

DEVELOPMENT OF A READY TO SERVE (RTS) DRINK USING VERALU / CEYLON OLIVE (*Elaeocarpus serratus*)

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Veralu / Ceylon olive (*Elaeocarpus serratus*) is one of the underutilized fruit species found in the wet zone and the intermediate zone of Sri Lanka. Few value added products of this fruit (Veralu pickles and cordial) are available in the market. But still there is a need of development of more value added products using Veralu to enhance utilization and availability in off season. Ready To Serve (RTS) drinks is one of the basic type of the fruit beverage which can be produced with simple and low cost technology. Therefore this study was carried out to develop a RTS drink using Veralu. Four recipes were prepared (Recipe one - 8% pulp, Recipe two - 10% pulp, Recipe three - 12% pulp and Recipe four - 15% pulp) with 10% of sugar and 0.01% sodium metabisulphite in one litre of water, considering the findings of preliminary studies and Sri Lanka standards (SLS 729:1985) for RTS fruit drinks. Sensory evaluation of four samples was conducted with 30 untrained panelists using a five point Hedonic scale. The data related to the sensory evaluation were analyzed using non parametric Friedman test with statistical software MINITAB and recipe three was selected as the best recipe for development of RTS Veralu drink with 12% of fruit pulp. Total soluble solids percentage, acidity, pH and microbial counts of selected product were determined and initially quality was compatible with the Sri Lanka Standards (SLS 729:1985) for RTS fruit drinks. Two treatments were prepared using the selected recipe with two different levels of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) (70 ppm SO₂ and 40 ppm SO₂) and stored in two storage conditions (ambient and refrigeration) for 2 months. Total soluble solids percentage, acidity, pH, color and microbial counts were determined in two weeks interval. Data of the storage study were analyzed using ANOVA ($\alpha=0.05$) and mean separation was done with Duncan's New Multiple Range Technique (DNMRT). Slight increase in acidity was observed in the samples stored at ambient temperature than refrigeration condition. Premium quality RTS Veralu drink could be produced using 12% pulp with 40 ppm SO₂ level and kept for two months period under ambient condition without any quality deterioration.

Key words: Veralu, RTS fruit drink, Storage study