

Title Supply chain challenges for minor tropical fruit: the Dabai example
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Abstract

Sarawak has a rich gene pool of indigenous fruit trees with potential to be commercialized. International efforts exist to conserve and promote diversity in food supplies for human kind, and development of new fruit for national and international markets is a challenge for local scientists and growers. The Dabai fruit (*Canarium odontophyllum*), known as the ‘Sarawak Olive’, is found naturally only in Sarawak; it is very popular locally and among emigrants from the region. However dabai is very perishable fruit with a shelf life of 2-3 days limiting its markets to nearby towns from its production areas. It is consumed fresh after soaking in warm water (60°C) for about 15 min. Most trees are seedlings (with inherent variability of fruit quality), trees are very large (harvest problems presented), they are located away from easy access (many are grown adjacent to rivers and fruit has to be transported to nearby towns by boat creating transport challenges), and there is poor local infrastructure in relation to packing and cooling facilities, reliable electricity supplies, and transport systems between population centres. Recent development of a freezing package enables storage of frozen dabai fruit for up to a year, making it available year round for marketing to markets further afield and for down stream activities of value-added products. We report on the status of, and suggest improvement, to the dabai supply chain, to maintain postharvest fruit quality during extended storage and transport of this desirable tropical fruit to regional, national and international markets.