

## ABSTRACT

The post-harvest storage of pomarac (*Syzygium malaccense*) under refrigerated and controlled atmosphere conditions

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The shelf-life and postharvest quality of the pomarac (*Syzygium malaccense*) were measured through physical, chemical and sensory changes for ambient, refrigerated, waxed, packaged, and controlled atmosphere stored pomarac, as well as for fruits stored in light or dark conditions.

Pomarac stored under ambient conditions (28°C) and which were unacceptable after 8 days showed rapid losses in weight, firmness, total soluble solids, fading of the red skin colour, high levels of shrivelling, decay, off-odours and a resulting objectionable taste. A shelf-life of 20 days was achieved for pomarac stored at 5°C. Such fruits were acceptable in terms of colour, firmness and taste compared to other refrigerated temperatures (10 and 15°C), however shrivelling was very apparent and thus a limiting parameter.

Waxed fruits marginally reduced weight losses, total soluble solids and colour loss compared to untreated fruits held at 5°C. Packaging improved the quality of the fruits compared to untreated and waxed fruits as weight loss, firmness and shrivelling were all reduced after 25 days of storage at 5°C.

The results of the respiration studies showed that under all temperature treatments (5, 10, 15 and 25°C), the levels of CO<sub>2</sub> produced declined with storage time. No levels of ethylene were detected for pomegranate stored at all four temperatures. Pomegranate therefore exhibited a non-climacteric respiratory pattern. Storing pomegranate in a dark chamber reduced the rate of colour loss compared to storage under light.

Storing pomegranate in controlled atmosphere (CA) of 1% oxygen and 11% or 14% carbon dioxide at 5°C reduced weight loss, sugar loss and maintained firmness during storage. Other characteristics of CA stored fruits included lower rates of colour loss and a good to satisfactory taste with fruits having a typical pomegranate flavour. CA storage extended the shelf-life of the pomegranate to 25 days while enhancing the fruits' quality beyond that achieved at 5°C under normal air storage.

Special thanks to the Organization of American States (OAS) for providing me with a grant and to the University of the West Indies for the Postgraduate Scholarship granted to me. The author wishes to express her gratitude to Mr. B. Lauckner (Statistician, CAIR) in the statistical analysis of my data. I would like to acknowledge the patience and excellent work done by Mr. Peter Aboune in typing this thesis.

Special thanks to Dr. Winston Lewis, a friend, who has helped me throughout the course of this study. Finally, many thanks to my