

family
**Vegetable
Garden**
series

EXTENSION BULLETIN E 824(19)

When to
Harvest
Vegetables

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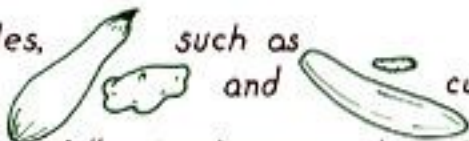
ON TIME

Vegetables should be harvested when they're at their peak for best flavor and nutrition. So it's important to know the right time to harvest each vegetable.



MATURITY - BEFORE AND AFTER

Some vegetables, such as summer squash and cucumbers must be picked before they are fully developed, or they become seedy, tough, and have poor flavor.

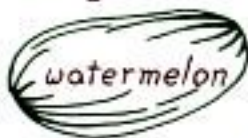


Pick these vegetables as soon as they are ready, or new ones won't form on the plant!



PICK THESE -
AND MAKE ROOM FOR MORE!

Other vegetables, such as winter squash and watermelon



are not ready to eat until after they are fully developed.

WHEN IS THE RIPE TIME ?

FROM UNDER THE GROUND

Loosen with a spading fork before pulling. Be careful not to injure crop.

Harvest at sizes shown.



To store onions, let the tops die and fall over. Dig, and dry for several days. Cut off tops and roots, and store in a cool, dry place.

PODS



Pick us full-sized, but before the pod turns yellow. Open a few pods to check our size.

PEAS

Pick when peas begin to fill pods. Lower pods mature first.



SNAP BEANS



EDIBLE PODDED PEAS (SUGAR PEAS)

You can eat us, pods and all! Pick before pea seeds get bigger than BB's.

SALAD CROPS



SPINACH

Pick when leaves are big enough to use.



LEAF LETTUCE

Cut us here

GREENS

Cut the outer leaves when they're as long as your hand.



FROM ABOVE THE GROUND

ASPARAGUS: Snap or cut shoots 6-8" high, before tips open. Don't pick spears thinner than a pencil. Don't harvest past July 1.

EGGPLANT is best when skin is shiny, dark purple. Don't wait til skin turns dull, or seeds get bitter.

OKRA: Pick soon after flower petals fall. If pods are longer than 4 1/2", they'll be tough.

PEPPERS: Use sweet peppers when green, or wait til they're red or yellow. Hot peppers are red or yellow when ripe.

RHUBARB leaves are poisonous. Only use the stems! Break them off when 1" across, before July 1.

SWEET CORN is ready when the silks turn brown and dry, and kernels squirt milky juice when punctured.

TOMATOES: Pick when fully red or yellow. Before frost, pick green tomatoes and store in a dark place, where they will ripen slowly.

PLANTS WITH HEADS

CABBAGE



Cut us here, when I'm firm and big enough. Don't wait too long - I may split.

HEAD LETTUCE



Cut us here, when I'm firm and about 6" across.

When my head is 2-3" across, tie the outer leaves around it, to keep me from turning yellow.



CAULIFLOWER

In 1-3 weeks, I'll be 6-7" across and ready for harvest. Check me often, if weather is warm. Green or purple cauliflower needs no tying.



BROCCOLI

Pick us, too!

We're buds! Cut us when we're the size of match-heads, before we open and turn yellow.



BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Pick us when firm and big enough. Pinch out growing point at top to get larger sprouts.



KOHLRABI

Pick me at this size or I'll get tough and woody.

2-3"

VINE CROPS

SUMMER SQUASH: ZUCCHINI, COCOZELLE, CROOKNECK, STRAIGHTNECK, SCALLOP



Harvest when we're young and tender, 6-8" long, with skin you can puncture with a fingernail. If you wait too long, you'll have to remove our large seeds.

CUCUMBERS

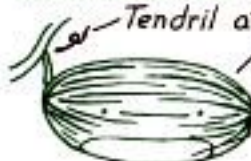


Don't let us turn yellow. We're seedy and not as good to eat then, and the vines will stop producing. **PICK OFTEN!**

MUSKMELON: Pick me when my stem breaks off easily or if my skin smells sweet. Store at room temperature for a few days. Chill before eating.

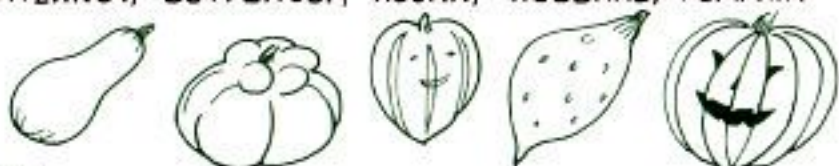


WATERMELON: I'll give you 3 signs:
Tendrils at stem turns brown,
I sound hollow when thumped, and
ground spot turns yellow.



WINTER SQUASH and PUMPKINS:

Let us get mature, hard-skinned and fully colored. Pick before frost and leave our stems on - we'll store better. **BUTTERNUT, BUTTERCUP, ACORN, HUBBARD, PUMPKIN**



**KEYS
TO
SUCCESS**

- Check garden often.
- Harvest vegetables at their peak.
- Use as soon as possible.

Other bulletins in this series provide additional information on vegetable gardening.

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