

EDAMAME

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Edamame is a food grade soybean (*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.) that is very popular in East Asia. It has been used as a vegetable there since 200 B.C. More recently, it has become very popular here in the United States, especially on both coasts. It is used as snack food, in salads, and in stir fry. It basically can be used in a lot of dishes. It is thought the use of food grade soybeans as a vegetable is a healthy source of protein and energy.

Food grade soybeans differ from feed grade soybeans (fed to livestock) in that they are normally larger in size and sweeter in taste. The part that attaches to the inside of the pod, called the hylem, is normally white in color. Feed grade varieties normally have a brown hylem. The most popular food grade varieties harvested for Edamame are usually white varieties. There are a few black varieties on the market. Size and sweetness at harvest seems to be the most important characteristic.



Edamame is harvested as an immature soybean at reproductive stage 6 (R6). That is when the soybean pods are green and have 2 to 3 fully developed green beans inside the pod. The beans inside the pod are usually round to oblong and 1/4 to 3/8 inches in diameter. Most production is hand picked to avoid bruising. They have been harvested with an FMC Green Bean Harvester. But 25% of the beans were left in the field and 7% harvested were bruised.

Edamame is processed in the pod. You should soak them in water twice-once to get the dirt off and the second soaking with salt and rub the soybeans down to help remove the hairs. Then bring a pot of water to a boil and add salt. Stir the salt into solution then add the soybeans to the boiling water for 3 to 5 minutes. When the time is up, pour the soybeans into a colander and let drain and cool. They can be eaten right away or frozen in freezer bags. After frozen they can be eaten once thawed or heated and eaten. They can be micro-waved. I find edamame to be an excellent tasting snack with good market potential.



We have been doing applied research on varieties here at Rock Springs for three years and have four late maturing experimental varieties in replicated plots this year.