

ABSTRACT

Papaya fruits (*Carica papaya*) harvested at five stages of maturity ranging from dark green to fully coloured (75% colour) fruit were tested for quality during storage.

Dark green fruit developed yellow skin colour during ripening at the same rate as pale green (breaker) fruit, but they did not have the same extent of skin-colour development at eating ripe stage. More mature fruits, which had reached or closely approached full maturity on the tree, had better eating quality when ripened than immature fruits. Therefore papaya fruit should not be harvested before reaching fully maturity (25%-50% yellow colour development).

Harvested fruits of this maturity can be kept at ambient temperature (25^o-28^oC) for 6days. When fruits stored at 15^oC, storage life can be extended for up to 15 days. Low temperature minimized the rate of ripening process.

Fruits harvested at 25%-50% were able to reach the peel colour, °Brix, Titratable acidity and less diseases as an acceptable level. Fruits harvested earlier than 25% colour stage were inferior in quality.

This study showed that, maturity stages have significant effect on ripe fruit quality of papaya stored both at ambient and 15^oC. It was further observed that the quality of this variety did not depend on ripening temperature.