



How to Harvest Your Macadamia Nuts and Prepare them for Sale

As farmers we can't afford to waste time with produce that cannot be used. So, the first rule is you don't need to harvest the small nuts from your trees. Do not harvest anything smaller than $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch. As you become experienced harvesting you will get a feel for what is the right size. If your macadamia nuts are smaller than $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch they are too small to husk, crack or sell.

Macadamia nuts fall from the tree when ripe, they need to be picked up as soon as you are able and the husk removed. A minimum of once a week. Place the husked nuts in screened racks and allow air to flow all around them, then dry them in the shaded area for a minimum of two weeks. This will lower the moisture content to approximately 25%.

Cull your nuts. Go through your nuts and remove any nuts that are sub-par. This includes, cracked or split nuts, any nut smaller than $\frac{3}{4}$ ", oddly shaped nuts (half nuts are okay as long as they are larger than $\frac{3}{4}$ "), any nuts with mold or mold staining (black stain marks), older nuts that are sun bleached or "rattlers" (nuts that when shaken you can feel the nut meat shake inside).

Then put them in burlap type sacks or better yet, polypropylene sandbags. Never put macadamia nuts in non-perforated plastic bags or containers, this will cause them to mold very fast. You can get sacks from Gold Crown (if I have any available). The sacks are recycled and may need repair. You can also get polypropylene sandbags from Lowes, Home Depot and similar stores. Fill the sacks about $\frac{3}{4}$ full so they won't be too heavy or break open. Bring in your produce to Gold Crown and keep your lot slip. Make sure you fill out the lot slip with your name, address and phone number. The weight from our scale is approximate only.

Gold Crown will then dry your macadamia nuts again using a dryer set at 104 degrees for two to four days. This reduces the moisture content down to less than one percent. Your macadamia nuts will loose weight. We test this moisture content to ensure the nuts can be boxed and sold. We also take a sample of your nuts, crack them, weigh the nut meat and compare this weight to the total weight of the nut in the shell. A Premium nut will crack out 36% or higher. Nuts that crack out less than 36% but more than 28% are regular nuts. If you nuts crack out less than 28%, we will try to cull out the small and bad nuts. If we reject your nuts, you will get a call from us to come and pick them up and see why they were rejected. This is important to you because you may want to fix problems with your trees.

The more nuts you bring into Gold Crown, the higher the price you will get paid for your produce. We cannot predict the final price you will be paid until the end of the year and depends on the market.

You can call Kurt at 951-252-3865 if you have any harvest questions.
Kurt Merrill, Warehouse and Production Manager
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