

Harvesting mangos

Part I – How to tell when a mango is ready to harvest

A mango is ripe if it is at peak sweetness, flavor, and texture, ready to eat. A mango is mature when, if picked, it will eventually ripen. (Note: If an unripe mango is stored at temperatures below 55 degrees, it will never ripen properly.)

Here is a sure way to determine if a mango is mature, though it does require destroying the mango:

Richard Campbell - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMv6bdi5N2U>

There are hundreds of varieties of mangos, and the fruit of different varieties differs in its appearance as it matures and ripens. In particular, for many varieties color is not a reliable indicator of maturity. Some varieties stay green even when fully ripe. Others develop a red blush, unrelated to maturity, wherever the sun hits them.

To assess maturity visually, one can use the following “indicators”. Though not 100% reliable, they work fairly well:

- 1) shoulder rise (= panicle drop),
- 2) brown lenticels, and
- 3) dry stalk.

The following video gives very clear explanations of the indicators:

Daniel Komayire -Selective Harvest - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4qSHrepLL8> from 3:00 to 6:30.

Part II – How to harvest mangos

Don't harvest mangos if you are allergic to the sap. Let someone else do it.

Keep two feet on the ground at all times. It's only fruit, not worth an injury.

Mangos are best harvested when they are still hard (so that they aren't easily damaged in post-harvest handling), but not far from beginning to soften.

Don't let the mangos drop-- clip the stems using pruners or cut-and-hold harvesters of appropriate length for the height of the mango. (If you don't clip the stems, the fruit will often “bleed” sap, which creates a sticky mess and can damage the skin of the fruit. Stems can be clipped short or broken off later after the fruit has sat for a time.)

Place harvested mangos carefully in bins, put them in the shade and get them out of the summer heat as soon as practical.

The following video shows proper harvesting technique:

Daniel Komayire -Selective Harvest - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4qSHrepLL8> from 10:30 to end of video at 16:30.