Book Review

Fruit and vegetables: harvesting, handling and storage (2nd edn)
AK Thompson
460 pp ISBN 1-4051-0619-0

The present monograph focuses on the post-harvest technology of fruit and vegetables, from preharvest factors to marketing and transport (Chapters 1 to 11). It also covers aspects of harvesting, handling, precooling, packaging, postharvest treatments, storage, disease control, safety and fruit ripening. Chapter 12, about two thirds of the book, is devoted to a comprehensive list of fruit and vegetables, which are sorted alphabetically with a unified outline for all crops. Most of the entries contain background information on botany and crop origin, harvesting, ripening, optimum storage conditions for the main grown cultivars and disease control.

The book, which is the second edition of ‘Postharvest Technology of Fruits and Vegetables’ dated 1996, is intended to be “essential reading for fruit and vegetables technologists, food scientists and food technologists, agricultural scientists, commercial grower, shippers and warehousing operatives and personnel within packaging company”. However, some chapters are not covered in enough depth to provide new and valuable information for food scientists and technologists. The book may, however, be valuable for horticulture and food science students and professional growers because of its broad range of crops covered in Chapter 12. Information in the book is well supported by tables, figures and colour plates.

In my opinion, fruit ripening conditions (Chapter 10) should have been placed after harvesting and handling methods and before postharvest treatments (Chapter 6). Packaging (Chapter 5) provides a good source material with a global perspective. Chapter 6 is well updated with the incorporation of 1-MCP, although the terminology of ‘antiethylene’ may not be as familiar as ‘ethylene receptor blocking agent’, which is the more common term. Disease control (Chapter 8) contains a valuable discussion of the new tendency to use essential oils as alternatives to conventional antimicrobial additives in foods. However, more detailed information and more references would have been useful.

In conclusion, the book is clearly written for a broad audience and is a useful general reference for students and professional growers. The information in Chapters 1 to 11 is too general and is not comprehensive enough for postharvest researchers. The information on the broad range of crops (over 280) addressed in Chapter 12 is valuable, especially the storage recommendations for each individual crop.

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