Tips Given On Prolonged Vegetable Storage

If your garden is large, and you cannot eat everything as it ripens, consider storing some of those fresh vegetables for use later in the fall or winter, suggests Robert Herner, Michigan State University horticulturist.

Certain vegetables can be stored for long periods of time and still retain quality.

"But," Herner cautions, "quality is rarely improved by storage and at best, you can only maintain the quality that went into storage."

Clean storage areas and containers as much as possible. You should harvest your vegetables during the coolest part of the day to that minimum amounts of field heat are present.

CAUTION: Do not allow vegetables to freeze before or during storage.

Following are a few suggestions for prolonged vegetable storage:

•Store carrots, beets, parsnips, salsify, rutabaga and Jerusalem artichokes as close to 32 degrees F as possible in high relative humidity. Bury these root crops in sand to prevent drying out and shriveling. Leave parsnips, salsify and Jerusalem artichokes in the ground, mulch heavily with straw or leaves, and dig up in the spring. This practice will increase the sugar content of parsnips and salsify.

•Store cabbage, cauliflower, celery, and Chinese cabbage at 32 degrees F in high relative humidity. Cabbage will store best if pulled up and with roots replanted in the sand. Make an A-frame over the cabbage and mulch heavily. Since cabbage odor is strong, it is best to store it outside the house.

•Store onions near 32 degrees F under low humidity.

•Do not store pumpkins and squash below 50 degrees F or in high humidity.

•Harvest tomatoes green just before a frost and store them above 50 degrees F. Lower temperatures will result in rotting and abnormal ripening. To hasten ripening, bring a few at a time out of storage and into room temperature.

•Harvest popcorn when the stalk dries and allow kernels to dry on the cob for several weeks or months. Test pop every few weeks to determine when the moisture content is just right. Remove all kernels at this time and place in sealed jars. An apple or balls of blotter paper soaked in a salt solution should also be placed in the jars to maintain proper moisture content.

There are several types of storage areas that you can use. Included are: pits, barrels, and basement corners.

Pits are especially good for root vegetables. Place the vegetables in a hole six to eight inches deep in the shape of a cone. Put a three-to four-inch thick layer of straw around the vegetables and cover with three to four inches of soil.

Pack the soil with a shovel and dig a drainage ditch around the pit. Use small quantities of different vegetables in several small pits rather than everything in one large pit.

You can also use a large barrel or garbage can to store vegetables. Pack the container with several alternating layers of straw and assorted vegetables. Set the barrel upright or slightly slanted in the ground. Cover the container with a good layer of straw and cover the straw with soil.

You can make a simple storage room in a corner of your basement where there is a window. Bring cool, outside air into the storage room through a cold air intake with a ventilating flue extending to the floor. Allow for opening and closing the flue, depending upon the weather.

One part of the window can serve as the warm air outlet near the top of the room. Darken the window to prevent sunlight from filtering in, especially when storing potatoes. Cover openings to the outside with wire screen to keep mice out.

The floor should be built of slats over about three inches of sand placed on the concrete floor. The sand, when moistened, will provide the proper humidity. Use a thermostatically controlled heater when the area is not uniformly heated.

If a little time and care are taken, you can enjoy fresh vegetables all year round.

Survey Shows

Average new home in America contains 1,715 square feet of space and costs just under $20 per square foot, the latest survey by the Bureau of Building Market Research, Chicago, found. Averages also include 7.2 rooms, 3.3 bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Cool Season Varieties Best For 2nd Planting

It is a good idea to make several different plantings in your garden instead of only one large planting after the danger of frost is over, says Robert Herner, horticulturist at Michigan State University.

The time to plant seeds depends on the hardiness of the vegetables and the climate in your area. "Certain vegetables can withstand some frost while others cannot," contends Herner.

Most vegetables can be divided into two groups: Those that grow best in cool weather and those that flourish during warm weather.

Examples of cool season vegetables include: beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage; carrots, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, onion, peas, radishes and spinach.

Examples of warm season vegetables include: beans, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, melons, okra, peppers, pumpkins, squash and tomatoes.

"In general," says Herner, "cool season vegetables are hardy or frost tolerant. They should be planted early in the spring and again in July. Most of these varieties will not tolerate hot weather."

Warm season vegetables cannot tolerate frost and will grow best only when the temperatures are warm to hot.

"Therefore, if you undertake a second planting of the cool weather vegetables during this time, you can enjoy fresh garden delights until the arrival of fall," Herner concludes.

Family Room From Garage

An idea plans booklet for converting a garage to a family room-solarium is available for 15 cents in coin from Western Wood Products Assn., Dept. 529-P, Yeon Bldg., Portland, Or. 97204.

Michigan Tops In 6 Crops

Michigan ranks number one in the nation in the production of six crops: red tart cherries, sweet cherries, dry edible beans, cucumbers for pickling, fine Eastern white soft winter wheat, and rhubarb.

Handy Jim's FIX-UP TIPS

Family Plans Ahead

A FAMILY approach to home modernization has many advantages. With members participating, each has a say on ideas that will benefit all.

An early point in the planning—after deciding what's to be done—is a decision to use amateurs, professionals or both. This is an important "think-ahead" time because space, furnishings and materials must be considered, says John Concord, home improvement consultant to Masonite Corporation.

"Togetherness and apartness are considerations. Dad's workshop shouldn't be next to Sue's music center. Partitions can solve many problems. Royalcote panels are ideal. They're noted for their ruggedness, beauty and easy maintenance."

A home project initiated by

the whole family and carried out by the members is a positive step ahead. "The greatest benefit," Concord comments, "is the project itself. It will enhance the daily lives of family members, make home more inviting and add to its present and future value."

For a free brochure on decorator panels useful in creating unusual patterns, send a postcard to Masonite, Box B, Chicago, Ill. 60690, requesting Form No. 68128.

Food Costs Increase Compared

The price of almost everything the consumer buys has gone up faster than the cost of food. While food costs have increased 47 per cent since 1952, the average worker has enjoyed pay raises of more than 140 per cent. During this same period, the cost of medical care has gone up 123 per cent and housing now costs 64 per cent more.

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