



## FRUIT AND VEGETABLE HARVESTING

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### ABSTRACT

**P**eople greet harvest time with mixed feelings. The joy of gathering a bountiful harvest is certainly a joyful, and most gratifying experience. There is also a small sense of sadness, as we reach the end of a gardening season that brought new learnings and much satisfaction. Next spring feels a really long ways away. And indeed, that "just around the corner" feeling will have to wait until January, when seed catalogs arrive in the mail!

**KEY WORDS:** Vegetable Harvesting, storage methods, satisfaction.

### INTRODUCTION :

From a flavor and texture standpoint, most fruits and vegetables are at their best when they are still young. Most can be picked when small, and help to thin out the harvest, as well as to extend it. In addition, many fruits are best picked before they fully ripen. This helps to avoid damage during transit, and to last longer during storage. Peaches are a good example, as they are best picked when still hard or firm. They ripen to a soft and sweet tasting treat, if left out on a counter for a few days. If you pick peaches when they are ripe, they will keep for only a few days, and are easily bruised.

While we often think about harvesting in the fall, harvesting vegetables and fruits goes on all season long. It begins with the first asparagus spears, progressing on to early fruits and vegetables, and all the way to pumpkin pickin'.

Let's focus on the fall harvest, and things you can do to prolong the harvest, as well as properly store and keep it in good condition. Note that many flowers, fruits and vegetables have specific peak harvest times and storage methods. Make sure to read further on each specific one as needed.

### Keys to Successful Long Term Vegetable Storage:

One recent spring day, a neighbor of mine walked over to visit me, as I was planting vegetables for an early crop. He wanted to show me (as in show off) what was in a box that he was carrying. It was one quarter full of small, yellow tomatoes. Most of them were in good shape! He had stored these tomatoes from late September to mid

April, and had been eating fresh tomatoes all winter! Granted, this was a long keeper variety. But, the point is, vegetables under the right conditions can last for quite a while. Here are some pointers to maximize the storage times for your crop:

### Know when to pick your fruits and vegetables:

Most vegetables should be picked before they peak. Tomatoes and peppers are a good examples. They will slowly ripen off the vine. Some vegetables need to "cure", or ripen and harden before storing. A good example of this is pumpkins and gourds.

**Clean and sort:** Prior to storing vegetables, wash thoroughly with water. Remove any that are damaged, have soft spots, or holes in them. The old saying "one bad apple spoils the whole bushel" is quite true.

**Eliminate bacteria:** Bacteria is what spoils fruit and vegetables in long term storage. After washing them, rinse them in a light solution of chlorine and water. This works well for winter squash, pumpkins, tomatoes, peppers, other vegetables that have a hard skin. Use one part chlorine to twenty parts water. Let them dry thoroughly before putting them away. Fruits and root crops do not usually need this extra protection. It is not recommended for thin skinned vegetables, leaf crops or others with a short shelf life.

**Spread them Out:** When putting fruits and vegetables away for long term storage, do not pile them high and together in one big container. Several smaller containers are best. Keep them from touching each other, if possible. If one does go bad, the bacteria or fungus has a harder time spreading if the fruit is separated.

**Optimal storage conditions:** Most fruits and vegetables store longer if kept in cool, dry conditions. Many will last for months under the ideal conditions. Cold storage is used for many crops, and remain fresh for use weeks and months later. Each fruit or vegetable may have a different ideal temperature. Local cold storage companies will know the proper humidity and temperatures.

A few vegetables will keep for several months out of the refrigerator. These include potatoes, onions, garlic and winter squashes. For home storage, the general rule of thumb is cool, dry and dark conditions are the best.

### HARVESTING VEGETABLES

At the point when collect time comes, it comes for sure. For the plant specialist, the test now might be to keep in front of a tidal wave of vegetables.

It's best to take a wicker container out to the garden each day to perceive what has aged. Picking vegetables when they are ready regularly urges the plant to deliver more.

Most vegetables are at their pinnacle of delicacy and flavor when they are generally little. Zucchini, for instance, are best when they are close to six or seven inches in length. At that point they get intense and woody. (In the event that you find a disregarded whopper, grind it and make zucchini treats or zucchini bread.)

Be that as it may, it's vital to monitor what you planted and keep the seed parcel so you recognize what's in store. There are numerous cultivars of vegetables today, reared for various attributes, for example, measure. You can plant a watermelon assortment that ages at eight crawls crosswise over (see here) or one that is not prepared until the point that the natural product measures 30 pounds. Furthermore, it would be a disgrace to pick yardlong beans (which really are best when they are 15 to 18 inches long) at the five to six inches that would be typical for post beans.

When you reap, pay special mind to indications of inconvenience, for example, yellowing leaves or decaying organic product, and evacuate the issue parts. Regardless of the possibility that it's something you can do minimal about - , for example, bloom end decay or splitting from a lot of rain - there's no reason for giving the plant a chance to place vitality into organic product you won't have the capacity to eat.

### Here are a few hints for gathering some regular vegetable-cultivate abundance:

#### Herbs.

Squeeze or decreased herbs as often as possible to keep them creating more stems and leaves (the parts we eat) and to shield them from sprouting, which changes the flavor. In the event that that implies you have

surplus thyme or oregano, dry it in a darker paper sack. Basil, particularly, needs visit squeezing back to keep it shaggy and beneficial. Eventually in July or August everyone has excessively basil, which is the reason the Italians designed pesto (find numerous formulas on the web).

