HARVEST & STORE FRUIT

Thanksgiving Point Institute

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– Fruit should be harvested when it is ready to pick or mature. Harvesting at optimum maturity produces the best quality fruit.
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– Fruit harvested in the cool of early morning and cooling the fruit immediately after picking promotes quality and shelf life.
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- Harvest most fruits by twisting and lifting the fruit up, not by pulling straight down from the spur or branch. Proper technique is important for minimizing bruises and injuries.
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– Place fruits gently in harvesting container. Do not just drop them in. Softer fruits require more careful handling to avoid bruises, while firmer fruits at harvest require more careful handling to avoid skin punctures.
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APPLES

- Apples can be tree-ripened, but most are picked earlier and ripened. When left on the tree, they tend to drop badly before harvest and they can become mealy and of poor quality. After apples mature, the starch must change to sugar for optimum flavor.
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- Mature apples have well developed, brown seeds
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Pick and sort apples according to quality. Leave on tree until cold nights enhance sugar production. Apples will tolerate a light frost.
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- Sort Fruits. Use some other method of preservation for those damaged by worms, birds or nicks.
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– Store unblemished ones in boxes.
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– Summer apples:
  • Pick when ripe and use fresh, freeze dry or bottle immediately. These do not store well in common storage
Golden Delicious apples do not increase in sweetness in storage

- Leave golden delicious apples on the tree until ripe to increase the sugar. Store in plastic-lined boxes. The golden delicious go into plastic lined boxes to keep the moisture higher. Leave holes in the plastic to allow for transpiration.
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– Red delicious apples will sweeten more in storage:
  • Avoid a moist environment which promotes spoilage.
  • Store on screen trays, layer between newspapers, or wrap.
  • Store at about 40 degrees
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– Check fruit regularly for spoilage. The storage length depends on the apple variety. Jonathan, MacIntosh, and Golden Delicious don't keep as long as Delicious, Rome or Winesap apples.
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– Ideal long-term storage method(s):
  Common storage,
  Freeze, bottle, dry
– PEARS

• Do not ripen pears on the tree. If they are picked too early, they will shrivel without ripening. If too late, they will be soft, mushy, and brown in the middle.
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• To determine time of harvest:
  – Use calendar
  – Watch Fruit size
  – Watch Skin color
  – Watch seed coat color
  – Wait for some fruits to fall
  – Test pick some fruit
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• Use the calendar.
  – Bartlett pears are usually ready to pick during the last half of August or the first half of September.
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- Pick winter pears such as D'Anjou, Comice and Bosc two to four weeks later than Bartlett.
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• Watch Fruit size.
  – Fruit on a well-laden tree will be smaller than on a thinner crop.
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• Watch skin color.
  – Skin begins to lighten somewhat from dark green and the lenticels become more visible. Lenticels are ventilating pores that show up as dark dots on the skin.
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• Watch seed coat color
  – Seeds become dark brown when the fruit is mature.
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• Watch for a few sound fruits to fall from the tree.
  – Those that are wormy will be the first to drop.
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- Try picking some pears.
  - Grasp gently, lift fruit to take the weight off the spur (the woody twig that the pear is attached to) and twist gently. If the pear is ready to harvest, it will separate easily. If you have to pull hard or break the stem, wait and try again in a few days.
– If your tree has both large and small fruits, pick the larger ones first. Smaller ones will grow somewhat larger and all the fruits can be picked in a week or 10 days.
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– Store the fruits at room temperature. If you want the fruit to ripen at the same time for canning, cover the box with a blanket or a newspaper to concentrate ethylene gas. to hasten ripening.
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• Winter pears:
  – Pick later. Very few of these actually end up being eaten by home gardeners. To ripen properly, they should be stored for two to three months at temperatures below 40 degrees, but above freezing after harvest. A refrigerator is generally required for these temperatures.
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– Asian pears ripen best on the tree. Pick as skin turns yellow or when they taste sweet (russeted types).
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- Ideal long-term storage method(s):
  Common storage, Freeze, bottle, dry
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• **Apricots**
  - Harvest apricots when the fruit begins to soften and develop their characteristic flavor. Handle apricots carefully to prevent bruising. Fruit should keep for 2 to 3 weeks when stored at a temperature of 35 to 40°F.
  - Ideal long term storage: Freeze, Bottle, Dry
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• Peaches:
  – Don’t look for a bright rosy blush when selecting peaches. It is nice to look at, but doesn't necessarily indicate ripeness. Instead, look for a creamy yellow or golden under color.
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- Pick when ripened according to taste. Peaches picked green will continue to color up but sugars will not develop as well as those picked ripe.
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– Avoid bruising during handling and preserve as soon as possible after picking.
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- Peaches are ready to eat when they're barely soft, apricots when soft. Refrigeration will keep ripe peaches fresh for several days.
- Fresh peaches served at room temperature have a greater aroma and fuller taste.
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- Ideal long-term storage method(s) for Peaches: Freeze, bottle, dry
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• **Plums:**
  - Do not depend strictly on color to determine ripeness. Plums will begin to soften as they ripen.
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– Pick green gage and other table plums when ripe according to taste.
– Pick purple plums when very ripe. Avoid bruising during handling and preserve as soon as possible after picking.
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– Plums can be stored for approximately 2 to 4 weeks at temperatures near 32°F.

– Ideal long-term storage method(s): Freeze, bottle, dry
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• Cherries
  – Pick cherries when fruit has a dark red skin and the inside is also turning red. Pick sooner if necessary to save them from the birds.
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• CHERRIES
  – Ideal long-term storage method(s): Freeze, bottle, dry
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• Strawberries and Raspberries
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- Strawberries and Raspberries
  - Pick when ripe according to taste. Use as soon as possible or store without washing in the refrigerator.
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• RASPBERRIES AND STRAWBERRIES
  – Ideal long-term storage method(s): Freeze, bottle, dry
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• Grapes
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• Grapes
  – Pick when ripe according to taste. Grapes will tolerate light frost and develop increased sugar content.
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- Ideal long-term storage method(s):
  Dry, bottle as juice or whole grapes
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The End

Come back next week