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Storing Vegetables Successfully

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

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STORING VEGETABLES

Successfully

Vegetables, to be satisfactorily stored,
 must be Properly Matured,
 neither Diseased nor Bruised;
 placed in Suitable Containers and
 stored with Proper Temperature,
 Humidity and Ventilation

Cool, Moist Storage

Potatoes, Root Crops, Cabbage, Apples

Warm, Dry Storage

Squash, Pumpkins, Sweet Potatoes

Cool, Dry Storage

Onions, Dry Peas, Beans

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SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE ♦ BROOKINGS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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 NOT CIRCULATE

Cool, Moist Storage for *Potatoes, Root Crops, Cabbage, Apples*

Essential requirements for these main storage crops are not ordinarily found in furnace-heated homes unless special provisions for proper temperature, humidity and ventilation have been made.

Temperature Just Above Freezing

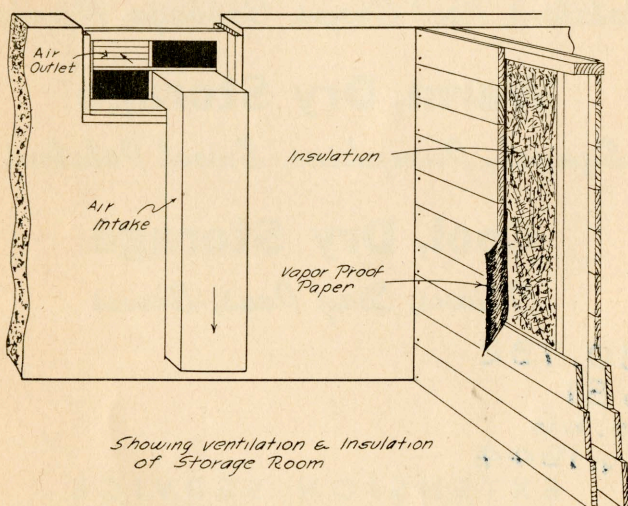
Right temperature (32-40 degrees) can be assured only by protecting against house heat by tight partitions or insulations; or preventing freezing by insulation and banking. Keep a good thermometer in the storage room.

Air Must Be Moist

The moisture in the air must be sufficient to prevent shriveling. Sprinkling the floor occasionally during winter will help maintain the needed moist air. If storage place is too wet or musty, provide floor drainage and ventilation. Excessive ventilation may also cause shriveling.

Ventilation Is Essential

Ventilation must be provided to cool storage room in the fall and remove excessive moisture. The living cells of the stored crops probably need some air. Ventilators or windows should be opened in the evening and closed in the morning, so regulating to keep temperature between 32 and 40 degrees. The illustrations show ways to provide the needed cool, moist storage conditions.

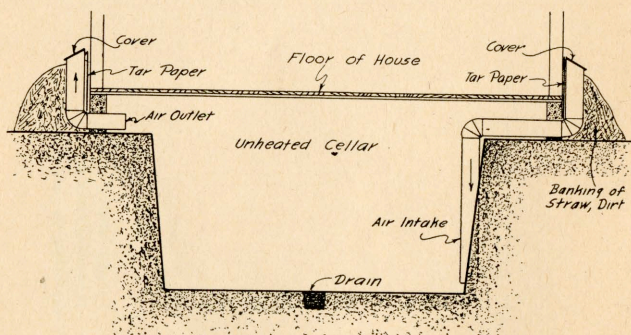


IF YOU HAVE A BASEMENT WITH FURNACE, place insulation between storage room and rest of basement. In some cases, it may be necessary to also insulate concrete foundation wall.

Potatoes—Potatoes should not be too ripe for storing and for this reason, late varieties usually store best. In handling, avoid bruising, sunscald from too much sun, or greening from too much light. Do not let them freeze. (They freeze at 29 degrees.) For 8 to 10 days after digging, a 65-70 degree temperature with high humidity will help form the corky layer, heal bruises and prevent decay. After this sweating period, temperature is lowered to correct winter storage point. The lower the temperature the longer before they will sprout. Below 36, they may become sweet but tend to return to normal when exposed to room temperature a few days. Potatoes may be stored in crates or bins small enough to permit air circulation through the pile which should not be more than 4-6 feet in diameter.

Apples—Apples to store successfully must be late varieties not too ripe. Should be well-matured, free of diseases, insect and mechanical injury. Pick while hard ripe in padded basket or sack; never drop in container. May be stored in clean boxes, baskets or crates and stacked in storage room. Container should never be so full as to cause bruising. Wrapping each apple in oiled paper aids in preventing apple scald and apple rot. Prompt cooling and storing after picking is important because apples ripen much faster off than on the tree.