### Tomatoes.

There is a colossal scope of tomato assortments. Numerous sorts are red when ready, yet some are orange, yellow, striped or even green. You can plant small currants or tremendous slicers which will more often than not set aside greater opportunity to age. So take in what's in store from your assortment and screen the plant intently as its due date nears. For the most part, a tomato is completely ready when it discharges effectively from the stem. On the off chance that you misinterpret a bit it's no disaster, since tomatoes will age to some degree in the wake of picking. Yet, they build up the fullest sweet flavor on the off chance that they age in the sun on the vine. When you have picked the initial couple of tomatoes of a specific assortment, you will discover what a ready one will look and suggest a flavor like. A few tomatoes are "determinate" sorts, which will quit bearing following half a month. Most are "vague" sorts, which will continue blooming and setting natural product until slaughtered by ice, albeit colder climate will moderate generation. It's a smart thought to pick your green tomatoes a week or so before your territory's normal initially ice date. The more develop ones will mature inside on the off chance that they are put away at room temperature, wrapped in daily paper so they don't touch. Or, on the other hand make seared green tomatoes.

### Peppers.

Peppers are develop and prepared to eat when full-sized yet at the same time green. In the event that left on the vine longer, they will change shading to red, orange, yellow or darker, contingent upon the assortment, and will extend in enhance and turn out to be less fresh in surface. Hot peppers left to change shading will get more sizzling. So whether you pick at the green stage or later will rely upon the assortment and what you intend to utilize the pepper for. Similarly as with tomatoes, the initial couple of you pick will show you to gage readiness.

### Lettuce.

It's critical to pick lettuce before hot climate urges the plant to "jolt," or build up a bloom stalk, which makes the leaves taste severe. With leaf lettuce and numerous different greens, you can "cut and come back once more" while the leaves are youthful and delicate, close to five inches in length. Utilize scissors to cut the biggest leaves independently from the plants. At the point when the littler leaves get sufficiently enormous, collect those. You might have the capacity to return to a plant two, three or four times, a couple of days separated, before it surrenders in the late spring heat. To delay the lettuce collect, search for jolt safe assortments and sow seeds a few times at two-week interims. A tent of shade material or translucent line cover - or a site to some extent shade - additionally may defer dashing in hot atmospheres. In late summer, sow green seeds again for a fall trim.

### Green beans.

Pick the cases when they are somewhat short of their greatest size, to make sure that they are delicate, with youthful seeds. In the event that you delay, the seeds will develop and solidify and the unit will wind up plainly extreme. Try not to pick green beans in the morning when the dew is still on the vines; hold up until the point when they are completely dry to abstain from spreading ailment. Furthermore, stay aware of the picking to urge the vine to continue blooming and creating cases.

### Peas.

For plant peas, pick a test pod and open it when the seeds have started to swell inside. You're searching for peas that are round yet delicate. Pick peas just before you are prepared to shell and cook them. For snow peas and sugar snaps, taste a pod when it nears full size. You need a fresh, crunchy, crisp tasting unit, in which the

seeds have begun growing yet are no place close round. Units left too long on the vine get extreme and stringy.

Melons, muskmelons and honeydews: Melons are dubious, notwithstanding for melon agriculturists. You can pound the melon and tune in for a dull, empty sound or sniff it to check whether it notices sweet. A ready melon or muskmelon will start to have a tan or yellowish shading underneath the corky "netting" on its skin. A honeydew will feel smooth, not shaggy. Cut the stem instead of severing the organic product, which makes an injury that welcomes the natural product to spoil. Give the organic product a chance to age for one more day or two at room temperature before cutting into it.

### Watermelons.

At the point when the spot underneath the melon, where it sits on the ground, turns yellowish, as opposed to white or green, the melon is near ready. The skin likewise gets harder, so test it with your thumbnail to how effectively it marks. For antiquated full-sized watermelons, the conventional readiness test is to pound and tune in for a dull, empty sound, yet this may not fill in too with the littler "cooler" assortments. At last, you'll need to cut one open and choose if it's ready, and utilize that as a standard for whatever remains of the product.

### Cucumbers.

Check the seed bundle to perceive how expansive your assortment of cucumber will get and to what extent that is required to take. However, remember that you can pick cucumbers at any stage, contingent upon what you need to utilize them for. Littler ones will be more delicate, with more slender skins and few or juvenile seeds. As well old cucumbers get dry and woody. Like melons, cucumbers ought to be cut from the vine, not pulled.

### Sweet corn.

Timing is everything with sweet corn. The portions start to lose sweetness and flavor the moment the ear is picked, so the immense favorable position of becoming your own is so you can hold up until the latest possible time. The conventional run was to get the pot of water bubbling to cook the corn and after that go out and pick it. Sweet corn is prepared to eat when you can feel full, adjusted portions underneath the husk; the silk at the highest point of the ear is drying out; and a squished bit delivers a smooth sap.

### Root vegetables.

Read the seed bundle to perceive to what extent it should take before you begin verifying whether your assortment of carrots, beets, turnips, radishes or parsnips is prepared. At the point when finally, extricate the dirt delicately and force one up to perceive how huge it is. Root vegetables are more delicate and fragile in enhance if eaten more youthful and littler; as they get more seasoned and bigger, they get harder, woodier and more impactful. In the event that that is alright with you, you can store some establish trims appropriate wide open to the harshe elements ground after the tops bite the dust. Spread a thick layer of leaves, straw or other mulch to shield the ground from solidifying so you can at present uncover them, and you might have the capacity to reap carrots, turnips or parsnips at Thanksgiving.

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