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Microbiological and sensorial analysis of salicornia shoots preserved in controlled atmosphere

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Salicornia, or pickleweed, is a succulent halophytic plant, from the family *Chenopodiaceae*, and usually grows nearby salt marshes. It is very rich in vitamins, but also in iodine, phosphorus, calcium, diuretic, depurative and resolute substances, and fibres. For this reason, it is already considered as a very interesting plant not only as food but even as a delicatessen.

Nevertheless, there is scarce information in what concerns the preservation of salicornia shoots, the eventual chemical alterations or the general aspect of the plant during shelf life. The objective of this study was mainly to perform microbiological analysis followed by sensorial analysis, during a four-week period. Salicornia shoots were packed in glass flasks and subjected to four different atmospheres (vacuum, normal atmosphere, two other atmospheres poor in O_2 and rich in CO_2).

Preliminary results indicate that atmosphere with the highest concentration in CO_2 can be a good method to preserve salicornia shoots. Total counting of microorganisms, the counting of coliforms, and the counting of yeasts and molds were always below the limits of acceptance, for all conditions.