



Produce Handling Guide

While we can't control the seasons or changing weather patterns that effect fruit and vegetable quality, there are many variables you can control to maximize your freshness and yields.

TEMPERATURE

Temperature is the defining factor in maintaining and maximizing your produce quality. Temperature abuse is the leading cause of produce claims and losses. Always be aware of temperatures in receiving, storage and prep areas to effectively manage optimal produce life.



ROTATION

Proper rotation is as easy as writing delivery dates on products and storing in order so that the oldest product is always used first. This is called the FIFO method.

FIRST IN
FIRST OUT



IDEAL STORAGE TEMPERATURES

FRONT - 45° - 50° F	Apples	Jicama
	Basil	Limes
	Beans	Okra
	Cabbage	Pears
	Cantaloupe	Peppers
	Carrots	Pineapples
	Citrus	Plums
	Cucumbers	Radishes
	Eggplant	Yellow Squash
	Garlic	Zucchini
Honeydews		
MIDDLE - 40° - 45° F	Artichokes	Tomatoes
	Asparagus	Kiwi Fruit
	Beets	Mushrooms*
	Cauliflower	Parsley
	Cherries	Peas: Snow,
	Coconuts	Sugar, Green
	French Beans	Turnips
	Grapes	Watercress
	Green Onions	Watermelon
	Green	
BACK - 34° - 40° F	Alfalfa Sprouts*	Greens: Kale,
	Bean Sprouts*	Collards,
	Berries	Endive, Chard,
	Bok Choy	Etc.
	Broccoli	Herbs
	Celery	Kale
	Corn	Leaf Lettuce
	Dairy Products	Leeks
	Fresh-Cut Fruits & Vegetables	Lettuce
	Fresh-Cut	Spinach
Salads	Romaine	

* STORE AS FAR AWAY FROM LIGHT AS POSSIBLE, USUALLY ON A LOWER SHELF

FRESH FRUIT RIPENING GUIDE

Some fresh fruit continues to ripen after harvest while others do not. Whether or not a fruit continues to ripen is a key factor in determining its storage and shelf life. Fruits that require additional ripening should be stored at room temperature until ripe. Fruit that does not ripen after harvesting should be stored in a cool area until used.

FRUIT THAT RIPENS AFTER HARVEST

Bananas	Pears
Kiwi	Plums
Nectarines	Tomatoes
Peaches	

FRUIT THAT DOES NOT RIPEN AFTER HARVEST

Apples	Pineapple
Grapes	Strawberries
Oranges	Watermelon

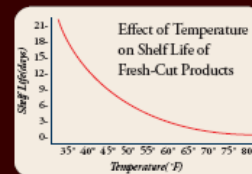
HANDLING OVERVIEW

TEMPERATURE:

Temperature fluctuates from front to back of the cooler, this is due to the location of the cooling unit and the frequency of the door being opened. The area closest to the door will generally be the warmest.

FRESH-CUT PRODUCE:

- Store at 34°F; each degree higher reduces shelf life
- Maximize shelf life with proper refrigeration
- Keep time out of refrigeration to a minimum
- Store product in original bags or shipping cartons



* Microbiological growth greatly increases at temperatures over 50°F

TOMATOES:

Should be held at room temperature to ripen and then used immediately. Be careful not to over buy; if you refrigerate a ripe tomato, it loses flavor.

BEST KEPT IN DRY STORAGE

Avocados(unripe)
Bananas
Mangos
Onions
Papaya
Pears(unripe)
Plantains
Potatoes
Pumpkins
Shallots
Squash(hard, butternut, corn,etc.)
Tomatoes(ripe)*
Watermelons(whole)