is packed in a fifty kilo jute sack and can be kept in the store for longer periods. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry buy the processed "tabseel" date from the farmers and exports large quantities to India. The date "tabseel" product is used for human consumption, medicinal and in food processing. Date palm post-harvest handling "Tabseel" season is not just an annual farming activity, it is the time when family, relatives, friends and neighbors join hands to harvest, process and work together in the village. The significance of the centuries old traditional date palm post-harvest handling 'tabseel' will be discussed.