

EFFECTS OF CHEMICAL TREATMENTS ON THE RETENTION OF ASCORBIC ACID AND SULPHURDIOXIDE CONTENT IN DATES DURING STORAGE

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ABSTRACT

Research was conducted on the effects of different chemical treatments i.e dipping in 3% brine solution, 0.25% acetic acid solution 0.25% citric acid solution for 5 minutes and sulphuring for 2 hours, on the retention of ascorbic acid and sulphur-dioxide contents in two cultivars of dates viz Basra and Dhakki during storage. It was found that both vitamin 'C' and sulphur-dioxide significantly decreased with the passage of storage periods.

INTRODUCTION

Date palm (Phoenix dactylifera L.) belongs to the family palmaceae. It is perhaps the oldest fruit plant cultivated on this globe. As confirmed by history and corroborated by the archeological research of ancient historical remains of the Sumerians and Akadians, the houses of these very ancient races were roofed with palm tall trunks and fronds. Thus probably, Date palm is the most ancient tree of the world. Its origin is said to be near Persian Gulf i.e. in countries like Iraq, Iran, Arabia and North Africa, but most of its development took place in Iraq, a leading date growing country in the world, produces approximately 0.4 million tonne of date fruit annually, of which 2/3 is exported.

The people of hot and dry areas of Pakistan always find dates as an ideal food. During the harvesting season, most of the population in the date growing areas largely consume this fruit as food for subsistence.

Date fruit ranks fourth in area and production in Pakistan. According to Agricultural Statistics of Pakistan (1985), its total