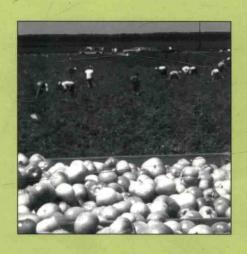
Second Edition, Revised and Expanded



edited by

Jerry A. Bartz

Jeffrey K. Brecht

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Jerry A. Bartz Jeffrey K. Brecht

University of Florida Gainesville, Florida, U.S.A.



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Preface to the Second Edition

Postharvest Physiology of Vegetables is extremely useful to everyone concerned with the production and marketing of fresh vegetables. It presents the physiology and associated pathology of fresh vegetables under a single cover. Teachers, students, and researchers, as well as the vegetable industry, can read about the scientific principles that govern the postharvest life of fresh vegetables. The first edition's editor (J. Weichmann) urged his contributors to concentrate on the postharvest physiology of the various plant organs because he sensed the need for a comprehensive discussion of the physiological factors that influence the postharvest life of fresh vegetables. There was no other book quite like the one Weichmann had in mind. He recognized that physiology, not technology, dictates how crops must be handled to maintain optimal quality with minimal waste. Recognizing similarities and differences between various crop physiologies is essential to successful marketing strategies.

Weichmann wrote in the Preface to the first edition that he was motivated by the absence of a book on the "basic postharvest physiology in the botanical sense." Except for *Postharvest Physiology of Vegetables*, this remains largely true today. Books about the postharvest world of crops deal mostly with fruits, toxins in stored grains, and storage technology. Therefore, the second edition is dedicated to those who labor with harvested vegetables, particularly with their physiology or microbiology.

Now, more than 10 years after the first edition of *Postharvest Physiology of Vegeta-bles* was published, it seems appropriate to revisit the postharvest world of vegetables to find what's new, what's still useful, and how the new and still useful can be meshed together to reduce wastage, improve quality, and, most importantly, provide products desired by consumers. In the past decade, consumers have found that a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables is healthful and fulfilling, as well as one of the best guarantees against health problems ranging from obesity to cancer. Modern markets have strived to provide consumers with an ambundance of different fresh fruits and vegetables. Produce sections

of supermarkets are usually located near the store entrance to convince customers that the market is clean, progressive, and, in general, a nice place to shop. New ways of marketing fresh produce are being devised, including ready-to-eat fruit and vegetable salads, fruit sections, vegetable sticks, and stir-fry vegetables. The new paradigm in produce marketing, which includes providing convenience, a bright, fresh appearance, desired texture, freedom from undesirable microorganisms, and homegrown flavor, has created new challenges for the postharvest practitioner.

Advances in plant physiology, biochemistry, and molecular biology have had great effects on our knowledge and understanding of postharvest physiology. For example, new evidence on the role of ethylene and other plant hormones in various tissue and cellular processes is presented on a seemingly daily basis. The importance of membrane phenomena and membrane compositional changes in the response of plant organs to postharvest stresses is more recognized now than ever. Similarly, there is a greater appreciation for the influence of preharvest environmental and cultural factors on postharvest behavior. Information regarding the mechanisms of atmosphere modification in maintaining plant tissue integrity is transforming what was once strictly an empirical field of study. The growth in popularity of fresh-cut products has focused new attention on wound responses, an understanding of which is critical to the development of handling procedures for these items.

Since the world of vegetables postharvest has changed markedly in recent years, we felt that to be useful the book had to be expanded. As a consequence, sections and chapters were added or reorganized. The title of the book was changed to reflect the coverage of microbial ecosystems on vegetables. Unfortunately, certain topics such as biotechnology and food safety are so dynamic that it is impossible to stay abreast of the latest findings. We ask our readers to be patient with such apparent lapses, for they are out of our control. We feel that the new organization presents a complete treatment of postharvest vegetables.

Chapter topics are grouped into six parts: basic postharvest physiology, factors affecting postharvest physiology, product quality changes during handling and storage, technologies to improve postharvest quality, biotic and abiotic factors involved with spoilage, and storage characteristics of different categories of vegetables. An introductory chapter contains a brief history of the changes in the postharvest world of vegetables over the past decade. It is clear that technological advances have been made possible only because of knowledge about the postharvest physiology of the raw and fresh-cut products.

