

Removing the seed coats from germinated bean sprouts

IN THE production of bean sprouts, a common problem faced by farmers is the presence of the seed coat or testa. This is often still attached to the seedling. Removing the seed coats from the harvested beans by hand is laborious and time-consuming. However, a Malaysian farmer has found a better way to deal with this problem.

Based on his own experience, the farmer found that the lack of continuous watering, especially during the night time, is the reason why the seed coat is still attached to the seedling at harvest time. Thus, it is important to water the bean seedlings at regular intervals and at specific times, using the same volume of water, 24 hours a day. This will ensure that the seedlings grow to their optimum size, and are able to shed their seed coats easily.

To separate the loose seed coats from the sprout involves several steps.

- Place the bean sprouts in a container.
- Pour the water until the sprouts are submerged to a depth of 8 - 10 cm.
- Shake and turn the bean sprouts in the container a few times. This is to release the seed coats trapped in between the sprouts.
- After shaking and turning, the seed coats float on the surface.
- Using a plastic strainer, scoop off the seed coats and place them in another container before disposing of them. Use a strainer with holes slightly smaller than the size of the seed coats.
- Keep shaking the container and scooping off the seed coats.



Fig. 1. The presence of the seed coat or testa may lower the quality and price of bean sprouts

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Merits of the technology

This method is simple, low-cost and environmentally friendly. It can easily be acquired by farmers given a simple demonstration or instructions.



Fig. 2. Plastic basket used as a strainer to remove the seed coats



Fig. 3. High-quality bean sprouts as a result of regular watering and the removal of the seed coats