Late Beets, Carrot, Rutabagas, Parsnips, Salsify, Turnips and Winter Radishes—Harvest before overgrown, woody, strong. Roots may be stored in ventilated barrels or crates but not in large piles where they may heat and decay. Storing in closely covered crocks or burying in moist sand, sawdust or soil (to maintain humidity) may be satisfactory. Thirty-two degrees is best storage temperature.



IF YOU HAVE AN UNHEATED CELLAR, bank house foundation.

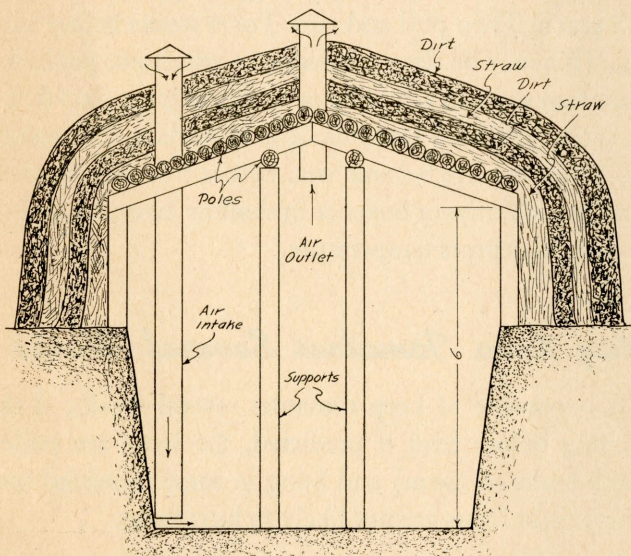
Late Cabbage, Kohlrabi—Pile heads one or two layers deep in slatted shelves in same room with roots.

Parsnips, salsify, horseradish, parsley and late cabbage are not injured by being held frozen in pits through the winter. They may be stored in a shallow pit, barrel or box sunk into ground with earth mounded about it to prevent surface water running in. Harvest after freezing weather begins, store in convenient piles and cover to prevent repeated freezing and thawing. Place in pits when ground is frozen and keep covered. Use burlap or carpet, then a mouse-proof board and finally straw. When removed from pit, vegetables may be thawed over night in cold water after which they may be kept in ordinary storage for some time. Parsnips and salsify may be left in ground over winter without injury. Cabbage stored frozen should be used before March.

Pit storage for other vegetables is not generally recommended for South Dakota (except Black Hills section) because of danger of freezing during severe cold. They are often safe until Christmas, however.

Warm, Dry Storage for *Squash, Pumpkins, Sweet Potatoes*

Ordinary furnace rooms, basements, attics and upstairs rooms usually provide the warm, dry air with proper 40 to 50 degree temperature these vegetables need. To test for maturity: Squash and pumpkins when prop-



IF YOU HAVE NO BASEMENT OR CELLAR, build an outside root cellar or (for fall use) a temporary pit.

erly matured, are difficult to puncture near stem end with thumb nail. Several inches of stem should be left attached. Do not break the skin. Pick before exposed to frost. Harden shell by leaving outside during several warm days or keep in heated rooms (75 to 80 degrees) for two weeks. Then store, not on floor in root cellar or vegetable storage room, but in rows on shelves where warm and dry. Sweet potatoes are placed in baskets, crates or shallow bins with slatted bottoms.

Cool, Dry Storage for *Onions, Dry Beans, Peas*

Unheated closets, attics, storage rooms or porches which do not freeze are suitable for onion storage. Such places will also store beans and peas even if they do freeze.

Beans, Peas—Harvest when maximum number of pods are ripe, beginning to dry. Vines are pulled, cured like hay, then threshed. Or pods may be picked; spread in a warm place until thoroughly dry. Shell, place in bags, hang in cool, dry, airy place. If thoroughly dry, will keep in cans or jars.

Onions—Are mature when tops topple over while still green. Then pull and cure 3 or 4 weeks before storing. This may be done outdoors, in windrows protected from rain or in an airy shed or rooms in trays 4 x 3 ft. x 3 in. with ventilated bottoms. It is important that onions are not allowed to become wet. Before freezing weather, store in such trays or boxes or in shallow layers on shelves at 32 to 36 degrees temperature.

May Keep Tomatoes Several Weeks

It is possible to keep tomatoes several weeks, if the evening before frost is predicted, the vines are pulled (with fruits on them) and hung in some protected spot where light frosts are not likely to hurt them.

We Must Preserve All the Food

we possibly can. Food is fully as important as arms to win the war. We must have food to ship to our boys in the Service, to our Allies and at the same time have enough to keep our people in good trim at home so production will not lag.

Vegetable Crops Are Abundant

in South Dakota this year. We cannot afford to let any of them go to waste. We will need every ounce of food we can get in the trying months and perhaps years ahead. This leaflet tells how to save through STORAGE those bountiful crops with which Nature has blessed our Struggle for Freedom.

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