

# Effect of harvesting season and cultivars on storage behaviour, nutritional quality and consumer acceptability of strawberry (*Fragaria × ananassa* Duch.) fruits

Pankaj Kumar Kannaujia and Ram Asrey

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## Abstract

This study focuses on the effect of weather conditions during fruit growth and ripening on functional components and storage life of strawberry. Two newly adopted commercial strawberry cultivars Camarosa and Winter Dawn were tested for their bioactive compounds and storage life in relation to harvesting months February(winter) March(spring) and April(summer). Fruits were harvested at commercial maturity, packed in plastic punnets and stored at  $5 \pm 2$  °C temperature and  $85 \pm 5\%$  relative humidity up to 12 days. During storage, March–April harvested fruits showed higher retention of total soluble solids (TSS), total sugars, functional components and consumer acceptability over winter produce. Between varieties, Camarosa showed better storage response over Winter Dawn in terms of overall quality. In conclusion. strawberries harvested during March–April have lower acidity, higher TSS, antioxidant capacity and consumer acceptability over February picking.