

Selective harvest of mangoes

Mango fruits mature at different times and harvesting all of them at once leads to losses. Selectively harvesting the mature ones and proper handling leads to high yields and better fruit quality.

The rate of maturity of fruits depends on the variety of the mango, soil fertility status and other individual factors. Mature fruits have distinctive features which include; their panicle drops inside, the skin of the fruits have spots called lenticels and the stalk begins drying out. Check out for these at harvesting.

Coloured flags

Another way to identify mature fruits is to attach different coloured flags on branches with different batches of flowers as they form and the date at which each flower batch started forming is noted. First selectively harvest fruits from the branches that flowered first and those that flowered late later.

Harvest practices

After estimating the maturity of fruits by looking at the external factors, open up a sample of the fruits to determine the fruit sugar content and the colour of the fruit.

Use a refractometer to determine Brix which translates into the sugar content of the fruits. This is done by dividing the fruit into 3 parts. Cut the first part through into the seed and the other halves half way from the seed into the skin. Calibrate the refractometer and squeeze to drain some juice onto the refractometer. Point the refractometer into direct sunlight and make the reading of the Brix. The more the Brix, the greater the sugar content.

Quality parameters

The level of maturity at which to harvest depends on the variety of the mango and the market you are targeting. Different markets demand for different mango quality parameters.

Harvest mangoes without carrying out any harm to the fruits. This can be achieved by investing in proper harvesting tools like picking poles. These enable the harvester to pick the fruits from trees and gently place them in to the basket. They also remove panicles which are major entry points of disease and also also reduce on the ability of the tree to produce flowers the next season.

Also remember always to disinfect harvesting equipments before beginning to harvest to prevent transmission of diseases from one orchard to another.