

Technical Bulletin #36:

# Cucumber

## 1. Harvest

- Cucumber can be harvested 32 to 35 days from transplanting depending on the variety.
- Harvest cucumbers when they are smooth, shiny, dark green and tender.
- Over maturity is indicated by yellowing, shriveling on the skin and the development of bitter off-flavor.
- Harvesting should be conducted during the coolest time of the day, preferably in the morning, after the leaves and fruit have completely dried.
- Harvesting when the plants are wet will encourage the spread of foliar diseases.
- Harvesting in the afternoon will result in slightly softer and more flaccid fruit (product).
- Remove cucumber from the plant with pruning shears, sharp knife or scissors.
- After harvesting, avoid direct sunlight and place product in the shade. Product should not be exposed to the sun for more than 15 minutes.
- Harvested cucumbers should be kept as cool as possible.



Harvesting cucumbers using scissors

## 2. Cleaning

- Cleaning can be done manually by rubbing the fruit surface with a soft damp cloth or cotton gloves, or by washing with potable water.
- If there is no potable water, use Sodium hypochlorite at a concentration of 150 ppm (15g/L) as a sanitizing agent keeping the water at a pH of 6.5 for effective cleaning.
- After cleaning, cucumber is generally placed on a soft mesh or wire table to dry before sorting and grading.
- Cucumber is graded based on size, uniformity of shape, firmness, skin color, and fruit length.



Cucumbers after being cleaned with a cloth

## 3. Packing for transport

- Cucumbers should be packed in strong, well-ventilated containers such as wooden or durable plastic containers, or bamboo baskets. Always use liners such as banana leaves or cushions.



Plastic crates facilitate harvesting

- The container should have protective padding to prevent fruit from scarring and abrasions.
- The container should be well-ventilated and hold about 25 kg of product.
- Never put cucumbers in plastic bags as that will lead to an excessive buildup of heat.
- Fully loaded containers should be taken to a shaded, well-ventilated temporary holding area.
- Avoid overloading.

#### 4. Transportation

- To protect the product from damage, avoid piling containers on top of each other, unless sufficient space is maintained between containers.
- Use a cloth to cover the containers from sunlight and dust.
- The ideal vehicle for transporting should have refrigeration to reduce transpiration. If this is not possible, at least have a roof to protect the product from direct sunlight, dirt and dust. Transporting to the market should be done as early in the morning as possible, late afternoon, or at night.



Plastic crates for motorbike transportation

#### 5. Storage

- Keep product in a cool place such as under the house, or other shaded areas with good ventilation.
- Cucumbers are susceptible to water loss during storage. Therefore, using a wet cloth to cover the containers and avoiding direct contact with the cucumbers will help to reduce the evaporation rate of water and will lead to a better quality product at the time of selling.
- Frequently sprinkle the cloth with clean water to maintain coolness.
- For longer storage up to two weeks, cucumbers should be kept at 10 degrees Celsius with relative humidity of 95%.

#### 6. Nutrition Value

- Cucumbers are a low-calorie food, and are very low in Saturated Fat, Cholesterol, and Sodium - making them a good food for a heart-healthy diet.
- Cucumbers contain Vitamins A, C, and K, Pantothenic Acid, Magnesium, Phosphorous and Manganese, and Potassium, but are not major sources of Carbohydrates, Proteins or other micronutrients that are essential for a healthy diet.

##### **Cambodia HARVEST**

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