Part I, "Basic Postharvest Physiology of Vegetables," contains updated reviews of the principles involved with the harvest and storage of fresh vegetables. Part II, "Factors Affecting Postharvest Physiology," includes two new chapters: Chapter 6, on preharvest factors such as calcium nutrition and control of irrigation, which affect the postharvest life of vegetables, and Chapter 7, which covers wound healing, nonspecific respiration increase, as well as the effect of injuries on the physiology of the crop. In addition, three chapters from the previous edition on atmosphere modifications as postharvest treatments have been combined into one to provide a more coherent treatment of the subject.

Part III, "Product Quality Changes During Handling and Storage," has been modified. We have deleted chapters on amino acids and minerals and separated the previous sensory quality chapter into three chapters on color, texture, and flavor and aroma, reflecting the recognition of the physiological basis of sensory aspects in postharvest physiology. Part IV, "Technologies To Improve Postharvest Quality," is entirely new, con-

taining discussions of the physiological foundations of successful technologies in the areas of harvest and handling, chemical treatments, and biotechnology.

Part V, "Biotic and Abiotic Factors Involved with Spoilage," is a revision of the previous edition's part on postharvest diseases and injuries. Modifications include Chapter 19, "Temperature Extremes," which replaces chapters on chilling and freezing injury and frost damage and adds a discussion of high-temperature injury that was not in the previous edition. The chapter on host–parasite relations now includes recent findings on changes in host susceptibility to postharvest pathogens. The chapter on bacteria contains recent information about the survival and growth of human pathogens on fresh vegetables. Two new chapters in this part include one devoted to the control of spoilage using "biocontrol" methods and a separate treatment of the use of sanitation to control spoilage and other hazardous organisms—including a discussion of HACCP as it applies to fresh product packinghouses.

The last part, "Storage Characteristics of Different Categories of Vegetables," contains modifications to the "Postharvest Physiology of Certain Vegetables" part of the first edition. We have categorized vegetables by type of tissue or organ so that their physiology can be discussed on the basis of similarities within a category. Additionally, fresh-cut vegetables are covered under a separate chapter because of the complex nature of preventing the consequences of wound physiology.

Our chapter authors were selected carefully and represent a range of disciplines, including postharvest researchers and teachers from horticulture, plant pathology, microbiology, food science, and engineering. This is fitting because the challenges and problems ahead are not likely to be restricted to any one discipline. Multidisciplinary approaches will become the normal way to solve intransigent postharvest problems in the years to come. We asked the contributors to focus first on the basic principles of postharvest physiology and pathology related to their topic, and then to expand where appropriate to illustrate how those principles relate to the postharvest characteristics and behavior of vegetables. We also asked them to cover the technologies that have been developed for maintaining vegetable quality after harvest. We feel that they have succeeded admirably in that regard. We express gratitude to them for agreeing to contribute to this volume, devoting time and energy to the cause, turning out excellent analyses of their topic, and remaining patient with us throughout the process.

It is the express purpose of this book to review various components of the postharvest world of vegetables. We hope that students of all ages will be stimulated into devising ways for better preservation of vegetable quality, more vegetable products (particularly fresh-cut vegetables), safer products, and a wider array of vegetables in the marketplace—all leading to healthier diets, less strain on the environment, and a happier society.

Jerry A. Bartz Jeffrey K. Brecht

Preface to the First Edition

According to a study of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, large losses of vegetables occur yearly during the postharvest period. These losses are high not only in less developed countries, but also in very well-developed ones where modern technologies are available.

A number of books have addressed postharvest technologies, but the physiology of plant foods is usually covered on a small scale, and sometimes not at all. This in spite of the fact that the basis of all technological measures is the reaction of the plant, which means the physiology of the plant.

Postharvest technology has to be based on postharvest physiology. For a long time I have lamented that no book existed dealing with basic postharvest physiology in the botanical sense. This book is dedicated to all those working with vegetable crops who want to increase their knowledge as well as look for the underlying principles: to advisers and managers, to students as well as teachers, in practice or at universities.

It is impossible for one person to summarize all the knowledge of postharvest physiology, because research in this topic is divided into numerous disciplines. So a number of well-known scientists from all over the world were asked to focus on certain areas of postharvest physiology, providing information that is comprehensive, complete, and incorporates the latest results. Each chapter is complete in itself, but cross-references have been made to avoid repetition.

