



Harvesting and Preparing Vegetables for Exhibit

Each time you select vegetables from the produce section of the grocery store, you are judging. You select produce for freshness, cleanliness, good size and color, and freedom from mechanical, insect, and disease damage. You look for the same qualities in your home-grown produce.

There are many important guidelines when selecting and preparing vegetables for exhibit at fairs. Judges use several criteria to evaluate vegetables. There are several things the exhibitor can do to meet these criteria to the highest level and receive top placing at the fair.

Judging Criteria for Vegetables

When evaluating exhibits, judges look primarily at quality, condition, size, uniformity, and true-to-type.

QUALITY is often a measure of the ability of the person who has grown the specimen. Well-grown vegetables are of high quality.

- High-quality vegetables are at their best and in prime eating condition.
- Prime eating condition does not always mean fully mature. Some vegetables like green beans and summer squash are at their prime eating condition and harvested young, small, and immature. Others, like tomatoes or watermelons, are at their prime when fully ripe and mature.
- The color, shape, texture, and size are all indicators of high quality.

CONDITION is an indication of how the exhibit has been handled.

- All vegetables on exhibit must be in prime condition.
- Cleanliness is an important factor in evaluating the condition.
- Specimens must be free of blemishes that may be caused by insects, diseases, and mechanical injury.

SIZE of the specimen reflects its quality and uniformity.

- The size of vegetables on exhibit should be typical of the crop and variety (true-to-type).

Remember, the biggest doesn't always mean the best. In some cases, like with zucchini, bigger can be a distinct disadvantage.

UNIFORMITY gives insight into the ability of the exhibitor. It takes skill and knowledge to grow many vegetables that look identical.

- When two or more specimens are required for an exhibit, they must be as identical to each other as possible.
- All vegetables in one exhibit must be equal in size and shape. For example, avoid having an exhibit where some of the tomatoes are bigger than others or where some green beans are straight and others have a slight curve. All vegetables in an exhibit should be at the same level of maturity or ripeness. An exhibit with all specimens slightly under-ripe but uniform is better than an exhibit with each specimen at a different ripeness level.
- Color should be consistent between all specimens in an exhibit. For example, green peppers should be entirely green - one specimen with a red spot may lower your placing.

TRUE-TO-TYPE All vegetables should be true-to-type, that is, typical of the crop and variety being exhibited. For example, cucumbers with curled ends are not true-to-type, nor is an elongated beet typical of the variety 'Detroit Dark Red.'

- Labeling is essential so the judge knows what to expect in the appearance of the vegetable. Labeling is especially important for unusual varieties or cultivars.
- All specimens in the exhibit should be of the same variety or cultivar. For example, an exhibit should not have both 'Straight-8' and 'Lemon' cucumber varieties. Mixing varieties is typically an automatic disqualification.



Planning & Exhibiting

Follow these guidelines to best prepare vegetables for display.

PLANNING When planting your garden in the spring, coordinate the planting to ensure vegetables are ready for exhibit during the fair. This may mean planting earlier or later than you typically would.

- Plant extra plants, rows, or varieties to ensure you have plenty to choose from the week of the fair.
- Properly label all plants so you know the variety when the fair arrives. Use labels, maps, or photos to keep accurate records.

HARVESTING Vegetables should be fresh and in prime condition for eating at the time of judging.

- Harvest only those vegetables that exhibit the right stage of maturity, color, and size.
- Always use sharp knives, pruners, or scissors to make clean, straight cuts when harvesting or trimming vegetables. Do not pull fruits from the vine. This may result in a jagged tear on the stem.
- Be familiar with the stem length needed to exhibit before harvesting so you leave enough stem on the vegetable.
- Harvest and prepare vegetables (except dry onions and sweet potatoes) as close to the exhibition date as possible to prevent wilting and shriveling.
- If vegetables must be harvested a day or so before the fair, store them in plastic bags in the refrigerator. To avoid condensation or “sweating,” remove vegetables from the refrigerator several hours before the show so they can come to room temperature before judging.
- Harvest and handle vegetables carefully. Damage caused by rough treatment during harvest or transportation downgrades an exhibit. For example, it is not desirable to display root crops sliced by the garden fork while digging or to show squash with torn-off stems.
- Transport vegetables carefully to prevent cuts, bruises, or other damage. Be particularly mindful of stems that can puncture other specimens.
 - Utilize a cooler to keep temperatures moderate and consistent.
 - Wrap vegetables in cloth or paper.
 - Carefully wedge specimens with soft materials in appropriate-sized boxes to prevent movement.
 - Secure vases for greens to prevent tipping.
- Bring extra specimens (as alternates) to the show. If a specimen is damaged before the show, you will have a backup.

