

CHARACTERIZATION OF MATURITY PARAMETERS IN ESTHER AVOCADO (*Persea americana* Mill.) FRUITS DURING POSTHARVEST COLD STORAGE

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The evolution of different quality parameters during avocado cold storage was determined for different harvest days, storage temperatures and storage periods. Twelve 8-year-old trees were used, with three samplings being performed every month as of January 18th, 2006. Harvested avocado samples were stored for 10, 20 and 30 days at 4, 6 and 9°C and evaluated after a storage period at 20°C, once the fruit reached 0.5-0.9 k-f firmness. The evaluated parameters were dehydration, ripening time and skin and flesh colour (tristimulus colorimeter MINOLTA, model CR-300). The results of the evaluated parameters were analyzed through ANOVA according to a factorial randomized design of 3 x 3 x 3 (harvest dates x storage periods x storage temperatures). The results obtained indicate that for dehydration no differences were detected among treatments, with storage temperature and harvest date as determining factors. Ripening time showed differences attributable to harvest dates, storage periods and storage temperatures, and the determining factor was storage period. Skin and pulp colour presented differences attributable to harvest date.