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# HARVESTING AND STORING VEGETABLES FOR HOME USE

BY
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# HARVESTING AND STORING VEGETABLES FOR HOME USE

By J. J. GARDNER

The home garden should be planted with a view to furnishing a large assortment and a continuous supply of vegetables, not only during the growing season, but for winter use as well. Most people have no conception of the number of common vegetables that may be kept in a fresh or preserved state for winter use. The list includes about 30 different kinds. There are about 20 different kinds, namely, potatoes, beets, carrots, horseradish, winter radishes, parsnips, rutabagas, salsify, turnips, kohl-rabi, cabbage, celery, leek, chicory, parsley, onions, dry beans, pumpkins, squashes and sweet potatoes that may be easily stored in the fresh state.

In addition, the following vegetables may be had for winter use by either canning or preserving: Rhubarb, tomatoes, sweet corn, peas, string beans, cauliflower, cucumbers, citron, green peppers and green tomatoes.

## *TIME OF PLANTING*

In order to secure the best results in storage, it is generally necessary to regulate the time of planting so that crops will be at the proper stage of maturity at the right time for storage. For example, beets sown extremely early in the spring would hardly make desirable roots for winter storage because of their being over-grown and woody. Later planting would produce smaller beets of better quality for winter keeping. No particular care is necessary in regard to the time of planting for vegetables which are to be canned or preserved, except that they be given plenty of time to develop and that there be a sufficient quantity available at the right time.

## *HARVESTING*

The time for harvesting, where crops are to be stored, is just as late in the fall as possible, avoiding any possible chance of injury by freezing. This time will vary slightly with different vegetables; for instance, turnips may be allowed to remain in the ground longer than beets, they being more hardy, and beets slightly longer than carrots. Only vegetables free from blemishes or injuries should be used.

Vegetables to be stored for winter use should be harvested and handled with care. Root crops, such as beets, carrots, winter radishes, rutabagas, turnips and kohl-rabi may usually be harvested by pulling by the tops. In case the vegetables are long rooted, digging with a fork may be necessary.

Horseradish, parsnips, salsify and chicory usually require digging in order to get the root out without injury, and should be removed so that the tip is not more than a quarter of an inch in diameter in case it is broken off.

Cabbage, celery and parsley are taken roots and all with the soil clinging to them. Only injured parts are removed. Root tops should be removed carefully, cutting about three-fourths of an inch from the crown of the vegetable so that no injury will occur. Otherwise, the roots are subject to bleeding and soon wither because of loss of moisture. The portion of the leaf remaining on the crown soon withers and falls off, with no injury to the root.

Onions for winter storage are harvested when the necks begin to wither. The tops are removed and the onions placed in a well ventilated place, preferably under cover, to "cure".

## *STORAGE*

Nearly all of the common vegetables are satisfactorily stored under one of four conditions:

1st. Cool, moist conditions and no circulation of air.

2nd. Cool, dry conditions with a circulation of air.

3rd. Cool, moist condition of roots and a circulation of air about the top.

4th. Warm, dry conditions with a free circulation of air.

Most of the common vegetables are stored under the first condition of coolness, moisture, and no circulation of air, namely, potatoes, beets, carrots, horseradish, parsnips, winter radishes, rutabagas, salsify, cabbage and kohl-rabi.

The second group includes only the onion.

The third group includes such vegetables as the celery, leek, brussels sprouts, chicory and parsley that continue their growth in storage.

The fourth group includes such vegetables as dry beans, sweet potatoes, pumpkins and squashes.

The conditions for the first group may be met in several ways. Where only a limited supply is to be stored, the best method is to

place the vegetables in a box of moist sand or soil in layers. Where larger quantities are to be put away, they may be stored in what is known as an out-of-door pit.

