

**NSPRI**

**Research In Food Preservation to Reduce Poverty**

**PRACTICAL GUIDE**

**POST HARVEST HANDLING OF TOMATOES**



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## Introduction

Tomato is an important food ingredient. They are commonly eaten in their fresh forms or processed into puree, paste, sauce, dried and whole-peeled forms. It can be grown all over the country. Tomatoes spoil easily because they contain a lot of water and therefore, require special care to preserve.

The storage life tomatoes depend greatly on the cultivar of the tomato. Cultivars with thick skin like the "Roma" and "Early stone" are generally more resistant to diseases, pests and physiological disorders after harvest than the local variety. Mechanical injury also shortens the storage life of tomatoes.

To extend to shelf -life of tomato, proper handling of fresh fruits and processing are very important. Tomato can be processed into various forms for domestic and commercial purposes.

### Tomatoes provide:

- Vitamins and minerals.
- Cancer preventing substance
- Lycopene which gives the tomato its red colour
- Materials for soup thickening.

### Problems associated with fresh tomato

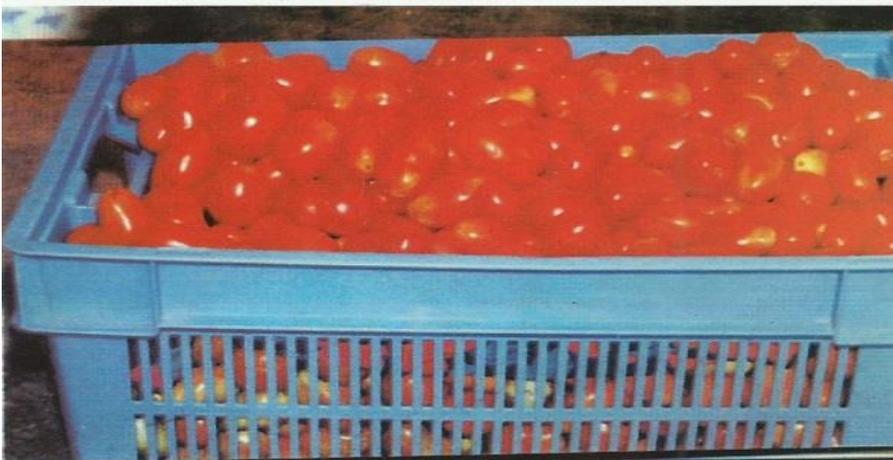
Sign	Causes
Rotting (decay)	*Infection by agent of spoilage. *Mixing bad fruits with good ones.
Colour Degradation	*Harvesting of immature or over-ripe fruits. *Harvesting during hot weather.
Oozing of water and bad odour	*Compression of fruits during transportation. *Mechanical damage.

## **Equipment For Postharvest Handling Of Fresh Fruit of Tomato:**

- Crates for packing and transporting fresh tomato fruits.

The following are the crates you can use.

- Plastic crates
- Collapsible wooden crates.
- Waxed paper cartoons.



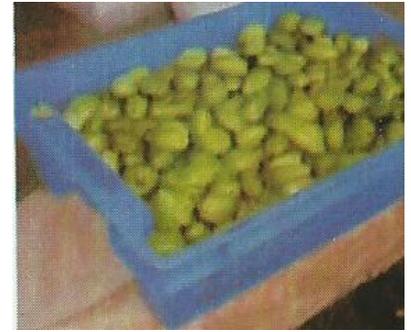
## **Packaging House**

This provides cool environment for packaging and storage of fresh fruits.



## **Recommendations for Handling Fresh Fruits after Harvest**

- Start harvesting when 20% of the fruits are ripe.
- Harvest mature green fruits by hand picking.
- Harvest ripe fruits for processing and for direct consumption
- Do not mix ripe and unripe fruits in the same Packaging material.
- Do not mix bad and damaged fruits with wholesome ones.



### Vehicle

- Do not heap fruit but Package them in crates and store in cool places.
- Process excess ripe fruits.
- To transport crated fruit use ventilated vehicle.



### Processing of Tomatoes

- To avoid wastage process tomatoes into durable products.
- Make use of freshly harvest, matured and ripe tomatoes in processing
- You can process into dried tomato, to produce tomato powder that you can package and use later.



### Drying of tomato:

- To produce dried tomato select the cultivar that is red in colour when ripe.
- Select red, ripe tomatoes that are firm in texture and free from diseases and mould.
- Wash the freshly harvested tomatoes in clean water using large bowl.
- Slice tomatoes into thin slices and remove the seeds.
- Spread the sliced tomatoes on clean trays and use multipurpose, hybrid or solar dryers to produce dries tomatoes.
- Don't dry sliced tomatoes on open floor.
- While using upon sun drying, it must be on raised platform and cover with mosquito netting to prevent contamination from flies.
- You can mill the dried tomato and pack in polythene bags and store in cardboard boxes to prevent from direct light.

- Store in cool, dry place.



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