

Effect of Hot Water Treatment on Post-Harvest Disease and Quality of Sweet Potato

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Abstract: Nigeria is the largest producer of sweet potato in Africa with annual output of 3.46 million metric tons globally the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables, the losses range from 10 to 30% of the entire production. This is due to numerous causes but the most important reason is infestation of fungi. Many synthetic fungicides are employed for postharvest treatment of tubers through the world. However, fungicide residues often represent a significant threat to human health. The current study was to use warm water treatment on sweet potato. Warm water at 50^oc was used for four treatments in three different dipping time of 0min (control) 10 minutes, 15 minutes and 20minutes. Data are collected based on quality assessment these include weight loss, tuber firmness, rind thickness and appearance. The experiment was single factor and will be laid in (CRD). The result on all parameter showed that 10min dipping time has the potential in prolonging the shelf life of tuber by reducing decay on it and has best ability to maintain the quality of sweet potato in comparison with the other treatment.

Keywords: Potato Tuber, Hot Water Treatment, Postharvest, Fungi

Background of the Study

Sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas* L.) is an important crop food security in many parts of the developing world. Sweet potato has a short growth cycle (four to five months): yields will in maginsl area, and is drought tolerant. In addition to these agronomic advantage sweet potato is good source of carbohydrate, fiber, vitamin and minerals (Endrias et al., 2016) Sweet potato also certain phytochemicals which are good for human health despite all these nutritional and agronomic benefit, sweet potato is highly perishable after harvesting (Rees et al., 2003). The major cause of product losses is weight loss, sprouting and rotting (Ravi et al., 1996). Control of sweet potato postharvest losses has generally been reliant on the manipulate of storage temperature and relative humidity. With the aim of achieving an ideal storage temperature of 15 degree and relative humidity of 80% to 95% (Amral B., et al., 2011) in some cases, sprouting and rotting is controlled by heat treatment.

Sweet potato is a major crop that surfer serious negligence in the past and now occupies a global position as a source of food and industrial raw materials (NjokeJ.E., 2007). Nigerian is the abundance producer of sweet potato in Africa with annual output of 3.46 million metric tons and globally the second largest producer after china. However, this is the only crop among the root

and tuber crops that has a position per capital annual rate of increase in production in sub-Saharan Africa (Olagunju FL *et al.*, 20013).

Sweet potato (*ipomoea balatas*) is an herbaceous warm wetted creeping plant that belong to the family of convululacease and genius of *Ipomoeas* (Mbansa E.O 2010). The family is mad of 45 genera and 1000 species. It grows best at temperature of between 24° to 28° with annual rainfall of 1000mm to 7000mmC.

In Nigeria, more 85% of the sweet potato production is done by farmers who maintain small farms and carry out their operations manually with traditional farm tools such as hoe and machete (Okonkwo J.C *et al.*, 2009). According to (Ugonnaet *et al.*, 2013), the main sweet potato growing areas in Nigeria is Jos plateau and this could be attributed to its attitudes which range which range from 1200m to 1400m and summer temperature that rarely exceed 35°c which makes the temperature climate sweet able for potato production. Sweet potato has been identified to be the fourth most important root crop in Nigeria after cassava, yam, and cocoyam (Okonko J.C, 2009),

Postharvest loses are quite often the limiting factor of sufficient production of this particular crop. This may be due to several factors such as improper handling during and after harvest, deficiency in curing and storage infrastructure, lack of proper packing and grading, and also inadequate knowledge in global market requirements and opportunities (Siddique, 2005).

Sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas L*) is an herbaceous warm watered creeping plant that belong to the family of convululaceae and genus of *Ipomoea* (Mbansa, 2010). Sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas(L.) Lam.*), is an important crop food security in many parts of the developing world. Sweet potato has a short growth cycle (four to five months); yields will in marginal area, and is drought tolerant. In addition to these agronomic advantages, sweet potato is good source of carbohydrate, fiber, vitamins and minerals (Woolfe, 1992). Sweet potatoes also contain phytochemicals which are good for human health. Despite all these nutritional and agronomic benefits, sweet potato is highly perishable after harvesting (Reese *et al.*, 2003). The major causes of product losses are weight loss, sprouting and rotting (Ravi *et al.*, 1996). Control of sweet potato postharvest losses has generally been reliant on the manipulation of storage temperature and relative humidity, with the aim of achieving an ideal storage temperature of 15 degrees and a relative humidity of 80% to 95% (Picha, 1985a). In some cases, sprouting and rotting is controlled by use of hot water treatment. (Woolfe, 1992, Afek *et al.*, 1998). However, these control methods are difficult to achieve for subsistence farmers whose villages are not network. The present study investigated the effectiveness of different hot water treatments in preserving the important qualities of sweet potato in order to reduce the usage of synthetic chemicals. The results could be a reference point for relevant parties to take necessary actions in providing a favorable treatment for potato tuber storage and providing an affordable control of diseases.

