

**Determination of maturity indices for harvesting of drumstick (*Moringa oliferal*) variety Raan Murunga.**

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Moringa is a popular home garden vegetable crop. Harvesting of crops at incorrect stage of maturity leads to serious quantitative and qualitative losses. Farmers used to harvest post at its maximum size to obtain maximum yield. As a result pods become tough quickly making them inedible and poor in quality. However, the maturity indices for harvesting of moringa have not yet been determined for practical use.

The CARP has provided a research grant to initiate a project to determine the maturity indices of selected economically important crops. Under this project, during the year 2005 a study was completed to determine the changes in physical and chemical properties with maturity of moringa to identify the correct stage of maturity for harvesting.

It was found that toughening of moringa pods were caused by formation of lignin. The only practical means of controlling lignifications is by prevention. Therefore, harvesting of pods before lignifications is the best stage of maturity. So, that moringa variety Raan Murunga should be harvested when the pods are at maximum length, before seeds prominent form out dark green and flexible. It takes 38 days from flowering to come to best stage of maturity.