

Title Postharvest handling and marketing system of sour sampaloc in the Philippines
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Citation Philippine Journal of Crop Science, 32(Supplement no. 1) p. 120, 2007.
Keywords *Tamarindus indica*; Fruits; Postharvest technology; Marketing; Philippines

Abstract

Sampaloc fruit has a great potential for export since it can be eaten fresh, is an ingredient to many Asian dishes and maybe processed into candies, puree, sauce or powder. However, no documentation of its handling and marketing system has been done yet in the Philippines. Information on its postharvest behavior is also very scant. Key information interviewees were identified and actual handling operations in major production and trading areas were observed. Most sampaloc trees though very old grown in backyard scale. In general, no cultural management is employed by most tree owners. Harvesting of young shoots and immature fruits starts as early as September but fruits become mature between January to May. The peak of harvest slightly vary among the production areas. The immature fruits are highly perishable and must reach the market or powder processors within 3 days after harvest. They are packed in recycled plastic or netted sack weighing at 30-80 kilograms each. In contrast, the ripe fruits may last for a year. They are shelled, sun-dried when necessary, bulk-packed in plastic-lined sack and stored in ambient places. It is this condition, which is stocked year-round by collection agents or wholesalers. Normally many collection agents are necessary to fill up the largest volume (i.e. hundred kilos to several tons) for delivery to buying stations, traders, wholesalers, shippers or processors. The major wholesalers are found in Divisoria Manila, Urdaneta, Pangasinan and Davao City. Fruits from Mindanao are also shipped to Manila from Davao and General Santos City either by boat or plane. Most of the sampaloc traders have been in the business for at least 10 years with their parents usually starting it all. Improvements at each handling point have been recommended to ensure clean and safe products from sampaloc that is of export quality.