Material and Method

Sample Collection

One bag of Freshly harvested sweet potato tuber were purchased from Gamboru Market Maiduguri and transported to Ramat Polytechnic postharvest laboratory early in the morning and are allowed to cool for 1hr, clean and stored according to sizes and quality before subjecting

them to the experimental set up. About 128 were washed to removed dirt sorted and dust free sweet potato tubers

Preparation of Sweet Potato for Experiment

The treatment was laid in completely randomize design (CRD). There were four different treatment of hot water treatment that have been tested on sweet potato and each treatment was subject to 10 min, 15 min and 20 min immersion time, T2 (50⁰C for 10 min), T3 (50⁰C for 15 min), and T4 (50⁰C for 20 min). Untreated (0 min control) sweet potato were immersed in sterile water at room temperature only (T1). All the treated sweet potatoes including 0min control were stored at normal room temperature (27⁰C ± 2⁰C) for 4 weeks. Three replicate had been set up for each treatment and each treatment has 2 number of sweet potato per replicate. The assessment of postharvest quality on treated sweet potato was conducted at every 1 week (7 days) interval for week.

Conduction of Experiment

32 tubers from each treatment were initially weighted and monitored at a 7 day (1 week) interval for 4 weeks. Weight loss percentage was calculated using this formula or equation

$$\text{Weight loss (\%)} = \frac{\text{Initially weight} - \text{final weight}}{\text{Initially weight}} \times 100$$

While the Appearance were evaluated using quality rating scale: visual quality rating:- 1 = excellent, fresh appearance; 2 = very good slightly defects; 3 = good limit of salability, defect; 5 = poor). (1 = no decay, 2 = 1-10% decay/slight; 3 = 11-25% decay/moderate; 4 = 26 – 50% decay/moderately 5 = more than 50% decay (Anna M et al., 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tuber Weight Loss

The result for hot water treatment at 4 weeks showed a significant difference among the treatments (Table 1). The control had 35% weight loss, which was significantly higher compared to other treatments. However, there was no significant difference between 20-minute 15-minute dipping time, which had 25% and 23% of weight loss respectively. Followed by 10-minute dipping time which had the lowest weight loss of 15%. The reduction of weight loss in the treatments compared to the control was attributed to the hot water treatment melting the wax and closing cracks while reducing weight loss, delaying ripening and slowing the degradation rate of peroxidase (Lurie et al., 1997).

Tuber Firmness

The observations (Table 1) on firmness display a significantly higher firmness on the fruits treated for 10-minute with a firmness value of 45.5 N, while the control had a significantly lower firmness value of 20.2 N. However, there was no significant firmness difference between the 15- and 20-minute treated fruits with the values of 30.3 N and 29.1 N, respectively. The results suggest that hot water treatment offers benefits in controlling fruit firmness, but prolonging the

period can cause adverse effects on fruit firmness. However, the results were much better than those in the control group were.

Rind thickness

Water loss from sweet potato tubers during storage results in shrinkage and fruit softening. The results (Table 1) for the rind thickness of sweet potato tuber showed a significantly lower rind size for the control compared to other treatments, with a size of 0.99 mm, but there was no significant difference at $P \leq 0.5$ between 15- and 20-min dipping times, with the rind thicknesses of 1.5 mm and 1,6 mm, respectively. Meanwhile, the 10-minute treatment had a highest rind size of 2.1.

Appearance

The observation on appearance of the fruit is presented in Table 1. Appearances showed significant differences at $P \leq 0.5$ between control and other treatment having 1.0 according to the scale of Anna et al., (2019). However, 0-min and 20-min dipping time had a significantly higher scale value of 4.0 respectively, followed by 15-min dipping time having a scale of 3.0. However, there was a significant difference between the 10-min and other treatments respectively.

Table 1. The main effect of hot water treatment on sweet potato tuber during storage.

Treatment	Weight loss (%)	Firmness (N)	Rind thickness (mm)	Appearance (1-5)
Control	35c	20.2c	0.99c	4c
10MIN	15a	45.5a	2.1a	2a
15MIN	23b	30.3b	1.5b	3b
20MIN	25b	29.1b	1.6b	4c

Means with the same alphabet are not significantly different at LSD ($P \leq 0.5$).

Note. Appearance scale of 1 = excellent, fresh appearance; 2 = very good slightly defects; 3 = good limit of salability, defect; 5 = poor). (1 = no decay, 2 = 1-10% decay/slight; 3 = 11-25% decay/moderate; 4 = 26 – 50% decay/moderately 5 = more than 50% decay

Conclusion

In the present study, sweet potato treated with (10 min) dipping time was able to maintain the weight loss firmness, rind thickness and appearance. It showed that hot water treatment of 10 min dipping time at temperature range of 50°C has the potential in prolonging the shelf life of sweet potato by reducing decay and has the best ability to maintaining the quality of sweet potato tuber in comparison with the control and other treatments.

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