

# CURING ROOT and TUBER CROPS

**Introduction:** For roots and tuber crops like sweet potatoes, potatoes and cassava roots, CURING means putting the crop after harvest in a warm, moist environment to help harvest wounds and surface damages to heal.

Why do we cure root and tuber crops?

Reason #1: storage life is longer.

Reason #2: water loss will be lower.

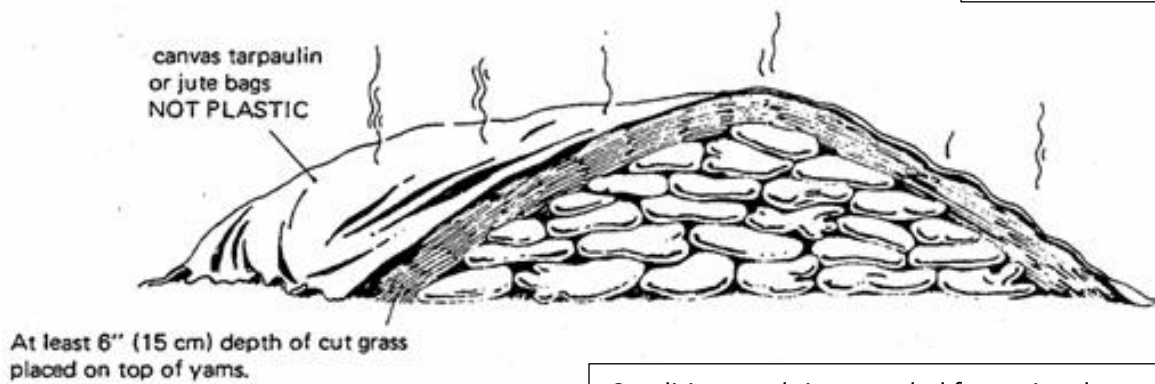
Reason #3: decay rates will be lower.

Well cured sweet potatoes can be stored for 7 months at 15 °C, and well cured potatoes can be stored for up to 10 months at 5 to 12 °C.

## Materials and supplies needed

Cut-away view of yam curing

Field curing



Conditions and time needed for curing depends upon the crop

Commodity	Temperature	Relative humidity
Potatoes	15 to 20 °C	90-95%
Sweet potatoes	30 to 32	85-90
Yams	32 to 40	90-100
Yucca (cassava)	30 to 40	90-95
Taro, Eddoes and Malanga	30 to 35	95

# Postharvest Innovations Plan Series

Number 18

Low cost, small-scale practices for reducing postharvest food losses

December 2017

Shed curing

Sweet potatoes	% Weight loss per month	Weight losses in 6 months
Cured	1.7	10.2%
Uncured	3.8	22.8%



## Costs and benefits

Crop (1000 kg)	No curing	Curing before packing, storage and marketing	Potential increase in profits
Sweet potatoes stored for six months before sale	772 kg to sell @ \$2 per kg \$1544 market value	Field curing, no cost, but 5% weight loss 848 kg to sell for @ \$2 per kg \$1696 market value	\$152 additional market value per 1000 load

## For further information

Small-scale postharvest handling practices: A manual for horticultural crops (Chapter 2; 5<sup>th</sup> edition 2015)

[http://ucanr.edu/sites/Postharvest\\_Technology\\_Center\\_/files/231952.pdf](http://ucanr.edu/sites/Postharvest_Technology_Center_/files/231952.pdf)

Curing brochure, Sonora Pacific

<http://sonorapacific.com/presentations/training-brochures/file/63-post-harvest-curing?start=40>

Postharvest Handling Systems: Underground vegetables (roots, tubers and bulbs)

<http://vric.ucdavis.edu/postharvest/undergnd.htm>

Postharvest Technology Center (UC Davis) <http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu>

The Postharvest Education Foundation <http://www.postharvest.org>

Postharvest Innovations LLC <http://www.postharvestinnovations.com>

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