

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News September 15, 2014
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HARVEST TIPS FOR WINTER SQUASH AND PUMPKINS

To harden rind you can cure for 10 to 20 days at 80 to 85F with good ventilation (e.g. four air exchanges per day). UMass suggests a warm dry greenhouse (70-80°F) with good air circulation, such as a greenhouse, for up to two weeks. There is mixed info on the benefit of curing winter squash but from what I've read by hardening the skin it will reduce weight loss in storage and this may also prevent subsequent handling injuries, which can lead to disease. If you are removing stems at harvest then I think curing is important to heal any wound that is created.

Harvested fruit should be stored with good ventilation (at least one air exchange per day) at 50 to 55F and 50 to 75% relative humidity. UC Davis says 55-59F with 60% RH optimal. Higher

TIPS FOR BEST ONION BULB QUALITY

Adapted from Christy Hoepting, Cornell Vegetable Program

Do not pull onions and leave them in the hot sun when temperatures are high because they can get sunscald, especially if the relative humidity is high and they are pulled on the green side. A common technique for field drying is to orient the pulled onions so that the leaves lay over top of the bulbs. Some growers move the pulled onions with the tops on into a greenhouse or high tunnel to dry. Temperatures should be held below 85 °F, which will probably require leaving everything wide open. Black shade curtain/cloth over the house can also help to moderate temperature. Ensure good air movement.

Harvest dry onions during the cooler part of the day if it is hot out, and as long as they are not wet from dew or rain. Storage-bound onions should only be topped when the neck is dry and has no green tissue (i.e. the tissue does not slide when you roll the neck between your fingers). Bacterial diseases and black mold can enter into and move through green tissue into the bulbs. These diseases do not infect or move in dry tissue. Leave 2-3 inches of neck on the bulb when topping. This increases the distance from the cut surface to the bulb for fungal and bacterial pathogens to travel. Theoretically, if the neck dries down before the disease gets to the bulb, the bulb should be sound in storage.

If onions are dying standing up due to excessive leaf dieback caused by disease or other stress, and they are not lodging, they should be pulled and note that it may take a bit longer for the necks to dry on these onions. Conduct harvest practices when the weather is dry. Ideally, onions should not be handled when wet. When wet harvested onions are placed into boxes, it takes longer for them to cure properly, and the added moisture can stimulate disease development and rooting, which in turn will stimulate sprouting. Avoid bruising during harvest procedures.

For optimum storage quality onions must be cured soon after harvest. Curing decreases the incidence of neck rot and bacterial diseases, reduces water loss during storage and is desirable for development of good scale color. Optimum conditions are 68-86°F and 70% relative humidity for at least 12 to 24 h. Best skin color develops at 75-90°F. Artificial curing can be done with outside air, which is heated to approximately 77°F or 3-5 °F above the ambient air temperature. Avoid temperatures greater than 82°F, because bacterial diseases and black mold are more likely to develop. A lower temperature, down to 68°F should be used if onions are poorly skinned, have been touched by frost or have bacterial diseases. Relative humidity should not fall below 65% or exceed 80%. RH going into the boxes should ideally be 50% and less than 100% coming out.

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Spotted wing drosophila is being found in fall raspberries across the region and at many but not all locations around the state. Populations can build up very fast so monitor your crop carefully; pick berries frequently, refrigerate fruit promptly if possible and/or protect with netting or insecticides. See: <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/SWDInfo.html>

RAW MANURE SURVEY

If you grow fruits or vegetables for sale and apply raw manure OR graze livestock or poultry in fruit or vegetable production areas, please take a few minutes to answer this brief survey. Under FSMA, the interval between applying raw manure to certain fruits and vegetables and harvest time may be extended. Your responses to the survey will be used to help UVM Extension providers understand current practices in Vermont, and how growers could be impacted if the interval is extended. This will help us make comments to policy makers on the proposed rules. Questions? Ginger Nickerson, virginia.nickerson@uvm.edu or (802) 505-8189. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/rawmanure>

VERMONT FARM SAFETY PROGRAM IS OPEN TO ALL FARMS

The Vermont Farm Safety Program provides ways to strengthen and improve your on-farm safety program. then A or insurance perspective. Farms that participate in farm safety programs may receive discounts on According to Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration, farms with 10 or fewer employees and without a temporary labor camp are exempt from inspection. However, if any food manufacturing takes place on a farm, regardless of size, it is subject to OSHA inspection. It is important to note that even though a farm with 10 or fewer employees is exempt from OSHA inspection it is NOT exempt from OSHA regulations. Every farm needs to have a safety program than includes a written plan.

Applications are being accepted for participation in the Vermont Farm Safety Program. There is limited space. The fee is \$90 and you must attend the orientation meeting on Nov. 14, 2014 at the UVM Extension office in Berlin VT, and at least one additional meeting via conference call or webinar. You must also agree to a farm safety check/audit on your farm during November or December, follow through on r , identify a , develop and implement an individualized Farm Safety Plan, and conduct monthly on-farm employee safety trainings. The program was developed by the VT Agency of Agriculture, UVM Extension, the VT Dept. of Labor, and Co-operative Insurance. The program is voluntary and all information is confidential. Contact Louise Waterman at (802) 828-6900 or Louise.Waterman@state.vt.us for an application or more info.