

Avocado Fruit Maturation and Criteria for Harvest

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Abstract. We regard "horticultural maturity" of avocado fruit as the point in time when harvested fruit will soften properly and will have a certain minimum acceptable taste. Time from harvest to softening of a fruit is generally shorter when maturity is advanced. The differences in time to soften between the adaxial and the abaxial portions of the fruit also diminish with maturity. Oil and dry matter may be used as a criterion of harvest. Each cultivar, however, has a distinct level of oil and dry matter when it reaches its minimal acceptable taste. The rate of oil accumulation also varies between cultivars. An additional problem is that in a given orchard, the time of attaining "horticultural maturity" can vary up to three weeks from year to year. Generally, there is no clear relationship between fruit weight and time of "horticultural maturity", although a positive relationship is sometimes found. When rates of oil/dry matter accumulation in fruit were studied, a sharp change was found. However, we were unable to use this change as a criterion for predicting time of harvest.