



Storing Your Veggies

Introduction: Storing

- Why be careful about storing your veggies? Listen to this shocking report from some researchers at the University of Arizona who worked with the USDA to discover that in 2002:



Introduction: Storing

- **University of Arizona Report:**
 - The average American family tossed out 470 pounds of food a year
 - That's about 14 percent of all the food brought in the home
 - And is about an annual cost of \$600
 - Every day they discarded more than half a pound of fruits and veggies

Introduction: Storing

- **University of Arizona Report (cont.):**
 - In total, the average family threw away $\frac{1}{4}$ of the produce they bought mostly because it went bad
 - And nationally we dump \$43 billion worth of food every year

Source: <http://www.vegetariantimes.com/article/spoiled-rotten-how-to-store-fruits-and-vegetables/>

Introduction: Storing

- Does that inspire you to be a bit more careful?
- Storing your veggies can include anything from keeping your fresh lettuce in the fridge for a week to curing and storing potatoes over the whole winter
- The question is - what do you do with what? How do you maximize the storage quality of your veggies or fruits?

Introduction: Storing



- **Overview:**

1. Storing Fruits and Vegetables
2. Curing and Storing Storage Crops



1. Storing Fruits And Vegetables

1. Storing Fruits And

- Most fruits and vegetables do best when picked at the peak of their maturity, washed, cooled, and refrigerated right away
- This is especially true with your brassicas, greens, salad greens, and many of the root crops such as carrots, beets, radishes and more...



1. Storing Fruits And

- But it's not true with everything
- Also there are some fruits and vegetables that should not be stored with each other
- For instance, some fruits produce a gas called ethylene that speeds up ripening and can cause other ethylene sensitive veggies to start deteriorating faster



1. Storing Fruits And

- An example of this is if you put spinach or kale in the same bin as peaches or apples
- The ethylene from the fruit will cause the greens to turn yellow and go limp much faster – even in just a couple days
- So, the best thing to do is to keep ethylene producing fruit separate from other veggies that are sensitive to it

1. Storing Fruits And

- **Here's a list of common ethylene releasers:**

- Apples
- Apricots
- Avocados
- Bananas
- Figs
- Honeydews
- Mangos
- Nectarines
- Peaches
- Pears
- Plums
- Tomatoes

1. Storing Fruits And

- **And here's a list of sensitive veggies that you won't want to store with the others:**

- Artichoke
- Broccoli
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Greens (kale, collards, chard)
- Endive
- Lettuce
- Parsley
- Potatoes
- Squash
- Sweet Potato
- Watermelon
- Zucchini

1. Storing Fruits And

- **And finally, some produce actually does better outside of the fridge and will lose flavor and moisture if kept in the fridge.**

Some of these include:

- Avocados
- Bananas
- Nectarines
- Peaches
- Pears
- Plums
- Tomatoes



2. Curing And Storing Storage Crops

2. Curing And Storing Crops

- There are several crops that can be cured and stored for longer periods of time – even over the winter
- Curing hardens the skin of the vegetable making them last better when stored



2. Curing And Storing Crops

- Here's how to cure and store some main ones (most of these do well being stored in a cool, dark place between 40° to 60° Fahrenheit – example could be in your garage, basement, or an unheated room):



2. Curing And Storing Crops

- **Potatoes**
 - Potatoes can be cured a couple different ways
 - One way is to simply leave them in the ground for one to two weeks after the plants die back and then harvest and store them



2. Curing And Storing Crops

- **Potatoes (cont.)**

- Another way to cure your potatoes is to harvest them after they flower and when the plants have begun to die back, and then keep them stored in a dark room that's kept at 60° to 75°F and 80 to 90 percent relative humidity for one to two weeks to cure them
- Potatoes can then be stored in boxes or breathable containers in a dark place and keep best at lower temperatures between 40° to 50°F

2. Curing And Storing Crops

- **Potatoes (cont.)**

- Make sure not to wash your potatoes before storing them. Simply rub the dirt off with your hands as washing them will shorten their storage life
- Sunlight will cause them to turn green and render them inedible (alkaloid levels increase, can cause digestive problems, taste bitter, and in extreme cases cause neurological problems and worse)
- Kennebec and Yukon Gold are a couple great varieties that are known to be good keepers

