

Passionfruit - harvest and post-harvest

Passionfruit harvesting is done by hand and is quite labour intensive. It is important to plan for the harvesting season, including thinking about how you will collect, package and store your fruit. Talk to the people you plan to sell to about their requirements for quality and packaging.

Harvest

Harvesting of passionfruit can begin as early as February and continue as late as October. The majority of the fruit is usually picked between March and May.

Passionfruit fall off the vine when they are mature, and are harvested by picking them up off the ground by hand. They can be collected into any suitable container, such as a plastic bucket.

Early in the season when it is hot and sunny the fruit needs to be picked up several times a day to avoid sun damage, which can leave the fruit unsaleable. Later in the season it may only need to be picked up a few times a week.



Passionfruit ripening on the vine

<http://www.simply-thai.com/fruit/passion-tree.jpg>

If you need very high quality fruit (such as for export) some fruit can be picked straight from the vine, provided it is fully coloured and near its natural fruit drop. Ripe fruit is a maroon colour. It turns red after picking. Fruit picked from the vine should be picked at the stalk and not too close to the fruit.

Post-harvest handling and packing

Copper based sprays leave a residue on the fruit which can be removed by dipping in a weak acid solution such as citric acid, then washed.

The stalk is trimmed to prevent damage to other fruit once packed, and the calyx is removed to improve the appearance of the fruit and help prevent rot.

Fruit for the local market is usually packed into 5kg cartons. The most important thing for packaging is to minimise damage to the fruit during storage and transport. Get advice from the people you supply to about what they expect in terms of quality and packaging.

Storage

A suggested storage temperature for partially ripe fruit is 7-10°C - they will keep at this temperature for about 4 weeks. Fully ripe fruit can be stored from 5-10°C for about a week.

Passionfruit can be damaged by chilling below 5°C. Problems include discolouration, uneven ripening and unpleasant flavour development. Temperatures above 10°C can increase rot on the fruit.

'Te Pànui Tips' are simple fact sheets that cover topics designing organic crop production systems on the East Coast.

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