

Proper Harvesting to Maximize Flavor, Nutrition and Productivity A Few of the More Popular Vegetables

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Lettuce / Spinach / Greens

Harvest:

- Outer leaves of leafy crops when 4-6", head lettuce (head loose and firm)
 - Will bolt (flower and set seed in hot weather)
- Replace spring crop with heat tolerant varieties – Sandy, Red Sails...
- Chard – pick outer leaves when 8 to 10" will keep producing

Peas

Harvest:

- 60-70 days (edible – swollen/no seed showing, peas – pod bright, swollen, peas full-size)

Beets / Carrots / Radishes

Harvest:

- When full size, dig carefully to avoid damage
- Eat the greens, even carrots (pesto)
- Poor root formation – lack of thinning, heavy and rocky soil
- Beets (50-60 days) carrots (60-70 days), radishes (25-30 days)

Cabbage / Broccoli / Cauliflower

Harvest:

- Cabbage head full sized and firm –
 - Cut below the head leaving lower leaves for additional heads
- Broccoli – flower head full size, before buds open
 - Leave stem for re-sprouting
- Cauliflower - blanch when head is size of quarter – ready in 5 to 7 days

Brussels Sprouts

Harvest:

- Sprouts are firm and 1-2" in diameter.
- Start at the bottom and work way to top
- Or harvest whole stalk at the end of the season

Beans

Harvest:

- 50 to 80 days, snap before seeds swell and show, dry (outer shell dry)

Cucumber

Harvest:

- Sweet pickles (1.5 to 2.5"), dills (3-4"), slicing (6-9" skin bright green), burpless (10-12")

Tomato

Harvest:

- Fully ripe 5 to 8 days after fruit are fully colored
- Ripen green tomatoes indoors
 - Pick when blossom end greenish white or starting to show color
- Determinate- grows certain height and stop – containers,
- Indeterminate – grows, flowers and fruits until frost kills
 - Pinch tips late season to speed ripening



Peppers

Harvest:

- 60 to 70 days
- Sweet Peppers fruits firm and fully colored, break easily from the plant
 - Colorful peppers - left on plant longer to develop color & flavor
- Hot Peppers - red ripe stage, green chiles (immature and green)
 - Seeds and membrane contain the heat

Eggplant

Harvest:

- 70 to 80 (full size fruit, glossy before skin dulls, leaves thumb print)
- Hansel & Gretel – finger-like clusters of fruit that holds flavor and texture longer on the plant – skin not bitter

Potato

Harvest:

- 80 to 140 days, new potatoes any size, storing tuber full size, tops dry
- Plant may flower and produce small round tomato-like fruit
- **Don't eat the fruit on top**

Squash and Melons

Harvest:

- Summer squash fruit are 6 to 10 inches long or 3 to 6 inches diameter
- Winter squash full size, rind is hard, portion touching ground is cream or orange
- Melons - 65 to 100 days, fruit full size,
 - Watermelon – full size, rind is dull, ground spot cream, tendrils dry & curled
 - Muskmelon – rind changes from green to tan or yellow, stem separates easily from vine

Onions

Harvest:

- Sets for green onions 6-8" tall
- Storage onions best from plants (but you can save those from sets), harvest when tops fall

Still Time to Plant

- Check seed packets and plant tags for days from planting to harvest
- Compare that to the number of days to the average first fall frost
 - Allow a couple weeks for harvesting
- Look for plantable space
 - Succession (relay) planting
 - Containers
- Short season plants (varies with variety)
 - 25 - 30 days - radishes
 - 40 – 50 days – chard, leaf lettuce, mustard greens, spinach, kohlrabi transplants, onion sets
 - 50-60 days – beets, bush beans, cucumber, kohlrabi
 - Transplants of cauliflower, Chinese cabbage, collards, kale & onions
 - 60 – 70 days – carrots, Chinese cabbage, peas, sweet corn & turnips
 - Transplants of broccoli, cabbage
- Some plants tolerate and flavor improves after a light frost
 - Broccoli and Brussels sprouts for example

Extend the Season

- Cloches
- Row covers
- Cold frames



Managing Pests

- Work with nature
- Invite in songbirds
- Predators and parasitoids

Weeds

- Compete with plants for water and nutrients
- Host for insect and disease problems

Insects

- Handpick – Pluck, drop and stomp
 - Nock them into a can of soapy water
- Traps – yellow bowl with soapy water
- Barriers
- Pesticides – if you decide to treat no matter if organic, natural or synthetic -always read and follow label directions



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