

EVERT FRESH GREEN BAGS TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL FOOD STORAGE



NOT ALL PRODUCE IS THE SAME!

Therefore, it shouldn't all be stored the same way. This is a very simple, but surprisingly overlooked concept. Temperature, moisture, gas and light all have an effect on produce.

And the effect is not the same for every item.

The good news is if you know the proper way to store your produce, then it will remain fresh longer, it will taste better and you won't waste as much, meaning you get more for your produce dollar.

To help you out, we've provided you with these pages of helpful storage tips, so bite into some of this juicy info and start getting more out of your fresh produce.

Temperature

Sorry, but there just isn't one optimum temperature for keeping all produce fresh.

While apples and grapes are very comfortable at 1°C, squash and spinach prefer 13°C to 15°C and will suffer greatly from temperatures below 10°C

A refrigerator maintaining 7°C will completely ruin chill-sensitive produce like cucumbers and eggplant in a matter of hours.

Room temperature 22°C is just as damaging, to say nothing of the 40°C + temperatures in a parked vehicle. Excess heat or cold causes produce to stress and expire what is called damaged ethylene gas at 10 times the normal production rate cutting storage life from weeks to hours.

Gases

Ethylene gas is the silent killer for anything coming from a root system. Manufactured by the produce itself, it starts its deadly work as soon as said produce is removed from the mother plant. The same is true for many plants, from roses to pine trees, which explains why many gardeners and florists use the Green Bags for extending the shelf life and freshness of cut flowers! Many plant seeds are stored and shipped in Green Bags for this same reason. The Green Bags are impregnated with a natural mineral that adsorbs ethylene and other gases. Excessive oxygen also shortens produce life, as does carbon dioxide.

Basically limiting these gases ability to function normally cuts enzyme production and extends freshness, all without introducing potentially harmful chemicals.

Bruising, cutting, removing leaves, excessive light, excessive heat or cold, age and mildew all cause accelerated ethylene production, resulting in shorter shelf life. Gases produced by other produce or sources such as exhaust fumes are just as detrimental. Upscale produce shippers and packers in the USA use electric forklifts to prevent this type of damage. Sadly, many others do not! If possible, ethylene producers and limited ethylene producers should be stored in separate refrigerators or at least separate drawers in the same fridge. And all should be separated by Green Bags.

Moisture

Moisture is a necessity for plant growth and the freshness of picked produce.

But excessive moisture, especially that from a water tap, introduces bacteria and in many cases harmful chemicals to otherwise healthy fruits and vegetables.

Mildew is a bacteria culture growing on produce, fed by excessive moisture. Moisture can come from many sources: rain prior to picking, washing prior to shipping, water misters in the produce market, etc.

Aside from bacteria growth, moisture affects the cooling process, promotes stress and deletes freshness.

Two common causes of excess moisture on produce in the home are refrigerators with low Freon levels and a 22°C bag of produce placed in a 7°C fridge.

If everything in the fridge is a little moist, check the Freon level. An organic coffee filter or paper towel can be placed in the bag for a few days to soak up excess moisture. Be sure to exchange the original Green Bag with a dry Green Bag when towel is removed. Usually 24 hours is all that is needed for this easy fix.

Light

While direct light, like moisture, is very important for healthy plant growth, it is detrimental to the storage of most ripening produce. Direct light shining through a plastic or glass surface can raise temperatures on the contents by several degrees. Light also disturbs the dormant state needed for extending shelf life, prompting more ethylene production.

Age

When removed from the root system or food source many types of produce begin manufacturing ethylene gas. This gas allows the production of an enzyme, which basically allows the produce to self-absorb or rot. As this damages more tissue, more gas is produced (see #2 Gases) accelerating the rotting process. Like the old saying “a bad apple will ruin the barrel.” Placing a fresh apple in close proximity to an older or otherwise damaged apple will shorten the life of the fresh apple, usually within a few days of the older. Types of produce that are not large manufacturers of ethylene gas are very susceptible to ethylene and other gases. These should be stored separately by type and age in Green Bags. Never place the produce you buy this week in the bag with the produce you bought last week, even if they are the same otherwise.

Handling Winter Produce

Special handling is required for most produce found in stores during winter months.

Much winter produce in New Zealand is grown in other countries such as USA, Italy, Ecuador, Caribbean Is. Produce from these countries is generally more than double the age of produce grown locally.

Procedures are not always as modern and produce is handled more. Shipping distance alone causes bruising and stress not to mention temperature variations. Water is sprayed on aging produce to prevent drying and to give a fresh appearance. Bacteria have had more time to grow into algae and mildew.

The fresh peaches you just brought home are two to three weeks older than those you purchased in January. They are heavy with moisture and covered with bacteria and are but a few hours away from becoming a beautiful mildew garden! All have been subjected to damaged ethylene gas from age and from fellow peaches that were dropped and bruised during transit. All is not lost and these peaches should be consumed as soon as possible. The following procedures should double their shelf life even though it may be only a few days.

- Clean produce with a produce spray that illuminates bacteria growth
- Hand dry as much as is possible
- Place produce along with Organic coffee filter or paper towels into a fresh dry Green Bag
- If possible, place in fridge at optimum storage temperature
- Check after a few hours and repeat C and D until excess moisture is gone

Remember: Cool, Dry and Dark

If not storing in a fridge, find the coolest dark dry place you can.

If you drop, cut, squeeze, carry or transport produce in any way different from other produce, even picked from the same tree at the same time DO NOT STORE IT IN THE SAME CONTAINER.

And remember, over cooling produce is just as harmful as over heating.

Tap water is usually loaded with bacteria but so is the air. If you intend to keep produce for an extended period of time you must address the bacteria issue or mildew will grow.

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