

Title Improvements in mechanization of date palm harvesting and implications for fruit postharvest handling  
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### **Abstract**

The date (*Phoenix dactylifera*) is an important crop in the food system of Oman and other countries in the Arabian Peninsula. Date harvesting is tedious and hazardous, and also affects the quality of harvested fruits. Manual harvesting is the predominant method, but increasing labour shortages and high incidence of human hazards during harvest operations have created a need for improved mechanical harvesting methods. Traditional manual harvesting methods also result in considerable fruit losses and opportunistic contamination of fruit during contact with soil and microbial organisms. This paper reviews the existing methods of date palm harvesting and highlights the results of a recent study which examined the effects of enclosing growing fruit bunches in net-bags on harvest operation management and date fruit quality.