

# Chapter 7

## Harvesting, storing and processing the vegetables.

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The whole family's  
efforts have given  
fruit...!  
Now it is time to  
harvest.



Just three more steps and you will be,

**Expert Horticulturists!**

Now we will see:

**1- Harvest.**

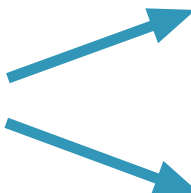
**2- Storing.**

**3- Processing vegetables.**

# 1- Harvest

The vegetables have to be harvested at their exact point of ripening.

**R i p e   v e g e t a b l e s**



Have the highest nutritional content.

Taste better.

▶ Most vegetables shrivel easily when they are harvested green.

▶ The quality of vegetables is highest when they are ripe and ready to be harvested.





▶ Some produce that is harvested too early will never have the flavor or nutritional value that ripe vegetables have.

▶ You should start getting to know every vegetable. Practice will let you know the exact moment to harvest.

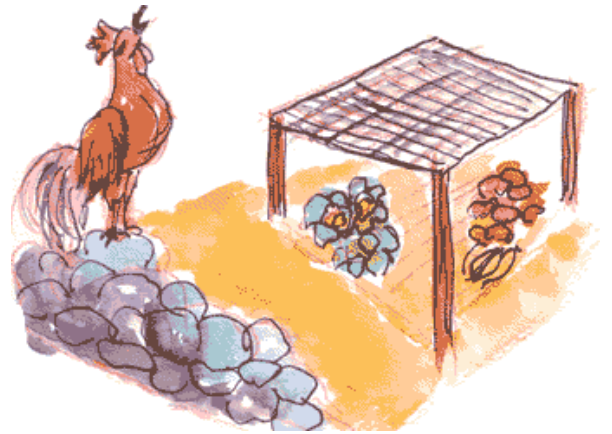
▶ Some vegetables that are harvested too late (overripe) will rot and are difficult to eat.

In the chart at the end of this Manual you will also find information on harvesting vegetables.



## Some advice for good harvesting.

- Harvest in the coolest hours of the day. Early in the morning or late afternoon, when it has cooled.
- Place everything you harvest in the shade as you go.
- Handle the produce carefully. It should not be bumped or ripped with your nails.
- Harvest when the plant is dry. In the case of onions, garlic, pumpkins and potatoes, you should harvest when the plant is dry. This means that the edible part is ready.





- Use a very sharp knife to cut leafy vegetables and to separate the edible part from the plant.



- You need to loosen the soil with a strong garden-fork before you harvest root and bulb vegetables to avoid having to pull the plant, which may damage it.



- Leave a bit of stem (the peduncle) attached to the fruit . A piece of stem is left on many fruits like melons, pumpkin and peppers so that diseases do not enter through the incision made when removing the stem.

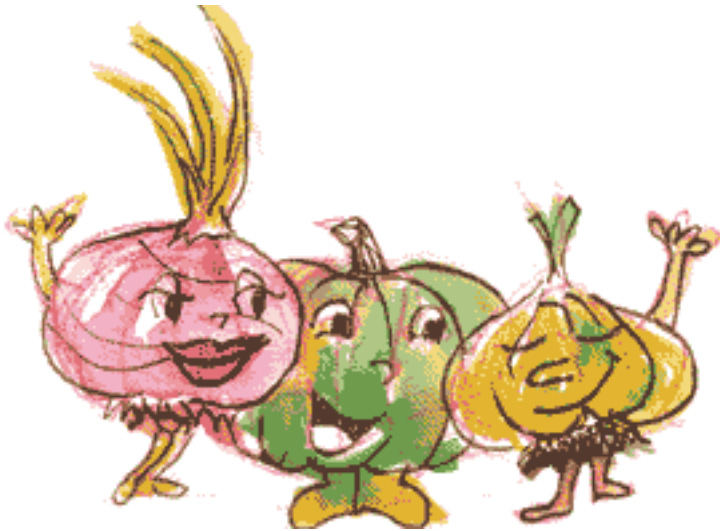
## 2- Storing

To always have fresh vegetables on the table you should harvest them only as needed.

**Your garden is the best place to keep vegetables fresh!**

To always have vegetables ready to harvest plant them in relay planting. (See Chapter 2)





There are some vegetables that are harvested all one time, therefore, **they need to be stored.**

Some of these are: onions, garlic and pumpkins.

These kinds of vegetables are easy to store but they need some special attention as we will see further on.

Nevertheless, most vegetables spoil quickly. You need to keep them in cool places and only for short periods.



## How do you store vegetables?

### Precautions:

- Eliminate vegetables that are soft, damaged, and sick or infected with pests.
- When you cut the leaves on root vegetables like carrots, beets and radishes, trim tops to 1 cm.



Every vegetable is stored differently according to its characteristics.

**There are vegetables that are stored at room temperature (20°C).**

In any room that is not too hot or too cold. Furthermore they must always be kept in the shade.

Some vegetables like tomatoes and melons can be harvested green and stored until they ripen.