2. Curing And Storing Crops



- **Sweet Potatoes**
 - Unlike many other vegetables, sweet potatoes actually get sweeter with age as their starches turn to sugars
 - That's why if you've ever picked a fresh sweet potato out of the field it might not have been very sweet

2. Curing And Storing Crops

- **Sweet Potatoes (cont.)**

- To cure your sweet potatoes store them in a very warm and humid room ideally around 80° - 85°F with 80-90 percent humidity for one to two weeks
- After being cured sweet potatoes can then be stored in boxes or breathable containers in a dark place and are best kept around 55° to 60°F – they do not do well being stored at lower temperatures

2. Curing And Storing Crops

- **Sweet Potatoes (cont.)**
 - Like potatoes, it is best not to wash your sweet potatoes before storing them – instead simply rub the dirt off of them
 - Beauregard sweet potatoes are a common type but I personally enjoy Georgia Jets the best
 - Or if you enjoy white sweet potatoes, try growing a white O'Henry

2. Curing And Storing Crops

- **Winter Squash**

- Some winter squash varieties store better than others
- One of the best for storage are butternuts
- Hubbards and buttercups come in next while thinner-skinned squashes such as acorn, delicata, and spaghetti squashes should be used pretty quickly



2. Curing And Storing Crops

- **Winter Squash (cont.)**

- For long lasting storage it is important when harvesting winter squash to not break the stems off of the squash itself
- This can be easy to do and so you may want to use a knife or some pruning sheers to avoid breaking the stems off
- Once harvested, cure your winter squash in a warm room around 70° to 80°F with humidity at 80-85 percent and good ventilation for one to two weeks

2. Curing And Storing Crops

- **Winter Squash (cont.)**

- Once cured, store your winter squash in a cool place (50° to 55°F) with good air circulation and moderate humidity
- Winter squash is much more sensitive to moisture which can lead to mold and rot – that's why it is important to have good air circulation
- It is fine to wash the dirt off of your winter squash with a damp rag before storing them – just make sure they dry out well

2. Curing And Storing Crops

- **Onions**

- Harvest onions when their tops have fallen over and/or are around half dead
- Onions should be cured in a warm, well ventilated, shady place at 80° or more for two to four weeks



2. Curing And Storing Crops

- **Onions (cont.)**
 - Once the onions foliage has completely dried out and the stems contain no moisture you can cut them off about an inch above the bulb
 - Store onions in boxes or mesh bags in a dark place that is cool (35° to 45°F)



2. Curing And Storing Crops



- **Garlic**
 - Garlic should be harvested when the plants begin to start dying back
 - Truly the best way to know that the garlic is ready is to harvest a few and inspect them

