



# THE PACKER

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## Best practices seminar educates

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Retailers, distributors, importers and others in the supply chain took time out of their day March 17 to learn how to better select and more effectively handle mangoes.

The University of California-Davis Post Harvest Technology Institute hosted the Mango Handling Best Practices seminar, sponsored by the Orlando, Fla.-based National Mango Board.

The Web seminar covered handling best practices for mangoes at the warehouse or distribution center and in-store, as well as selection and cutting practices for consumers.

"This issue of selection and ripening, along with how to cut a mango, has been a top priority in the NMB's educational efforts," said Wendy McManus, director of marketing.

For warehouse and distribution center handling, best practices include moving fruit directly to cold storage, where pallets should be stored on racks at 54-60 degrees and 90% to 95% relative humidity.

For shipping, trucks should be pre-cooled, but not at temperatures lower than 50 degrees.

Temperatures should be maintained as much as possible through all loading, and extreme temperatures should be avoided.

In-store, mangoes should be



Courtesy National Mango Board

**A Web seminar hosted by the University of California-Davis Post Harvest Technology Institute on March 17 covered best handling practices for mangoes, such as gently squeezing mangoes to determine their ripeness.**

stored at the same temperature as the warehouse, but should be displayed at room temperature on the sales floor.

Although they should be well-stocked, mangoes shouldn't be stacked too high to avoid bruising.

Separating them by variety and size is appealing to the consumer, and can help in the quest to educate consumers about mangoes.

Also, grouping mangoes according to ripeness can help educate consumers about which mangoes are ready to eat, and which need a

few days on the countertop.

Educational signs are also important for mangoes, especially when it comes to selection, ripening and cutting.

During the seminar, participants heard best practices for consumer education, and got recommendations for what they should tell their consumers and buyers.

First, color is not the best indicator of ripeness, as mango varieties do different things at different stages. U.S. consumers, especially, like a red blush on their mangoes,

but the blush doesn't reflect ripeness. Consumers should be urged to give mangoes a squeeze to find out their ripeness.

A ripe mango will give slightly and can be eaten immediately, while a firm mango should get a few days on the countertop.

If consumers want to save their mangoes a little longer, they should move them to the refrigerator.

Even if they can pick out a mango, many don't know how to cut it properly.

It is important to work around the long, flat seed center in the fruit.

Anybody cutting mangoes should hold the fruit on a cutting board stem down, then cut through the fruit along the seed, flip the mango over, and repeat on the other side.

The result is two oval-shaped mango "cheeks," leaving the seedy middle out.

Then cut parallel or checkerboard slices into the mango flesh without cutting through the skin, and scoop the flesh out with a spoon.

"There is no doubt at all that most consumers still need education — in particular, about cutting, selecting and ripening," McManus said. "Right now, the economy is a big concern. We will have to work that much harder to educate shoppers about mangoes so they don't retreat to more familiar fruits."