EXHIBITING Check the fair book for specific show guidelines. The quantities, stage of maturity, and other factors may differ from those listed in this publication. **Always follow the guidelines outlined in the fair book.**

- Double-check all quantities before judging. An improper number of specimens will lower your placing or potentially disqualify your exhibit.
- Vegetables are typically exhibited on white paper plates that you provide. Always pick a plate appropriate for your vegetable's size and shape. Colors, prints, and patterns distract from the exhibit. Occasionally the show organizers will provide plates, platters, or vases to use. Refer to the fair book to know which classes have provided containers.
- Most vegetable shows have a process to allow you to change classes the day of the show. Sometimes the vegetables you intended to exhibit are not ready, but something else in your garden is. Switching an entry to a different class allows you to still be able to participate.



CLEANING Clean vegetables are an important criterion for judging. Dirt detracts from the appearance of the vegetables.

- Brush dirt off with a soft-bristled brush or cloth.
- Do not wash vegetables with water unless necessary. If needed, wash vegetables carefully with cool, clean water.
- To clean root crops, let the soil dry and gently brush it off. Underground vegetables, such as potatoes, that have been washed and scrubbed will wilt and shrivel after only a short time on display.
- Generally, less soil adheres to root vegetables if they are dug when the soil is relatively dry. If washing is necessary, soak roots in cool water and gently wash with a stream of water or a soft cloth. Never scrub with a hard-bristled brush.
- Tender-skinned vegetables, such as summer squash and eggplant, must not be washed. Clean them by lightly brushing the dirt away with a soft-bristled paintbrush or soft cloth.
- Do not over-clean specimens. This can remove the waxy “bloom” on some vegetables or give them an unnatural scrubbed appearance.
- Clean specimens immediately after harvest. This can allow you to easily see imperfections or blemishes early, giving you a chance to harvest an alternative before the show.

LABELING Clearly label each specimen with its common name, scientific name, and variety/cultivar.

- The common name is the name commonly used for the plant and can vary by region, country, or language. Plants may have one or several commonly known names. The same common name may refer to two different plants.
- The scientific name (or botanical name) is the universal name given to a plant. Each plant has only one scientific name that consists of two words. The first word is always capitalized and identifies the plant’s genus name. The second word is the specific epithet and is not capitalized. The scientific name is underlined (when handwritten) or printed in italics (i.e. *Solanum lycopersicum*).
- A variety is a variation of a plant species in color, size, shape, or other attribute. A cultivar is the cultivated variety of a plant and was developed through a controlled breeding or hybridizing program. Single quote marks are used to indicate a cultivar name. Most vegetables have a cultivar or variety name. Rarely a vegetable may not have a cultivar or variety name (such as with some rhubarb).
- Variety is particularly important as it lets the judges know what the vegetable should look like. For example, uneven color is typical for the ‘Pineapple’ variety of tomato and would not lower your placing, but uneven coloring of an ‘Early Girl’ tomato would.
- Labeling makes the exhibit more educational. Viewers may want to know and possibly grow the varieties on display, as well as those that receive the top awards.