Others like onions and garlic should to be harvested when they are dry and then stored in bags, netting or braided.



## Most vegetables need to be stored in very cool places (10-15°C).

In the coolest room in the house. The basement is the best place.

There should always be room for air to circulate.

You can store vegetables better and for longer periods if you have a refrigerator.

You can use paper or cloth bags to protect the vegetables.



### 3- Processing the vegetables.

To take better advantage of the garden produce you can make “preserves” and this way consume vegetables throughout the year.

Home recipes will let you preserve vegetables for long periods.

If the preserves are incorrectly prepared they may get contaminated with organisms that are dangerous to your health. It is a good idea to consult with the expert.



## What preserves can be prepared?

Whole tomatoes.



Tomato sauce.



Jams: tomato-strawberry or strawberry-melon.



Dehydrated vegetables: You can sun dry green peppers-hot peppers.



Pickling: cucumbers – hot peppers – cauliflower – eggplants – carrots – cabbage – small onions



### Fresh strawberry jam

#### Ingredients:

4.5 kg fresh strawberries  
3.5 kg sugar

#### Preparation:

Put the 4.5 kg of strawberries and 3.5 kg of sugar in a large pot. Let it sit overnight. The next morning stir it with a wooden spoon; simmer on low heat stirring constantly until it comes to a boil. It should cook until it thickens (between an hour and an hour and a half). When the jam is thick, pour it into clean glass jars. Seal and store them and they are ready to be consumed.

For pickling you need to get home recipes from the local expert or your neighbors.

Making jams and jellies is very easy. Start preparing preserves by trying this simple recipe.



**You can get organized in many ways to take better advantage of your garden produce.**

**For example:**

- You can exchange products with your neighbors.
- You can get together with friends and neighbors and arrange to sell the produce.





In this chapter we have seen:

Harvesting and storing of the produce.

- 1- Harvest
- 2- Storing
- 3- Processing

### Final Test

Place a "T" if the sentence is true and an "F" if it is false.

- 1- Ripe vegetables have the highest nutritional value.
- 2- Most vegetables shrivel more easily if they are harvested still green.
- 3- Air circulation is not important for stored vegetables.
- 4- You should harvest in the coolest hours of the day.
- 5- Unripe tomatoes and melons are stored at low temperatures.
- 6- You can make "preserves" with leftover produce and store for use throughout the year.
- 7- It is good to get organized with friends and neighbors to sell the produce.
- 8- To make "preserves" you need to follow recipes properly and to take care that they do not get contaminated.



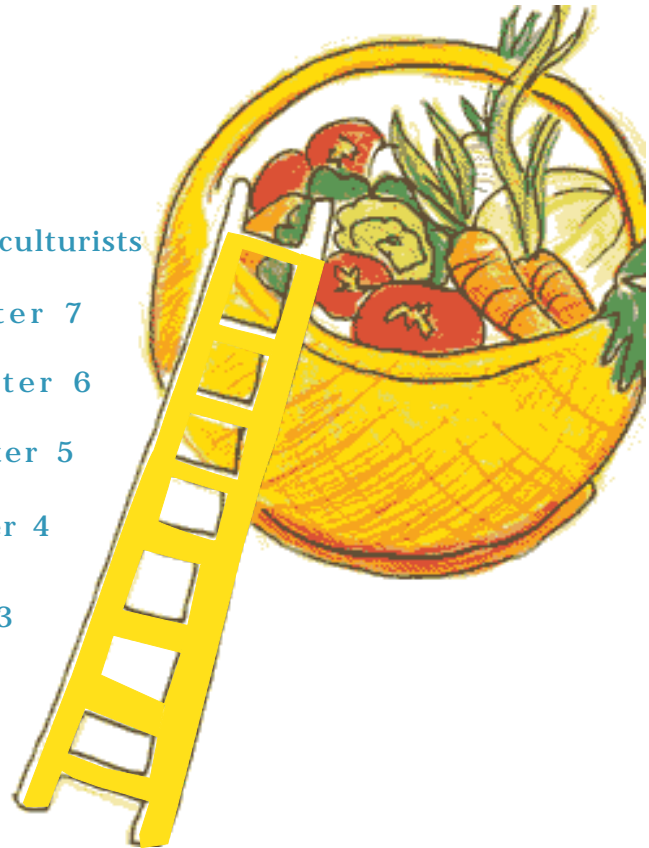
**If all your answers were correct, you have reached the top step. Congratulations!**

**Answers for the  
Final test**

- 1- T
- 2- T
- 3- F
- 4- T
- 5- F
- 6- T
- 7- T
- 8- T

If two or more of your answers were incorrect you should review the material in Chapter 7

- Expert horticulturists
- Chapter 7
- Chapter 6
- Chapter 5
- Chapter 4
- Chapter 3
- Chapter 2
- Chapter 1



We have accompanied you throughout this Manual, now you know how to make a garden.

With each year's experience you will learn more and your produce will be; the best!

**At the end of this Manual we have a surprise....**