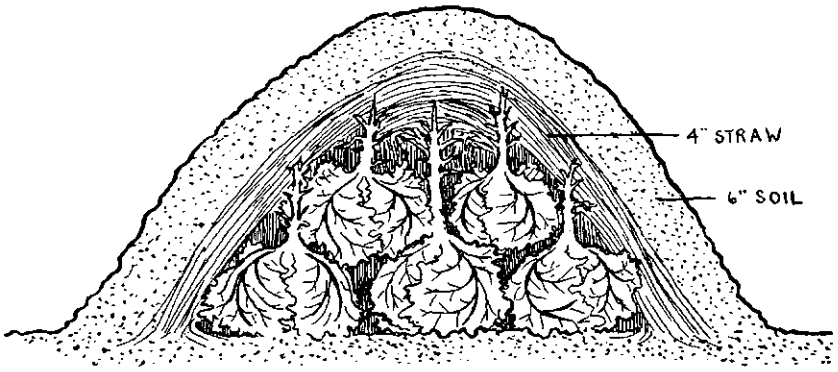
Parsnips, salsify and horseradish, being perfectly hardy, are not injured by freezing and may be left in the ground over winter, but it is often difficult to secure them when wanted, under these conditions. They may be placed in a conical pile in a well drained place and covered with about six inches of earth which may be chopped away at any time it is desired to get at the vegetables.

Beets, carrots, winter radishes, rutabagas, turnips and kohlrabi are not hardy and must be protecte from freezing. The vegetables are placed in a conical pile on a well-drained piece of land, covered with a layer of from six to eight inches of straw, and about the same amount of earth, leaving some of the straw protruding at the top to provide ventilation, as the vegetables are likely to develop some heat when first covered. As soon as cold weather sets in, the earth may be thrown over the top to completely seal the pit. In extremely cold sections, a layer of strawy manure is sometimes put on the top of this after the earth covering has become frozen.

**Pit of Beets opened April 15th**

Where a considerable quantity of vegetables is to be stored in this way, a series of pits, one adjoining the other, may be made, with only an amount of vegetables in each pit that can be economically used at any time. In this way, no pits are opened until the vegetables are to be used.

Cabbages are stored by placing them head down three in a row and two on top making a tier of five cabbages, the roots extending in the air. The pile may be as long as necessary. Several inches of straw or leaves should then be put over the cabbage and the same amount of earth thrown on them. Cabbage may be kept frozen solid without injury to the head, providing it is thawed out very gradually.




**Cabbage Pit**

Onions, in limited amounts, may be easily stored in a cool place where there is a free circulation of dry air about them; the main point to bear in mind is that they require a low temperature, as they sprout readily where there is any heat. A bushel or so may be hung up in a basket suspended from a rafter in a cool cellar. Larger quantities are usually stored in slatted crates, one piled on top of the other, allowing a free circulation of air between the crates.

Celery, leek, brussels sprouts, chicory, and parsley—vegetables that continue their growth after storage—are transplanted with soil clinging about the roots.

For home purposes, parsley may be taken and put into a pot or box and kept well watered, at an ordinary room temperature.

Celery, leek and chicory, in a small way, may be transplanted into a box, with holes in it for ventilation, and the roots covered with moist sand or soil, the air being allowed to circulate thru the

tops. Watering will be frequently necessary and should be applied to the roots and not the tops; otherwise disease is liable to start, and decay soon follows.

Brussels sprouts require more room than the celery and it is hardly practical to store them in a box, but they may be put upon the floor of the cellar, the roots covered with moist sand or soil and kept in this way.

Celery, leek and chicory may be also placed under the same conditions, or, if a hotbed is available, they may be transplanted into the bottom of the bed and kept for a considerable length of time, if additional covering is put on during severe weather.

Dry beans, sweet potatoes, squashes and pumpkins, in a limited way, may be stored on a shelf in a furnace-room, or in a warm place, where they may be kept dry and free from moisture. In order to insure squashes and pumpkins keeping satisfactorily, they should be harvested with the whole stem and part of the vine attached—otherwise, they are likely to start decaying on the stem end.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