Guidelines for Preparing Vegetables for Exhibit

SCIENTIFIC AND COMMON NAME	NUMBER TO EXHIBIT	BEST STAGE OF MATURITY	FAULTS	PREPARATION
ASPARAGUS <i>Asparagus officinalis</i>	5 stems	Straight, dark green with tight scale tips; spears should be crisp and firm.	Crooked, soft, loose scale tips, discoloration, wilted or shriveled, insect and mechanical injury.	Harvest spears of uniform thickness when 1/4 to 3/4 inch in diameter. Trim to a uniform length of 6 to 8 inches. Loosely tie spears in a bunch with two strings or bands. It can be exhibited upright in a jar of water to prevent wilting.
BEANS (lima) <i>Phaseolus lunatus</i>	6 pods	Full size for variety; bright green; tender; fresh.	Cracked pods, variable color, seeds too small; disease, insect, or mechanical injury.	Brush with a soft-bristled brush or soft dry cloth to remove dirt; leave 1/4 to 1/2 inch of stem on the pod.
BEANS (green, snap, wax) <i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>	6 pods	Uniform in color and size, straight; true to variety; small seeds; not more than half grown.	Cracked pods, variable color, seeds too large; disease, insect, or mechanical injury.	Brush with a soft-bristled brush or soft dry cloth to remove dirt; leave 1/4 to 1/2 inch of stem on the pod.
BEET <i>Beta vulgaris</i> subsp. <i>vulgaris</i>	3 specimens	Smooth, firm, and uniform in color; 1-1/2 to 3 inches in diameter.	Variable color, misshapen, rough or broken skin, oversized, insect or disease damage.	Trim tops to 1-1/2 to 2 inches in length (helps reduce wilting); leave up to 2 inches of tap root; brush to remove soil, or soak and gently wash in cold water; avoid scrubbing to prevent damage to the skin.
BROCCOLI <i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>italica</i>	1 head	Firm heads; uniform color; tender and crisp; tight bud stage.	Wilted, leaves in head, flowers open or showing yellow, depressed center, insect or disease damage.	Rinse with cold water; keep refrigerated until ready to exhibit; remove all leaves below the head; minimum diameter of head (or sprouts) is 3 inches; minimum length of stalk and head is 5 inches.
BRUSSELS SPROUTS <i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>gemmifera</i>	5 heads	Heads solid and firm; heavy for size.	Lightweight, loosely formed, not firm, wilted, split; insect, disease, or mechanical damage; peeled too much.	Do not peel excessively; two or three outer leaves should be left on; remove from the stalk.
CABBAGE <i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>capitata</i>	1 head	Heads solid and firm, tender and crisp, heavy for size.	Lightweight, loosely formed, not firm, wilted, split; insect, disease, or mechanical damage; peeled too much.	Do not peel excessively; two or three outer leaves should be left on; trim stem close to head but leave no more than 1/2 inch of stem.
CANTALOUPE <i>Cucumis melo</i> var. <i>cantalupensis</i> See Muskmelon				
CARROT <i>Daucus carota</i>	3 specimens	Smooth; straight; uniform bright color; 1 to 1-1/2 inches in diameter at crown.	Purple or green shoulders, too large or small, pale color, forked, crooked or cracked roots, insect or disease damage.	Trim tops 1 to 1-1/2 inches in length; remove soil by brushing or washing in cold water. Avoid scrubbing to prevent damage to the skin.
CAULIFLOWER <i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>botrytis</i>	1 head	White, orange (yellow), or purple (depending on cultivar); crisp and solid; "jacket" leaves fresh and with uniform color.	Poor color (yellow-brownish), grainy, excessively rough, wilted, insect or disease damage.	Trim "jacket" leaves even with the top of the head; some older leaves may be removed. Leave 1/4 to 1/2 inch of stem below the bottom leaves.
CELERY <i>Apium graveolens</i>	1 bunch	Crisp, firm, thick, and uniform petioles (stalks); uniform color for type.	Wilted, small size stalks, blemishes, split stalks, poor color for type; insect, disease, or mechanical injury.	Trim leaves uniformly and remove roots; wash in cold water and refrigerate until ready to exhibit.

