

A SIMPLE METHOD FOR THE PRESERVATION OF FRESHLY HARVESTED CASSAVA ROOTS

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Freshly harvested cassava root

The cassava is an important carbohydrate food staple, providing a cheap energy source for more than 800 million people around the world (FAO, 2007). Production worldwide is estimated to be approximately 230 million tonnes per annum, according to recent FAO statistics (FAOSTAT, 2010). The highly perishable nature of the cassava limits its use as a fresh staple food, as its roots deteriorate very rapidly after about two or three days (Booth, 1973; Beeching, *et. al.*, 2002). Cassava is usually processed into dried products to extend its shelf life. Freshly harvested cassava roots can be stored for long periods using a simple procedure that prevents the rapid deterioration that takes place upon exposure of the peeled root to the natural environment. These few steps can be followed to preserve the cassava roots and add value to this staple food product.

The harvested cassava roots are chopped into small useable chunks (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Cassava root chopped into small useable chunks

The roots are then peeled and washed (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Cassava root peeled and washed

The cassava chunks are then stored in plastic bags and placed in the freezer until ready for use. (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Cassava chunks stored in plastic bag and placed in freezer

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