

Small Farm Handbook, 2nd Edition

Table 10.1. Examples of postharvest requirements for selected vegetables and melons

Product	Harvest quality	Storage		Shelf life (days)	Ethylene sensitivity	Observations
		°F	% RH			
Artichoke, globe	size, tender bracts	32	95	14	low	sprinkle lightly
Asparagus	bracts at tip closed	36	95	14	low	stand in water
Basil	fresh, tender leaves	55	95	7	moderate	stand in water
Beans, lima	seeds developed, plump	40	95	7	moderate	sprinkle lightly
Beans, pole and snap	crisp pods, seeds immature	40	95	7	moderate	sprinkle lightly
Beets, bunched	firm, deep red roots	32	95	14	low	sprinkle, cut tops
Broccoli	firm head, buds not open	32	95	14-21	high	sprinkle; ice
Brussels sprouts	firm sprouts	32	95	21-28	high	sprinkle; ice
Cabbage	crisp, firm, compact head	32	95	30-180	high	sprinkle lightly
Cantaloupe melon	stem separates; rind color	36	95	14	moderate	ice
Carrots, topped	tender, crisp, sweet roots	32	95	28-180	high	sprinkle; cut tops
Cauliflower	compact, white curds	32	95	14-21	high	sprinkle
Celery	crisp, tender petioles	32	95	14-21	moderate	sprinkle; ice
Corn, sweet	plump tender kernels	32	95	7	low	ice
Cucumber	crisp, green, firm	50	95	10	high	sprinkle lightly
Eggplant	seeds immature; shiny, firm	50	95	10	moderate	
Endive, escarole	fresh, crisp, tender leaves	32	95	14-21	moderate	sprinkle lightly
Greens, leafy, and herbs	fresh, crisp, tender leaves	32	95	10-14	moderate	sprinkle lightly
Honeydew melon	waxy, creamy colored, heavy	45	90	21	high	
Lettuce	compact head, crisp, tender	32	95	21	high	sprinkle lightly
Onions, dry	firm bulbs, tight necks	32	65	30-180	low	
Onions, green	crisp stalks, firm white bulbs	32	95	10	moderate	sprinkle; ice
Parsley	crisp, dark green leaves	32	95	21	high	sprinkle; ice
Peas	tender, green, sweet pods	32	95	7-10	moderate	sprinkle
Peppers, chili	firm with shiny appearance	45	95	14	low	
Peppers, green	firm with shiny appearance	45	95	14	low	
Potatoes, early crop	well-shaped tubers, defect-free	50	90	14	Low	if washed, dry well
Potatoes, late crop	well-shaped tubers, defect-free	45	90	60-180	moderate	if washed, dry well
Pumpkin	hard rind, good color, heavy	55	65	30-160	moderate	
Radish, with tops	firm, crisp, dark green leaves	32	95	14-21	Moderate	sprinkle; ice
Rutabagas	roots firm with smooth surface	32	95	60-120	low	cut tops; sprinkle
Spinach	dark green, fresh, crisp leaves	32	95	10	high	sprinkle lightly
Squash, summer	firm, shiny fruits, right size	45	95	10	moderate	
Squash, winter	hard rind, corked stem, heavy	55	65	60-120	moderate	allow cut stems to heal
Tomatoes, green	firm, jelly present, light green	55	90	21	high	
Tomatoes, ripening	firm, uniform coloration	50	90	14	high	avoid temperatures <50°F
Turnip	firm, heavy roots	32	95	60-120	low	cut tops; sprinkle
Watermelon	crisp, good flesh color, heavy	55	90	14	high	

Table 10.2. Examples of postharvest requirements for selected fruits

Product	Harvest quality	Storage		Shelf life (days)	Ethylene sensitivity	Observations
		°F	% RH			
Apple	crisp, color typical of variety	32	95	90-180	high	varieties differ a lot in postharvest life
Apricot	firm, well colored	32	95	7-21	moderate	
Avocado	% dry matter, % oil, size	41	90	14-28	high	varieties differ a lot in chilling sensitivity
Banana	finger size, color	55	95	7-14	moderate	
Blueberry	blue color, firmness	32	95	14-21	low	
Carambola	yellow skin color	40	95	14-21	moderate	
Cherimoya	firmness, skin color	55	95	14-21	high	
Cherry, sweet	fruit color typical of variety	32	95	7-14	low	
Cranberry	fruit color	36	95	30-60	low	
Currant, gooseberry	firm, color typical of variety	32	95	10-21	low	
Date	color, sugar content	32	75	180-360	low	
Fig	firm but near ripe, skin color	32	95	7	low	
Grape, table	color typical of variety, sugar	32	95	14-90	low	gray mold ends life
Grapefruit	skin color, sugars-to-acid ratio	55	95	30-40	low	
Guava	skin color, firm	45	95	14-21	moderate	varieties differ a lot
Kiwifruit	firmness, soluble solids	32	95	120-150	high	
Lemon	juice content	45	95	30-120	moderate	
Lime	juice content, skin color	50	90	21-50	high	
Litchi	red skin color, soluble solids	36	95	14-28	moderate	
Loquat	fruit color typical of variety	32	95	14-28	low	
Mandarin	peel color, sugars-to-acid ratio	41	95	14-28	low	
Mango	skin color, shape for variety	55	95	14-21	moderate	
Nectarine	skin ground color, firmness	32	95	14-28	moderate	
Olives	color (green or black)	45	95	14-28	low	harvested olives are processed
Orange	skin color, sugars-to-acid ratio	41	95	30-60	moderate	
Papaya	skin color	55	95	14-21	High	
Passion fruit	skin color change	45	90	7-14	moderate	
Peach	skin ground color	32	95	14-28	moderate	
Pear, Asian	firm, skin color of variety	32	95	30-120	moderate	
Pear, European	firmness, skin color	32	95	30-120	High	
Persimmon	skin color	32	95	14-28	High	
Pineapple	skin yellowing; "eye" flatness	50	95	7-21	moderate	
Plum, fresh prune	skin color typical of variety	32	95	10-30	moderate	
Pomegranate	size, skin color	45	95	60-120	low	
Prickly pear cactus	firm, jelly present, light green	41	95	14-21	low	
Quince	skin ground color changes	32	90	30-90	low	
Strawberry	fruit color	32	95	7-10	low	
Tamarillo	peel and pulp color	41	90	14-28	low	
Tamarind	pulp and shell brown, brittle	68	75	14-28	none	keep 6 months at 41°F