

Frequently Asked Questions as at 29-Sep-2009

Q: How do I know when my nuts are ready to harvest?
<i>A: It depends on the variety, "Droppers" that drop on the ground and "Stickers" that have to be picked. If they are Stickers when you remove the husk and the lining is a rich brown colour inside, this is a good indication. You can then do a float test by drying the nut in shell, cracking it open and if all the nuts float it means the oil content is high and they are ready to pick (SP Sep-09)</i>
Q: What is the best way to dry my nuts after husking? (for small amounts)
<i>A: If only a small amount , putting them in an onion sack and hanging them in a warm airy place , until they rattle like a marble. It can take several weeks.(SP Sep-09)</i>
Q: How do I crack open the nuts, as the shells are very hard ?
<i>A: First make sure they are really dry, at least down to 10% moisture content. There are a number of nut crackers on the market at varying prices. 1) Bonks (bang together with nut in middle – short sharp movement), 2) Screw (place nut in and screw down till it cracks open), 3) Hammer types (has a rubber piece on end of hammer to place nut then bang down on something hard) and 4) Vice type (where you place nut in and pull over the handle). I personally like the Vice, it is easy on your hands with no jarring but is probably the most expensive type. (SP Sep-09)</i>
Q: How do I know when the nuts have been dried down to 10% moisture content?
<i>A: Take a sample of the nuts in shell and weigh accurately 100gms (A) place in oven at 106° C. and leave there for 24hrs. Remove and weigh accurately again (B) . The weight will be less than the weight at the beginning; the difference is the weight loss.</i>
<i>Moisture content = (C / A) x 100, where C = A – B. A=Wet weight, B=Dry weight C=Weight loss.</i>
<i>It does not matter if they were picked recently or ages ago. This is to help assess the moisture content of the kernel. If they are recently picked the moisture content is likely to be around 28% if they have been in a drier the moisture content will be much lower. If you want to test nuts from a 10 kg bag take a representative sample from the bag. VW(Sep2009).</i>
Q: Why do I have an orange or brown line around the centre of my kernels?
<i>A: This may be because they have been left on the tree for too long – they are post mature, and have a bitter taste. They need to be discarded. VW(Sep2009).</i>
Q: I have little brown spots on my kernels – what causes this?
<i>A: The little dark indentations on the kernel are probably the result of penetration of the proboscis of the Green Vegetable Bug (GVB) Nezara viridula. Sometimes called the Stink Bug. These insects particularly like long rank vegetation in which they breed so keep the vegetation around the tree short to reduce host plants and keeping fowls seems to reduce their numbers, and /or plant lure crops. VW(Sep2009).</i>
Q: Why do I have an orange or brown line around the centre of my kernels?
<i>A: This may be because they have been left on the tree for too long – they are post mature, and have a bitter taste. They need to be discarded.</i>
Q: I have little brown spots on my kernels – what causes this?
<i>A: The little dark indentations on the kernel are probably the result of penetration of the proboscis of the Green Vegetable Bug (GVB) Nezara viridula. Sometimes called the Stink Bug. These insects particularly like long rank vegetation in which they breed so keep the vegetation around the tree short to reduce host plants and keeping fowls seems to reduce their numbers, and / or use plant lure crops.</i>
Q: What is plant lure crop?
<i>A: to be answered</i>