

QUALITY STANDARDS

For Goodbye Hobby Garden, Hello Money Garden! Project Funded by the NE SARE

Evaluation of the following characteristics will be made on arrival:

- Color
- size and shape
- Defects or blemishes,
- Odor and taste
- maturity, firmness

The purchaser reserves the right to reject any unfit produce at its discretion. The following standards should be used as a guideline:

Beets

Look for: Beets that are firm, round, with a slender tap root (the large main root), a rich, deep red color, and smooth over most of the surface. If beets are bunched, you can judge their freshness fairly accurately by the condition of the tops. Badly wilted or decayed tops indicate a lack of freshness, but the roots may be satisfactory if they are firm.

Avoid: Elongated beets with round, scaly areas around the top surface — these will be tough, fibrous, and strong-flavored. Also avoid wilted, flabby beets they have been exposed to the air too long.

Cabbage

Savoy (curly leaf), green, or red

Look for: Firm or hard heads of cabbage that are heavy for their size. Outer leaves should be a good green or red color (depending on type), reasonably fresh, and free from serious blemishes. The outer leaves (called “wrapper” leaves) fit loosely on the head and are usually discarded, but too many loose wrapper leaves on a head cause extra waste. Some early-crop cabbage may be soft or only fairly firm, but is suitable for immediate use if the leaves are fresh and crisp. Cabbage out of storage is usually trimmed of all outer leaves and lacks green color, but is satisfactory if not wilted or discolored.

Avoid: New cabbage with wilted or decayed outer leaves or with leaves turned decidedly yellow. Wormeaten outer leaves often indicate that the worm injury penetrates into the head.

Storage cabbage with badly discolored, dried, or decayed outer leaves probably is over-aged. Separation of the stems of leaves from the central stem at the base of the head also indicates over-age.

Carrots

Look for: Carrots which are well formed, smooth, well colored, and firm. If tops are attached, they should be fresh and of a good green color.

Avoid: Roots with large green “sunburned” areas at the top (which must be trimmed) and roots which are flabby from wilting or show spots of soft rot.

Celeriac/Celery Root

Same guidelines as Beets

Garlic

Any Variety, White, red, or Elephant

Look for: Bright white bulbs that are the size of a small apple. Garlic bruises easily so must be carefully handled after harvest, it should not be thrown around. Outer bulb wrappers (“papers”) should be stripped so that the ones that had come into contact with the soil are discarded. Stripping too many wrapper layers will result in a “naked” bulb which will not store properly and will rot.

Avoid: undersized bulbs which did not develop fully; bulbs harvested too late and as a result the cloves began to separate and do not cling to the central stalk; sprouting bulbs; bruised dark stained bulb wrappers or overstripped bulbs.

Onions

Yellow, White or Red

Look for: Hard or firm onions which are dry and have small necks. They should be reasonably free from green sunburn spots or other blemishes.

Avoid: Onions with wet or very soft necks, which usually are immature or affected by decay. Also avoid onions with thick, hollow, woody centers in the neck or with fresh sprouts.

Parsnips

Look for: Parsnips of small or medium width that are well formed, smooth, firm, and free from serious blemishes or decay.

Avoid: Large, coarse roots (which probably have woody, fibrous, or pithy centers) and badly wilted and flabby roots (which will be tough when cooked).

Potatoes

Red, White, Yellow, Blue or Fingerling

Look for: With new potatoes, look for firm potatoes that are free from blemishes and sunburn (a green discoloration under the skin). Some amount of skinned surface is normal, but potatoes with large skinned and discolored areas are undesirable. For general-purpose and baking potatoes, look for reasonably smooth, firm potatoes free from blemishes, sunburn, and decay.

Avoid: Potatoes with large cuts, bruises, or decay (they'll cause waste in peeling) and sprouted or shriveled potatoes. Also avoid green potatoes. The green portions, which contain the alkaloid solanin, may penetrate the flesh and cause bitter flavor.

Rutabagas

Distinctly yellow-fleshed, large-sized relatives of turnips.

Look for: Heavy weight for their size, generally smooth, round or moderately elongated shape, and firmness. **Avoid:** Rutabagas with skin punctures, deep cuts, or decay. For more info see TURNIPS.

Sunchokes/Jerusalem Artichokes

Same guidelines as Beets

Squash (Fall and Winter)

Look for: Full maturity, indicated by a hard, tough rind. Also look for squash that is heavy for its size (meaning a thick wall and more edible flesh). Slight variations in skin color do not affect flavor.

Avoid: Squash with cuts, punctures, sunken spots, or moldy spots on the rind. These are indications of decay. A tender rind indicates immaturity, which is a sign of poor eating quality in winter squash varieties.

Sweet Potatoes

Look for: Firm sweet potatoes with smooth, bright, uniformly colored skins, free from signs of decay.

Because they are more perishable than white potatoes, extra care should be used in selecting sweet potatoes.

Avoid: Sweet potatoes with worm holes, cuts, grub injury, or any other defects which penetrate the skin; this causes waste and can readily lead to decay. Even if you cut away the decayed portion, the remainder of the potato flesh may have a bad taste. Decay is the worst problem with sweet potatoes and is of three types: wet, soft decay; dry, firm decay which begins at the end of the potato, making it discolored and shriveled; and dry rot in the form of sunken, discolored areas on the sides of the potato. Sweet potatoes should not be stored in the refrigerator.

Turnips

The most popular turnip has white flesh and a purple top (reddish-purple tinting of upper surface). It may be sold "topped" (with leaves removed) or in bunches with tops still on.

Look for: Small or medium-size, smooth, fairly round, and firm vegetables. If sold in bunches, the tops should be fresh and should have a good green color.

Avoid: Large turnips with too many leaf scars around the top and with obvious fibrous roots.