

Postharvest Loss: Hermetic Sealing of Lentil seeds with Locally available Jerrycans

One effective method is to store your lentils in airtight containers, such as jerrycans. Bruchids are among the insects known to attack lentils, causing weight loss, reducing quality, and hindering germination.

If you don't have a jerrycan available, you can use any dry, sealable container of similar size, as long as the lentils are tightly packed inside. The container should have a minimum capacity of 5 liters, with an optimum size ranging from 10 to 20 liters. It's crucial that the container you use has never held hazardous materials like fuel or pesticides, as residues from these substances can pose health risks.

Storing Lentils

You can safely store your lentils for up to 6 months in an unopened jerrycan. However, if you intend to use them for seed, be aware that the germination rate may decrease if stored for longer periods. Lentils intended for food consumption, not seed, can be stored for extended periods, ranging from a few months to over a year. Nevertheless, once you open the container, it's advisable to consume the lentils within a couple of weeks.

Steps to Follow

Here are the steps to follow:

1. Begin by thoroughly drying the lentils under the sun on a tarpaulin or a dark plastic sheet to reduce moisture content.
2. Carefully sort the lentils, removing any damaged ones.

3. Find a clean, dry jerrycan or a similar container with a capacity between 10 to 20 liters, suitable for holding 10 to 20 kilograms of lentils.
4. Fill the jerrycan to the top, ensuring the lentils are tightly packed. Add more lentils if there is any empty space.
5. Cover the top with a small piece of soft, hole-free plastic, and for added security, fold the plastic to create two layers.
6. Seal the lid of the jerrycan tightly, and make sure to label it with the date it was sealed and the intended use of the lentils (food or planting).
7. Do not open the jerrycan for at least a month after sealing to allow any bruchid insects to be killed.
8. It's crucial never to open the container until you need to use the lentils for planting, eating, or selling. Opening the jerrycan introduces new air, potentially allowing bruchid eggs to hatch. If the lentils are for food consumption, you can keep them in the container as long as desired. However, if they are for planting, avoid storing them for more than 6 months in jerrycans.