



help end **food waste** now



Whether you're shopping at the grocer's or farmer's market, or harvesting from your own backyard, once you get your fruits and veggies in the house, there's lots of things you can do to keep them fresh and edible for as long as possible:

- Fruits and vegetables are still breathing even after they've been pulled out of the earth, or off the vine or tree. In general, warmth speeds up respiration and cold slows it down – that's why refrigeration makes some foods last longer.
- Airtight wrappings suffocate fresh produce and speed up the decay process.
- Moisture encourages both decomposition and mould growth. Don't wash produce until you're ready to eat it.
- Keep things whole as long as possible. Don't even rip stems off fruits. Once living cells are broken, microorganisms start to grow.
- Eat the most perishable stuff first – raspberries last a few days, potatoes can hang around for about a month (in a cool, dark place).
- All fruits and veggies give off ethylene, a colourless, odourless, gaseous hormone that, among other things, stimulates ripening. Some species emit high levels of ethylene; others are overly sensitive to it.
- Some produce is cold-sensitive. For these, refrigeration accelerates spoilage. Once a cold-sensitive gas-emitter (such as a banana or avocado) is ripe, it can be refrigerated, but only for a little while.
- Refrigerators usually have two produce compartments for a good reason: to keep gas emitters away from produce that is ethylene-sensitive. (On the other hand, if you want to speed up the ripening of, say, a peach or tomato – simply put it in a paper bag with a ripe banana!)



David
Suzuki
Foundation

SOLUTIONS ARE IN OUR NATURE

GAS EMITTERS (keep those in bold out of the fridge – they are cold-sensitive)	KEEP THESE AWAY FROM GAS EMITTERS	STORE THESE IN A COOL, DRY, DARK PLACE (not in the fridge)
Apples	Bananas, ripe	Garlic
Apricots	Broccoli	Onions
Avocados	Brussels sprouts	Potatoes
Bananas (unripe)	Cabbage	Winter Squash
Cantaloupes	Carrots	
Figs	Cauliflower	
Honeydews	Cucumbers	
Nectarines	Eggplant	
Peaches	Kiwi	
Pears	Lettuce (and other leafy greens)	
Plums	Parsley	
Tomatoes	Peas	
	Peppers	
	Summer Squash	
	Sweet Potatoes	
	Watermelon	

It's better for the planet if you use what's fresh and on-hand (or about to go off), instead of searching out exotic imports to suit a certain recipe, or tossing something into the garbage or compost. If you're stumped about what to do with what you've got, go to www.epicurious.com and type in the name of the fruit or vegetable that's got you flumoxed. Voila! A whole new adventure in local eating. Have fun!

For more information, go to www.QueenOfGreen.ca.

Photos courtesy of Brooke McDonald www.slicephotography.ca and Nelson Agustin www.nelz.ca.

