P A P A Y A

How to Minimize On-Farm Papaya Fruit Damage

Papaya fruits harvested for local and export markets require proper handling.
This poster illustrates the best harvesting practices to minimize abrasion injury to green fruit.
Contact with white latex sap from damaged fruit can make other fruit less marketable.

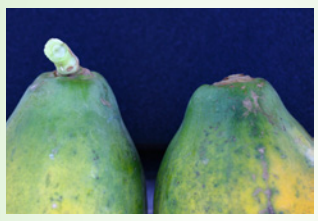
Careful fruit thinning of young papaya fruits ensures even, well-spaced fruit set on column. This will help produce uniform-sized, well-shaped fruit at harvest.

Dried leaf petioles can cause abrasions on papaya fruit and should be removed.

Use both hands to separate green fruits carefully from the fruit being harvested.

Gloves can reduce fingernail damage to papaya fruit surfaces. Gloves should be cleaned regularly to prevent a buildup of dried latex and dirt that can injure the fruit skin.

Surface nicks and any rubbing or abrasion cause white latex to appear. The area becomes desiccated, and a sunken green lesion occurs as fruits ripen.



Trim papaya fruit peduncles flush with fruit surface before loading into harvesting bag/bucket/bin. Stand fruit upright with the stem end down or dab latex off of stem end during harvest. Latex may cause blemishes on ripe yellow fruits.

Wash and remove dried sap, which can trap dirt and grit, from the walls of bags/buckets. Dried latex can also cause abrasions on freshly harvested papaya fruits. Routine cleaning of harvesting equipment and supplies can help reduce post-harvest damage to papayas.

Harvest low-bearing papaya fruits when ground is dry. Use a feather-type duster to remove soil particles that may adhere to the surface of the papaya fruit before placing fruit into bags/bins. Soil particles can be abrasive to adjacent harvested fruits.

Make a conscious effort to drive slowly when delivering bins to packinghouse especially on bumpy roadways.

If pallet-size plastic/vinyl bins are used, clean bin walls regularly; if wooden bins are used, line the bottom and walls of bins with a plastic or polyethylene foam sheet. Also, consider covering top of full bin with a non-abrasive quilted blanket to minimize the shuffling of fruits in transit and their direct exposure to the sun. For food safety reasons, make sure liners are clean, sanitized, and/or used only once.

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