



22/05/09

Information Sheet - Harvest Maturity

Papaya fruits should be harvested when the colour of the skin changes from dark green to light green and when one yellow streak begins development from the base upwards. This stage of ripeness is known as **Colour Break**.

Mature Green

Colour break



Fruits in this condition will continue to ripen normally after harvest. Those fruits harvested before this stage will fail to show complete ripening, and those harvested after, are more susceptible to damage and bruising during handling.

Importers require fruit at specific stages of ripeness for optimum sales; this varies between $\frac{1}{2}$ ripe and $\frac{3}{4}$ ripe depending on the importer. For fruit to arrive in the importing country at the correct colour stage, attention has to be paid to the maximum and minimum colour stages during harvesting, grading and packing in Fiji.

Everyone loses (farmer, exporter, importer, buyer) if fruit is picked and packed too green or too ripe. It is most important to control this at the farm level but later graders and handlers should be aware of this threat.

