

# Fruits and vegetables for all seasons Project

## GUAVA HARVESTING AND POSTHARVEST HANDLING



### Introduction

- Kenya has a favourable climate for high guava production.
- Guavas are nutritious, have high levels of ascorbic acid, riboflavin (vitamin B2), vitamin A (beta carotene) and minerals - phosphorus, iron, zinc and calcium, etc..
- The fruits grow naturally unattended to, and are neglected leading to high postharvest and field losses in the country.

### Guava Diseases and pests

- Guavas are susceptible to fungal diseases including: wilt, dieback, anthracnose, canker, dry rot and fruit rot which contribute to postharvest losses.
- Guavas are commonly infested by insect which cause significant economic damages to the fruits.
- The major pests are fruit-flies, scale insects, bark-eating caterpillar, fruit-borers and mealy bugs.
- These should be controlled by implementing good agricultural practices

### Harvesting

- Guava fruits should be harvested mature green or firm-ripe after attaining the right stages based on maturity indices including:
  - Fruit skin and flesh color
  - Fruit size
  - Fruit shape

#### Harvesting practices

- Hand harvesting- reduces physical damage on fruits. Mechanical – orchards.
- Harvesting should be done in the early morning or late evening hours to minimize field heat.



### Transportation

- **Transportation-** should be hygienic and must safeguard against bruising and injury to the fruit - soft and smooth lining materials are recommended.
- **Packaging-** guavas can be packaged in boxes, sacks, crates, polythene bags, plastic nets and cartons. The packaging material should ensure respiration continues to prevent deterioration.
- Fruits should not be overstuffed in the transport containers.



### Guava postharvest storage

- **Storage at room temperature** - Guavas ripen rapidly at room temperature and last for only 3-5 days.
- **Low temperature storage-** Guava storage is done at low temperatures (8-10°C). This storage extends shelf life to 7-11 days.
- A combination of modified atmosphere packages and cold storage extend shelf life by up to 11-18 more days compared to room temperatures .
- At farm level, low temperature can be achieved by use of brick/pot or charcoal coolers.

### Postharvest handling

- Harvested fruits should not be placed on dirty surfaces nor exposed to direct sunlight.
- **Sorting-** to separate damaged, rotten ,over-ripe guavas from the healthy fruits.
- **Washing-** guavas should be washed in clean water with 50-70ppm chlorine to remove dirt and prevent microbial growth.