The editor wishes to express his appreciation to all of the authors, who accepted a task of several years' duration. My sincere thanks go to the publisher for initiating this project, as well as for their interest and cooperation during the preparation of this volume.

It is our mutual wish that this book will help to avoid or at least reduce quality losses during the postharvest period. The book shall also help reduce crop losses—and thereby fight against hunger worldwide. Hunger is caused by the human, and the human must fight against it.

Contributors

Alexandros Aggelis Institute of Viticulture Vegetable Crops and Floriculture, National Agricultural Research Foundation, Heraklion, Crete, Greece

Elizabeth A. Baldwin Citrus and Subtropical Products Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Winter Haven, Florida, U.S.A.

M. Margaret Barth Redi-Cut Foods, Inc., Franklin Park, Illinois, U.S.A.

Jerry A. Bartz Plant Pathology Department, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, U.S.A.

Shimshon Ben-Yehoshua Department of Postharvest Science of Fresh Produce, Agricultural Research Organization—The Volcani Center, Bet Dagan, Israel

Mondher Bouzayen Ecole Nationale Supérieure Agronomique de Toulouse and Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, Toulouse, France

Jeffrey K. Brecht Horticultural Sciences Department, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, U.S.A.

William S. Conway Produce Quality and Safety Laboratory, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, Maryland, U.S.A.

Jean Pierre Emond Department of Soils and Agrifood Engineering, Laval University, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada

xiv Contributors

Robert Golaszewski Food Science and Human Nutrition Department, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, U.S.A.

Wojciech J. Janisiewicz Appalachian Fruit Research Station, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Kearneysville, West Virginia, U.S.A.

Adel A. Kader Department of Pomology, University of California, Davis, Davis, California, U.S.A.

Angelos K. Kanellis Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

Graeme King Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Wellington, New Zealand

Lise Korsten Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Alain Latché Ecole Nationale Supérieure Agronomique de Toulouse and Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, Toulouse, France

Pamela M. Ludford* Department of Fruit and Vegetable Science, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, U.S.A.

Niels Maness Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

A. Raymond Miller Department of Horticulture and Crop Science, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, The Ohio State University, Wooster, Ohio, U.S.A.

Majeed Mohammed Department of Food Production, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad

Maria Cecília do Nascimento Nunes Department of Soils and Agrifood Engineering, Laval University, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada

Erin M. O'Donoghue New Zealand Institute for Crop & Food Research Ltd., Palmerston North, New Zealand

Jean-Claude Pech Ecole Nationale Supérieure Agronomique de Toulouse and Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, Toulouse, France

Penelope Perkins-Veazie South-Central Agricultural Research Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Lane, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

^{*} Deceased.

Contributors xv

Dov Prusky Department of Postharvest Science of Fresh Produce, Agricultural Research Organization—The Volcani Center, Bet Dagan, Israel

Victor Rodov Department of Postharvest Science of Fresh Produce, Agricultural Research Organization—The Volcani Center, Bet Dagan, Israel

Mikal E. Saltveit Louis K. Mann Laboratory, Department of Vegetable Crops, University of California, Davis, California, U.S.A.

Carl E. Sams Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, U.S.A.

Maite Sanmartin Institute of Viticulture, Vegetable Crops, and Floriculture, National Agricultural Research Foundation, and Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Foundation for Research and Technology—Hellas, Heraklion, Crete, Greece

Robert L. Shewfelt Department of Food Science and Technology, The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, U.S.A.

Charles A. Sims Food Science and Human Nutrition Department, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, U.S.A.

Andrew C. Smith Institute of Food Research, Colney, Norwich, U.K.

Mark L. Tamplin* Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, U.S.A.

Keith W. Waldron Institute of Food Research, Colney, Norwich, U.K.

Chien Yi Wang Produce Quality and Safety Laboratory, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, Maryland, U.S.A.

Fritz C. Wehner Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Cheng-I Wei Nutrition and Food Science Department, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, U.S.A.

Bruce D. Whitaker Produce Quality and Safety Laboratory, Plant Sciences Institute, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, Maryland, U.S.A.

Hong Zhuang Redi-Cut Foods, Inc., Franklin Park, Illinois, U.S.A.

^{*} Current affiliation: Eastern Regional Research Center, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.