

121. Physicochemical Characterization of 'Rocha' Pears Harvested at Different Stages of Maturation in Southern Brazil

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In Brazil pears do not stand out among the most relevant fruit crops, regarding their planted area. However, they are well-accepted by consumers, as have a huge domestic market. There is little information available about pear cultivation, and it still faces problems mostly concerning the harvesting, storage and commercialization phases. The aim of this study was to characterize the fruits of the Rocha cultivar, harvested in different maturation stages and stored under cooling for different periods, regarding physical and chemical aspects. Fruits grown in a commercial orchard located in the municipality of São Francisco de Paula, Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil, were harvested in three maturation stages (E1, E2 and E3) and stored for different periods (0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100 and 120 days). The harvests were performed weekly, from January 18th to February 1st, 2010. The fruits were taken to the Post-Harvesting Laboratory at Embrapa Grape and Wine and evaluated on the following characteristics: fruit firmness, total soluble solids, acidity, pH and epidermis color. After storage, the samples were kept on 20 °C, seeking to simulate a room temperature, for 3 and 6 days. The fruits, especially those harvested at E1 and stored for a maximum of 60 days, have maintained the firmness, with few significant changes on the other attributes. From 80 days of cooling, some quality aspects were affected and the 6-day shelf life period has had a detrimental effect.