2. Curing And Storing Crops

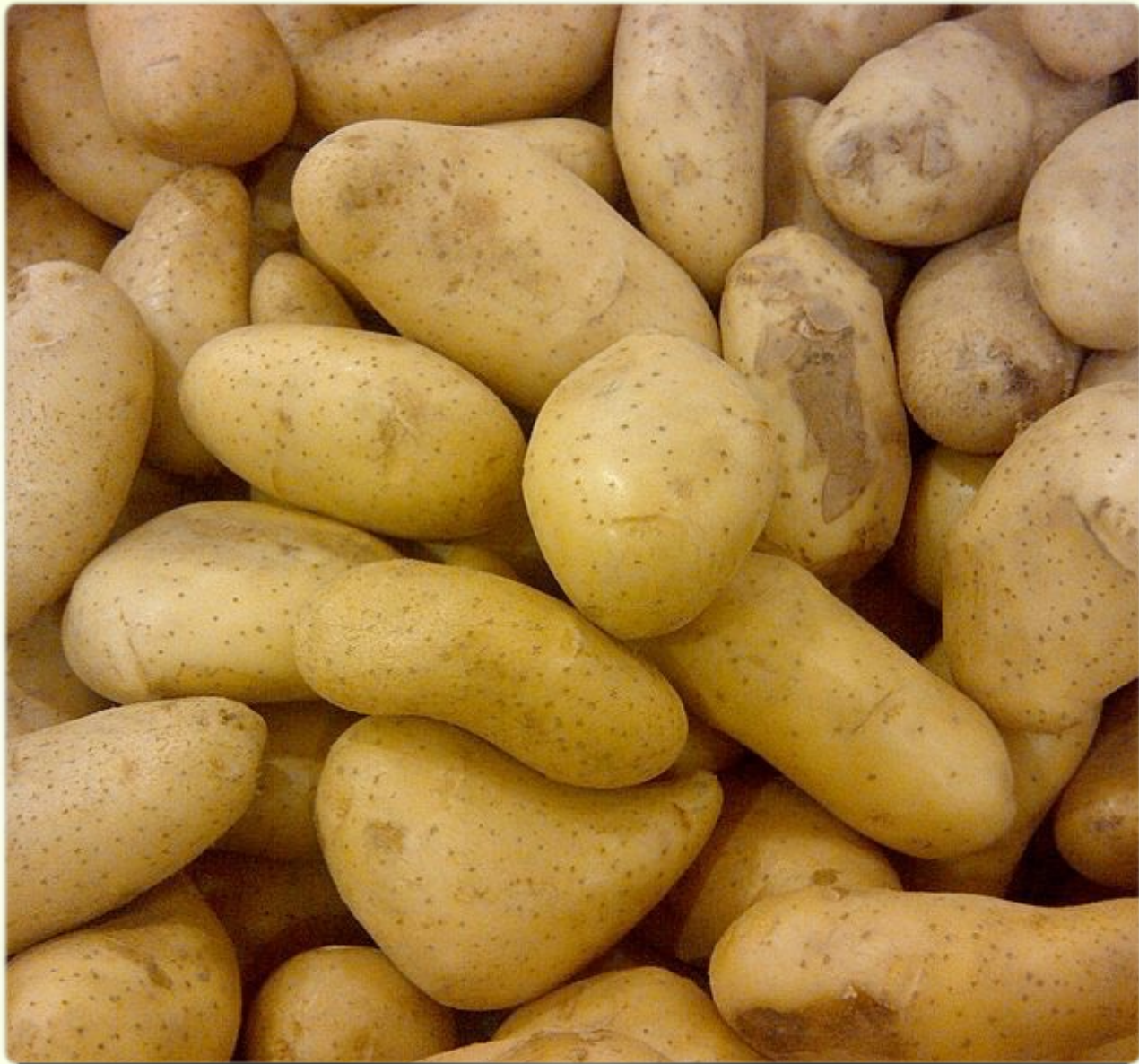
- **Garlic (cont.)**

- You'll want the whole bulb to be intact and to be able to feel the individual cloves – if it is splitting apart or the skin is deteriorating than you've waited too long and they will not store as well
- If you are growing hardneck garlic then remember to harvest the scapes while they are growing – these are great to eat as well!

2. Curing And Storing Crops

- **Garlic (cont.)**
 - Once your garlic is harvested, cure it in a warm, well ventilated place around 80°F or more for two to three weeks until the garlic stems are completely dry
 - Once the leaves and stems are completely dry, cut the stem a few inches above the bulb and store them in boxes or in mesh bags in a cool dark place (around 35° to 45°F)

2. Curing And Storing Crops



- There are some great tips for not only growing but storing some of your main veggies
- Check out the resources below for more information on storing other crops

Summary: Storing Veggies

1. Storing Fruits and Vegetables

- Most fruits and vegetables do best when picked at the peak of their maturity, washed, cooled, and refrigerated right away
- Be careful not to store ethylene producing fruits with vegetables that are sensitive to ethylene gas



Summary: Storing Veggies

2. Curing and Storing Storage Crops

- Curing hardens the skin of the vegetable making them last better when stored
- Once cured, most storage vegetables do best in a dry cool place such as in a garage, basement, or unheated room



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