

Fresh Produce Talking Points

Storage

- ✓ **Product Rotation** – Be sure to rotate fresh produce to ensure high quality product. Follow “first in first out” (FIFO) principles by removing older product from display, placing new fresh product in display and stacking older product back on top.
- ✓ **Stacking** – Make sure produce is not stacked so tightly that air cannot circulate. Delicate produce should not be stacked more than two layers deep to avoid damaging the bottom layer.
- ✓ **Ethylene** – Ethylene is a natural gas given off by some fruits and vegetables which causes ripening in other fruits and vegetables. Be sure to store ethylene-producing items away from ethylene-sensitive items.
- ✓ **Temperature and Shelf Life** – Different produce items require different storage temperatures to maintain freshness. This chart lists temperatures and shelf life of common produce items.

Group A (32-35°F)		Group B (45-50°F)		Group C (55-65°F or an air-conditioned room)	
Item	Shelf Life	Item	Shelf Life	Item	Shelf Life
Apples**	3-6 months	Avocado (unripe)*	2-4 weeks	Acorn Squash*	2-3 months
Asparagus*	2-3 weeks	Bell Peppers	2-3 weeks	Bananas**	1-4 weeks
Avocados (ripe)**	2-3 days	Cactus - Nopales	2-3 weeks	Butternut Squash*	2-3 months
Broccoli*	10-14 days	Cucumber	10-14 days	Jicama	1-2 months
Cabbage*	3-6 weeks	Eggplant	1-2 weeks	Onions	1-8 months
Cantaloupe**	2-3 weeks	Grapefruit	6-8 weeks	Papaya**	1-3 weeks
Carrots*	3-6 months	Green Beans	7-10 days	Plantains*	1-5 weeks
Cauliflower*	3-4 weeks	Lemons/Limes	1-6 months	Sweet Potatoes*	4-7 months
Celery*	1-2 months	Mango**	2-3 weeks	Tomatoes**	1-3 weeks
Collard Greens	10-14 days	Okra	7-10 days	Watermelon*	2-3 weeks
Corn	5-8 days	Oranges	3-8 weeks		
Grapes*	2-8 weeks	Peppers, Chile*	2-3 weeks		
Kale	10-14 days	Pineapple	2-4 weeks		
Kiwifruit**	3-5 months	Tomatillo	3 weeks		
Lettuce*	2-3 weeks	Yellow Squash*	1-2 weeks		
Mushrooms*	7-10 days	Zucchini*	1-2 weeks		
Nectarines**	2-4 weeks				
Pears**	2-6 months				
Spinach	10-14 days				
Strawberries	7-10 days				

*Items sensitive to ethylene gas **Items that both produce and are sensitive to ethylene gas **Bold** Items should not be refrigerated

Display

- ✓ **Visibility** – To ensure produce is sold before going bad, display it where it can be seen from the front door.
- ✓ **Baskets** – Display fresh produce in attractive baskets. Try to avoid storing produce in cardboard or shipping boxes that can be seen by customers.
- ✓ **Stacking** – Stack a smaller basket inside a larger one before stocking fruits and vegetables to give the illusion of a full, bountiful arrangement. This setup is more attractive to customers than a small, sparse looking display.

Promotion

- ✓ **Posters** – Use posters, flyers and other promotional materials to help advertise fresh produce in your store.
- ✓ **Samples** – Offer small samples of fruit to customers at the register.
- ✓ **Recipes** – Set out recipe cards near relevant produce for guests to take home with them. This will give them an idea of what to do with the produce and entice them to purchase the ingredients.

Note: Information listed above is not all inclusive. Please refer vendor to other resources for more detailed information.

This material was excerpted in part from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.