

Homemade Solar Dryer for Mesquite Pods

Mesquite pods need to be brittle dry so they produce an audible snap. Drying pods in a solar dryer for several hours at temperatures around 200 to 225 degree F. dries them quickly and thoroughly, killing the bruchid beetles and other insects and helping to prevent fungal growth. Then pods can be stored safely in an air tight container until milling.

Materials Needed:

1 twin bed box frame with all material removed; (or wooden pallet for smaller dryer)

nylon window screening to cover top and sides

Black 100% cotton cloth. Black cloth increases heat gain & protects items from direct sun.

Glass in frame or Plexiglas to cover items to be dried

Wooden saw horses to raise dryer to waist height for ease of use.

Oven Thermometer

Reflective insulating cover for bottom of frame

How to Assemble:

Staple screening and reflective material to frame. Cover entire frame to protect items being dried from insects and other pests.

Set up saw horses in sunny location . Place screen covered frame on sawhorses.

Put mesquite pods directly on screening and cover with black cotton then glass.

Watch the temperature . if it gets too hot place wedge between glass and frame to improve air flow. if items can take the sun and should not get as warm do not use black cloth.

Considerations:

Will it hold up to the winds? Can it be anchored down? This design is susceptible to wind damage. Alternatively wooden pallets could be used as the frame and legs permanently attached to frame.

Does it need to be moved and or stored when not in use?