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CHINESE CABBAGE <i>Brassica rapa</i> var. <i>pekinensis</i>	1 head	Tight, solid heads with clean, bright color; heavy for size.	Loose wilted heads, poor color, blemishes, showing insect or disease damage, too many outer leaves removed.	Keep one or two outer leaves on the head; trim stem close to the head; wash in cold water to remove soil and keep refrigerated until ready to exhibit.
CORN (sweet) <i>Zea mays</i>	2 ears	Kernels are fully grown and in the milk stage; well filled, good color, and even rows; fresh, bright green husks.	Too immature or overmature; crooked, uneven rows; cob not filled to tip; insect damage; dried husks; dented or dried kernels; long shank.	Harvest just before the show and leave husks on (corn deteriorates rapidly once the husk is removed). Remove the entire husk immediately before exhibiting.
CUCUMBER <i>Cucumis sativus</i>	<i>Pickling</i> (2"-3"): 5 specimens <i>Dill</i> (4"-5"): 2 specimens <i>Slicing</i> (6"-8"): 2 specimens	Straight, dark green color; crisp and firm.	Misshapen or crooked fruit, insect or mechanical damage, oversized, yellowish color, overmature, no stem.	Leave 1/2 inch of stems; wipe clean with a soft cloth.
EGGPLANT <i>Solanum melongena</i>	1 specimen	Firm, shiny; medium to large size; uniform color (purple, green, orange, white, or bicolor); light thumb pressure will leave a dent at the proper harvest stage; small blossom scar; fresh green calyx (the leaf-like cover of the flower and the eggplant).	Too small, off-color for type, dried calyx, dull color, immature.	Do not wash; wipe with a soft cloth if necessary; leave a 1-inch stem.
ENDIVE (Escarole) <i>Cichorium endivia</i>	1 head	Stout, crisp, tender head with a well-blanch heart.	Wilted, too large, dirty, insect damage, discolored.	Cut at the very base of the plant with a sharp knife preserving some roots when 6 to 14 inches in diameter (depending on variety). Remove discolored or damaged outer leaves. Wash in cold water to remove soil and refrigerate until ready to exhibit. Exhibit in a wide jar or shallow pan of water to prevent wilting.
GARLIC <i>Allium sativum</i>	3 specimens	Clean, smooth, brightly colored bulbs with dry necks.	Rough, off-colored bulbs; necks green and immature; missing or broken sheaths or cloves; blemished; roots or tops too closely cut.	Leave 1 inch of stem attached; trim roots to within 1/4 inch of the bulb; brush off soil; do not remove sheath or wash. Harvest early (approximately 2 weeks before exhibiting)
GREENS (collard, beet, mustard, turnip) <i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>viridis</i> , <i>Beta vulgaris</i> subsp. <i>vulgaris</i> , <i>Brassica juncea</i> , <i>Brassica rapa</i> subsp. <i>rapa</i>	6 leaves	Leaves 8 to 12 inches long; bright, tender stalks; clean, fresh, well-colored leaves and stalks.	Wilted, poorly colored, insect- or disease-damaged leaves.	Wash in cold water; place cut end in jar of water to prevent wilting.
GOURDS <i>Cucurbita species</i>	2 specimens	The rind should be hard and glossy with fully developed color or pattern; fruits that are true to variety in size, color, and shape.	Immature fruits with light color; soft or damaged rind; insect or mechanical damage; stem removed; green, soft stem, different forms or types.	Leave 2 inches of stem attached; wipe clean.

SCIENTIFIC AND COMMON NAME	NUMBER TO EXHIBIT	BEST STAGE OF MATURITY	FAULTS	PREPARATION
HORSERADISH <i>Armoracia rusticana</i>	3 roots	Clean, firm, uniform color, unbranched, straight.	Green coloration, too large or small, dirty, discolored, excessively crooked, non-uniform in length, diameter, or shape, mechanical injury from digging.	Dig roots and trim tops off. Scrub clean under cool running water. Select roots less than 2 inches in diameter and less than 7 inches long.
KALE <i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>acephala</i>	1 plant or 6 leaves	Dark green, crisp fresh leaves; bright, clean stems.	Insect damage to leaves; dirty, wilted, poorly colored leaves; seed stalk present.	Exhibit entire plant with roots. Rinse roots and place in jar of water. If growth habit warrants it, kale can also be exhibited like other leafy greens (see Greens).
KOHLRABI <i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>gongylodes</i>	2 specimens	1-1/2 to 3 inches in diameter, tender, good color.	Too large, tough, poor color, misshapen, dirty; insect, disease, or weather damage.	Cut leaves 1 to 2 inches long; trim roots 1 to 2 inches below the "ball."
LEEK <i>Allium porrum</i>	3 specimens	Long, thick and firm, with pure white stems of at least 3 inches topped with dark green leaves.	Swelling at the base (called bulbing); too large for variety; immature; not uniform in color, diameter, shank length, or overall length.	Dig carefully with a garden fork (do not pull) when approximately 1 inch in diameter (size can vary based on variety). Clean carefully with running water to remove dirt from roots and leaf axils. Trim roots to 1 inch; trim leaves 2 to 6 inches long.
LETTUCE (leaf) <i>Lactuca sativa</i>	1 plant or 6 leaves	Fresh, crisp, well-colored leaves.	Leaves are wilted, yellow, damaged, or dirty.	Remove older outer leaves that show yellowing; place roots in a jar of water. If growth habit warrants it, leaf lettuce can be exhibited like other leafy greens (see Greens).
MELON, HONEYDEW <i>Cucumis melo</i>	1 specimen	Pick at full maturity when there is a slight softening of the blossom end of the fruit (end opposite where the stem attaches); medium size and fragrant. Unlike muskmelons, the fruit of honeydews does not slip off the vine when mature.	Harvested too soon, poorly colored, decay spots, pest or mechanical damage, over- or under-ripe.	Leave 1 to 2 inches stem; wipe with a moist cloth.
MUSKMELON <i>Cucumis melo</i>	1 specimen	Pick at full maturity when stem separates readily and completely from fruit (full-slip); medium size and fragrant.	Harvested too soon (half-slip), poorly colored, decay spots, pest or mechanical damage, over- or under-ripe.	Do not wash; use a soft-bristled brush to clean.
OKRA <i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>	3 specimens	Small, straight, uniform pods not over 3 inches long; consistent green or red color.	Pods are large, woody, hard, crooked, discolored, soft, or mushy.	Leave a 1/2-inch stem attached to the pod.
ONION (dry) <i>Allium cepa</i>	3 specimens	Firm, mature, well-shaped bulbs; true to variety; small neck that is well dried; heavy for size; 2 inches or more in diameter; uniform color and finish.	Peeled bulb; sunscalded, immature, misshapen, double or split bulbs; large soft neck; poor color, size, and finish; inadequately dried (wet neck); disease, insect, or mechanical injury.	Harvest early (approximately 2 weeks before exhibiting) and cure thoroughly; do not remove outer scales; do not wash; trim tops 1 inch above bulb; trim roots to 1/4 inch.
ONION (green) <i>Allium cepa</i>	5 specimens	1/2 to 3/4 inch in diameter, straight, white stem and dark green leaves.	Too small or large, crooked, poor color, dry or discolored leaves, heavily peeled, enlarged bulbs.	Remove loose skin, cut tops 4 to 5 inches above white shank; trim roots to 1/2 inch. Bundle and tie in the middle.

