

# Proper Fruit Selection During Harvest Improves Market Value

Proper selection of fruits is important to maintain consumer and market satisfaction.

Fruits should be harvested at the correct stage for the targeted market to obtain maximum shelf life for that fruit. Ideally, harvested papayas should be washed, graded, treated for pests, and packed appropriately for local, mainland, and export markets within 18 to 24 hours.



**GREEN**  
Green fruits will not ripen properly (sugar content too low, color won't change, fruit may not soften, etc.). Low-quality fruits reflect poorly on Hawai'i's papaya industry. Therefore, green fruits should generally not be harvested, though clients who specifically request green papaya should be accommodated.

**TINGE (color break)**  
Mature green stage: Slightly yellow at the blossom end of the fruit. Any yellow tinge showing on the apical end of the fruit, the color break, indicates that the papaya has reached full maturity.

**1/8 RIPE**

**1/4 RIPE**  
Slight yellowing over the entire fruit.

**3/8 RIPE**



**1/2 RIPE**  
Fruit is half green and half yellow over the entire fruit.

**5/8 RIPE**

**3/4 RIPE**  
Predominantly yellow over the entire fruit. Typically three-quarter-ripe fruits are ideal for the local market. During the winter season when temperatures are cool, three-quarter-ripe fruits are permissible for export markets.

**FULL RIPE**  
Fruit is completely yellow. Fruit that is completely ripe should not be harvested for mainland or export markets without proper packaging and transportation.

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