

VEGETABLE STORAGE & HANDLING TIPS

from *Farmer John's Cookbook*

Beans – Store unwashed beans in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable bin of your refrigerator for up to two weeks. Rinse green beans under cold water when ready to use.

Beets – Cut off greens, wash and spin and place in plastic bag for later. Store the beet-roots unwashed in a plastic bag in the crisper bin of your refrigerator. They will keep for several weeks.

Broccoli – Wrap broccoli loosely (broccoli needs some room to breathe) in a plastic bag and keep it in the vegetable bin.

Brussels sprouts – Brussels sprouts keep longest if they are left attached to the stalk. If you're short on refrigerator space, snap off the sprouts and store them unwashed in a closed plastic bag in the veggie bin. Their flavor is sweetest right after harvest, so try to use them within a few days.

Cabbage – Stick dry, unwashed cabbage in the refrigerator, preferable in the vegetable bin. Remove and discard any floppy or yellowish outer leaves. Cabbage can keep for more than a month. Once it's cut, seal it in a plastic bag and continue to refrigerate it; it will keep for several weeks.

Cantaloupe – If your cantaloupe seems a bit short of ripe, keep it at room temperature for a few days. Once the melon ripens, store it in the refrigerator for a few days.

Carrots – Remove the leafy-green tops, leaving about an inch of stems, Refrigerate dry, unwashed carrots in a plastic bag for two weeks or longer.

Cauliflower – Wrap dry, unwashed cauliflower loosely in plastic and store it in the refrigerator. It will keep for up to a week but will taste sweetest if used within a few days.

Celery – Wrap unwashed celery tightly in a plastic bag and place it in the coldest part of the refrigerator, where it will keep for up to two weeks.

Chard – Keep dry, unwashed greens in a sealed plastic bag in your refrigerator. Thicker greens will keep up to two weeks, but tender ones like spinach should be eaten within a week.

Collard greens – same as chard.

Cucumbers – Be sure to get your cucumbers into the refrigerator right away. Store unwashed cucumbers in a sealed plastic bag in the vegetable crisper bin, and they will last for a week.

Daikon radishes – Wrap unwashed roots in a plastic bag in the refrigerator to store for up to two weeks.

Eggplant – Wrap unwashed eggplant in a towel to absorb any moisture and keep in vegetable bin of your refrigerator for up to a week.

Fennel – Cut off stalks where they emerge from the bulb. Unwashed bulb will keep in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for two weeks.

Garlic – Garlic can be eaten fresh or dried. Dried garlic will keep for several months in a dark, dry, well-ventilated place at a cool room temperature.

Herbs – Except for basil, set unwashed bunches of fresh herbs (with stems) upright into small jars filled with 1 to 2 inches of water. Then cover the herbs loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to two weeks. Roll up unwashed smaller sprigs or loose herbs in a dry towel, place the bundle in a plastic bag, and store it in the refrigerator's vegetable bin for up to a week. Basil – do not refrigerate fresh basil. Strip lower leaves off of stems and place the stems in a glass of water on the kitchen counter.

Kale – see Chard.

Kohlrabi – If you plan to use it soon, wrap the whole unwashed kohlrabi in a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator. Otherwise, remove the stalks and greens from the bulb and use them within a week. Bulb can be stored in a plastic bag in the fridge and used within two weeks.

Leeks – Loosely wrap unwashed leeks in a plastic bag and store them in the vegetable bin of your refrigerator. They will keep for at least a week.

Lettuce & Salad Greens – Store unwashed lettuce in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. To store lettuce that you have already washed and dried, roll the leaves loosely in a kitchen towel, put the towel in a plastic bag, and place the package in the vegetable crisper bin. Use lettuce within a week.

Onions//Red & Yellow Storage – will keep in any cool, dark, dry place with adequate air circulation for several months if they have been cured.

Parsnips – refrigerate unwashed parsnips in a loosely wrapped or perforated plastic bag. Can keep in refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Peas – Eat peas as fresh as possible, within four or five days of harvest. To store, put peas in a perforated plastic bag in the crisper of your refrigerator.

Peppers (sweet & hot) – place whole, unwashed peppers in a plastic bag, seal and refrigerate for a week or more. Beware of any excess moisture in the bag that could cause peppers to spoil. Red, orange, and yellow peppers are fully ripe and need to be eaten sooner.

Potatoes – Keep unwashed potatoes in a cool, dark, dry place – such as a loosely closed paper bag in the cupboard. They will keep for

weeks at room temperature, longer if you can provide their ideal temperature of 40-50 degrees.

Potatoes, Sweet – Keep unwashed sweet potatoes in a cool, dark place such as a loosely closed paper bag in a cupboard or cool basement, and use them within a few months. Do not store in the refrigerator; cold temperatures can darken the potatoes and will adversely affect their taste.

Radicchio – keep unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator's vegetable bin for up to one week.

Radishes – Remove greens. Store unwashed greens in loosely wrapped plastic bag in the crisper of your refrigerator. Because of their high water content, radishes deteriorate quickly. Store them dry and unwashed.

Scallions – should be stored unwashed and wrapped loosely in a plastic bag. Put them in the refrigerator where they will keep for a week. To keep scallions longer, chop off three-quarters of the tender green tips; the end closest to the root is less perishable.

Spinach – see chard.

Squash, summer – Since they respire through their skins, summer squash need to be refrigerated as soon as possible. Store them unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable bin, or refrigerate them in a sealed plastic container that you've lined with a

kitchen towel. In the refrigerator, they keep for about a week and a half.

Squash, winter – store winter squash in a cool, dry, dark place with good ventilation. (A porch or garage can work well as long as you don't let them freeze.) They should keep for a month or more, depending on the variety. (Delicata, pie pumpkins, buttercup, and red kuri have a shorter storage life than acorn, sweet dumpling, and butternut squash.)

Tomatoes – If your tomatoes smell fragrant and yield slightly when squeezed, they are ready to use. If not, store them for a few days at room temperature until they are ripe. Putting dry tomatoes in a brown paper bag may accelerate the ripening process; a sun-free spot on your counter will also work. You can dry tomatoes for long term storage or can or freeze them in sauces or salsas. Tomatoes tend to lose their flavor if stored for very long in the refrigerator, but if it's hot in your kitchen and you have some very ripe tomatoes, you're better off putting them in the fridge to prevent them from spoiling too fast.

Turnips – Remove greens. Store unwashed greens in loosely wrapped plastic bag in the crisper of your refrigerator. Because of their high water content, turnips deteriorate quickly. Store them dry and unwashed.