SCIENTIFIC AND COMMON NAME	NUMBER TO EXHIBIT	BEST STAGE OF MATURITY	FAULTS	PREPARATION
PARSNIP <i>Pastinaca sativa</i>	3 specimens	Medium to large size (1 to 2 inches in diameter and less than 7 inches long); clean, smooth, firm, uniformly tapered root; clear color.	Too small; poorly colored, blemished, crooked, or misshapen roots; side roots present; green shoulders.	Trim tops to 1 inch in length; soak and wash in cool water; trim off side roots but do not trim off lower portions of the tap root.
PEAS (snow, snap, edible pod) <i>Pisum sativum</i>	6 pods	Tender, flat pods with seeds just beginning to form, bright green color.	Seed maturing, pods swelled or damaged, pods tough.	Pick with stems, trim to approximately 1/4 inch; use a soft-bristled brush to remove soil.
PEAS (garden) <i>Pisum sativum</i>	6 pods	Bright green, well-filled pods with seeds in the eating stage.	Poorly filled pods, dull or whitish green color; pods shriveled or drying, blemished; seeds shriveled.	Pick with stem, trim to approximately 1/4 inch; leave peas in pod (unshelled); rinse with cool water to clean
PEPPER (bell) <i>Capsicum annuum</i>	2 specimens	Large, firm, blocky with dark color (red, yellow, green, orange, purple); large for variety, crisp and heavy, uniform in size and color.	Badly misshapen, rough, too small, off-color, wilted, lightweight, dirty; show signs of sunscald, mechanical injury, insect, or disease damage.	Leave 1/2 to 1 inch of stems attached.
PEPPER (hot) <i>Capsicum annuum</i>	5 specimens	Firm, with dark color (red, green, yellow, orange, or purple); crisp and uniform in size and color.	Badly misshapen, rough, too small, off-color, wilted, lightweight, dirty; show signs of sunscald, mechanical injury, insect, or disease damage.	Leave 1/2 to 1 inch of stems attached.
POTATO <i>Solanum tuberosum</i>	3 specimens	Firm, medium size (6 to 10 ounces), uniform color.	Mechanical, insect, or disease damage; unusually deep eyes for variety; poor color, green color, knobby, or growth cracks, too large or small for variety.	Do not wash; dig from dry soil and use a soft-bristled brush or soft cloth to remove soil.
PUMPKIN <i>Cucurbita pepo</i>	1 specimen	Thick flesh (heavy for size); clean, hard rind; true to type in size, shape, and color.	Light weight for size, stem removed, color and shape not typical of variety, scars and blemishes, insect or disease damage.	Leave 2 inches of stem attached; wipe and polish with a soft cloth.
RADISH <i>Raphanus sativus</i>	5 roots	Roots are 1 to 1 1/2 inches in diameter; fresh, crisp, uniform color, and smooth.	Wilted or soft roots, poorly colored, rough, or blemished; oversized or split.	Gently wash in cool water; remove only the discolored or injured leaves. Bunch and tie together at the base of the leaves.
RHUBARB <i>Rheum rhabarbarum</i>	3 stalks	Young, tender stalks, uniform color, approximately 1 inch in diameter.	Tough, blemished, overmature, poorly colored stalks; lower end of stalks cut.	Pull, do not cut stalks; trim leaves so only 1 inch of leaf blade remains attached to the stalk. Bunch and tie stalks together at both ends.
RUTABAGA <i>Brassica napus</i> See Turnip				
SPINACH <i>Spinacea oleracea</i>	1 plant or 6 leaves	Uniformly colored, clean, fresh, crisp leaves.	Wilted, poorly colored, blemished, insect-damaged leaves.	Wash in cold water; pull the entire plant, trim off roots to crown, remove outer damaged leaves; place in a jar of water to prevent wilting. If growth habit warrants it, spinach can also be exhibited like other leafy Greens (see Greens).
SQUASH (summer) <i>Cucurbita pepo</i>	2 specimens	The rind should be soft; long-fruited varieties (zucchini-type) should be 4 to 8 inches long; flat or scalloped types should be 3 to 5 inches in diameter.	Stem removed; large, overmature, or oversized fruits; scarred skins, wilted or soft fruit.	Leave 1 to 2 inches of stem attached; do not wash; use a soft-bristled brush to clean.

