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*and all at once, summer
collapsed into fall*

OSCAR WILDE

*Extend your season by
following these post-harvest
handling and holding tips for
winter storage crops.*

REVELSTOKE LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE

Practical Considerations

Optimal storage conditions as well as holding times vary by crop and type — and in some cases by variety, environmental conditions, and season or timing of harvest.

Most root vegetables and tuberous vegetables fall into the "storage crop" category, though not all; also hard-shell cucurbits, that is, winter squashes and pumpkins; and some head crops, typically cabbages. Grains, beans, and dried flowers, too, can be considered types of storage crops, though they are handled differently.

A lot of people shy away from storage because they think they have to maintain perfect conditions to keep the produce in storage as long as possible, but that's not necessarily the case...

HERE ARE SOME GUIDELINES TO KEEP IN MIND.

There are ideal temps and humidity levels that can help extend the length of time your veggies will keep for, but perfection is not necessary for a decent result. We live in a climate where we have this type of environment in our garages, basements, or mud rooms, or perhaps you have a root cellar!

Johnny's Seeds (the experts) wrote the below guidelines.

For all the crops that should be stored at 32°F/0°C, you can expect to get half the storage life (2–3 months for some things may be quite reasonable) by storing them in temps up to 50°F/10°C, provided there is high humidity (except for onions, which like it a little drier). High humidity can be provided simply in some cases, like bagging items into perforated bags.

If you can get as close as possible to the target temperature and humidity, and if the crop is prepared properly, it will keep for a good while. Keep in mind that even under ideal conditions, crops can go bad at any time. You are better off having enjoyed the last of your veggies in January than you are throwing out half your stash in April - don't wait to eat what you've stored.

Beets & Carrots

Tips for Post-Harvest Handling

It is ideal to harvest in dry conditions, when the soil will easily slough off of the roots. It is also important to trim the tops off close to the root — leave about $\frac{1}{4}$ " of tops material there. Leaving any more than this will invite decay, but not leaving anything will hasten the drying out of the root.

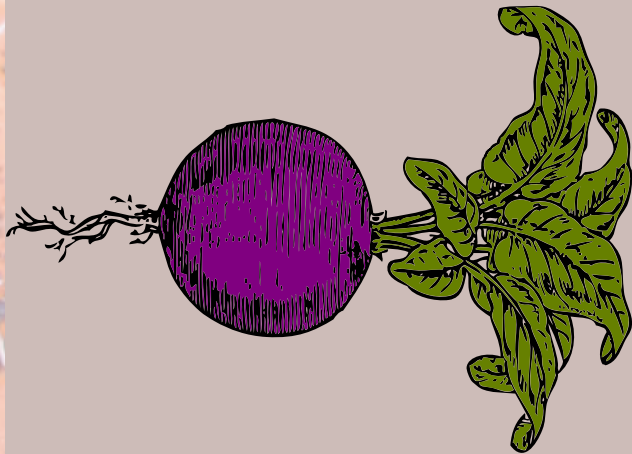
*Some say to wash these root crops before storage. We do not agree, for two reasons: 1) getting them wet can encourage decay; and 2) washing them will remove much of the beneficial bacteria that occupy the thin film of soil on the roots. These bacteria actually help fight decay.

Instead, we recommend gently removing soil clods from the roots, being careful not to use anything abrasive that may scratch the root surface. Wash them as you remove them from storage for eating throughout the winter.

Crop by Crop guidelines by Johnny's Seeds

We won't go through them all, we invite you to visit their website for all their specific details. Here are some examples of the valuable information they provide in their Grower's Library.

BEETS



HARVEST BEFORE THE FIRST HARD FREEZE, TRIM TOPS TO 1/4" THE TAPROOT SHOULD BE CUT OFF PRIOR TO STORAGE. TO STORE, PACK IN PERFORATED PLASTIC BAGS OR IN SEALED CONTAINERS FILLED WITH DAMP SAND. BEETS OF ALL VARIETIES WILL KEEP FOR 3-5 MONTHS WHEN STORED AT 32°F/0°C AND 90-100% HUMIDITY.

LEEKs



HARVEST EARLY/SUMMER LEEKS FIRST, MOVING ON TO MIDSEASON/FALL LEEKS, AND THEN LATE/WINTER LEEKS.

-LIFT PLANTS WITH FORK TO HARVEST.

-PLANTS WILL STORE SEVERAL WEEKS WITH EITHER METHOD BELOW:CLEAN PLANTS BY TRIMMING TOPS, ROOTS, AND PEELING OUTER LEAVES. STORE IN BOXES AT NEAR FREEZING (32°F/0°C) AND 95% RELATIVE HUMIDITY.

-TRIM TOPS AND PEEL ANY NECROTIC LEAVES. TRIM ROOTS, BUT LEAVE AN INCH OR TWO. STORE IN A ROOT CELLAR, PLANTS UPRIGHT IN A CONTAINER WITH ROOTS IN A MOIST SOIL/SAND/PEAT MIX. EXPOSING TO SOME LIGHT WILL KEEP TOPS GREEN. FULLY TRIM ROOTS AND PEEL OUTER LEAVES AS NECESSARY TO USE.



WINTER SQUASH & PIE PUMPKINS

LOTS OF INFO ON SPECIFIC VARIETIES! BUT, IN GENERAL... SHOULD BE HARVESTED BEFORE HARD FROST.

-CUT FRUITS FROM VINES AND HANDLE CAREFULLY.


-SUN CURE IN THE FIELD FOR 5-7 DAYS OR CURE INDOORS BY KEEPING SQUASH AT 80-85°F/27-29°C WITH GOOD AIR VENTILATION FOR 5-7 DAYS.

-STORE AT 50-60°F/10-15°C, WITH 50-70% RELATIVE HUMIDITY AND GOOD VENTILATION.

-REPEATED EXPOSURE TO TEMPERATURES BELOW 50°F/10°C MAY CAUSE CHILLING DAMAGE.



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REMEMBER, IT IS IMPORTANT TO INSPECT PRODUCE AND TO CULL ANYTHING SHOWING SIGNS OF DISEASE OR DECAY BEFORE PUTTING IT INTO STORAGE. CONTINUE TO MONITOR AND CULL WHILE IN STORAGE (DISEASE AND DECAY SPREAD FAST). AND ENJOY!