Title Effect of harvest-time and postharvest treatment on the quality of open-grown flowering peach branches

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Abstract

Cut, flowering peach branches are traditionally used for decorative arrangements in China. However the yearly supply to the market is very limited in the north area at present. In order to investigate the possibility of utilizing the branches from the open field cultivated trees during the earlier season, *Prunus persica* 'Chun Guang' was used for the following experiment. Branches were harvested 7 times at interval of 15 days from the end of December 2005 to the end of March 2006, and then held in vases with distilled water and kept in the observation room with ambient temperature of 20±2°C, 60±5% relative humidity (RH) and light intensity of 80 $\mu mol \cdot m^{-2} s^{-1}$. The percent of opened and fully opened flowers, vase life and the time of forcing were recorded to elucidate the postharvest quality. The results showed large effects of harvest-time on the vase quality of peach cut flowers. The percent of opened and fully opened flowers kept increase during the period of experiment, from 42 and 17% at first rising to 90 and 96% on the end of March respectively. Moreover, branches harvested during the period of December and early showed poor ornamental value, with as long as 25 days of forcing time and only 6-7 days of vase life. Branches cut at the end of March were able to open after 7 days forcing and reached approximately doubled length of vase life and much higher percent of opened and fully opened flowers as mentioned above. Results from this primary study showed that it is possible to harvest the open grown peach branches from the late March and supply the market so that to reduce the production cost.