SCIENTIFIC AND COMMON NAME	NUMBER TO EXHIBIT	BEST STAGE OF MATURITY	FAULTS	PREPARATION
SQUASH (winter) <i>Cucurbita pepo</i> , <i>Cucurbita maxima</i>	1 specimen	The rind should be hard and glossy with fully developed color; medium to large fruits are true to variety in size, color, and shape.	Immature fruits with light color; soft or damaged rind; insect or mechanical damage; stem removed; green, soft stem.	Leave 2 inches of stem attached; wipe clean.
SWEET POTATO <i>Ipomoea batatas</i>	2 specimens	Medium size (2 to 4 inches diameter); smooth, brightly colored.	Rough, off-color, bruised roots; evidence of insect, disease, or mechanical injury; poorly shaped, too small, or too large; excessively dirty.	Dig 7 to 10 days before exhibiting to cure; do not wash; clean with a soft-bristled brush or cloth.
SWISS CHARD <i>Beta vulgaris</i> var. <i>cicla</i> See Greens				
TOMATILLOS <i>Physalis philadelphica</i>	3 specimens	Firm fruits that are heavy in relation to size, typical of the variety, uniform in size and color (green or yellow), ripe, smooth, and well-shaped.	Poor color, sunscald, too large or too small, misshapen, insect or disease damage, cracked fruit, stems left attached; husks left on; over-ripe.	Pick mature but firm fruits; remove stems and husks; clean carefully with a soft cloth.
TOMATO <i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>	<i>Slicing:</i> 3 specimens; <i>Roma or processing:</i> 5 specimens; <i>Cherry, pear, or grape:</i> 10 specimens	Firm fruits that are heavy in relation to size, typical of the variety, uniform in size and color, ripe, smooth, and well-shaped.	Poor color, green shoulders, sunscald, too large or too small, misshapen, insect or disease damage, cracked fruit, stems left attached; over-ripe fruit is likely to be soft and "leaky."	Pick mature but firm fruits; remove stems; clean with a soft cloth.
TURNIP <i>Brassica rapa</i> subsp. <i>rapa</i>	3 specimens	Roots 2 to 3 inches in diameter, smooth skin and firm flesh, uniform color.	Poorly colored, soft, spongy, too large, rough skin, excessively dirty, side roots present; show evidence of insect, disease, or mechanical injury.	Trim leaves to 1 to 2 inches; leave at least 2 inches of tap root; soak and wash in cold water; do not scrub.
WATERMELON <i>Citrullus lanatus</i>	1 specimen	The ground spot shows yellowish background color and dull gloss; in the best eating stage, medium to large size, shape, and color typical of the variety.	Immature or over-ripe, poor color, misshapen, blemished.	Leave 1 to 2 inches of the stem; wipe with a moist cloth.

Resources

Additional information on growing vegetables is available from local ISU Extension offices and the following ISU sources.

- Extension Store <https://store.extension.iastate.edu> 515-294-5247
- Yard and Garden Website <https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu>
 - Check this site for links to horticulture newsletters, care and how-to articles, FAQs, and other resources related to gardening in Iowa.
- Iowa 4-H <https://extension.iastate.edu/4H> 515-294-1018
- Plant and Insect Diagnostic Clinic <https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/pidc>
 - pidc@iastate.edu 515-294-0581

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