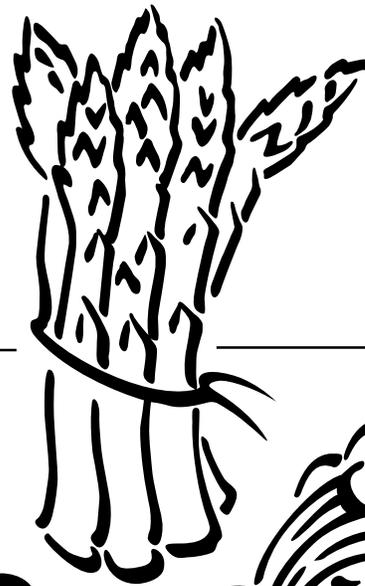
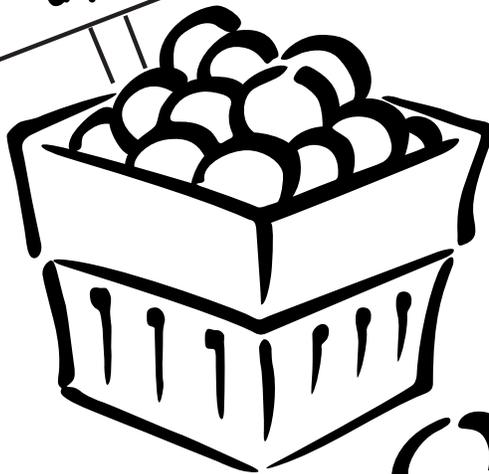


A GUIDE TO BUYING

# Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

Blueberries  
\$1.99  
a pint



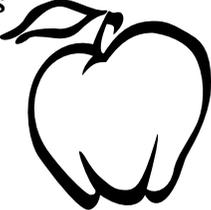
**A GUIDE TO BUYING**

# Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

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Food, Nutrition & Health

**M**any varieties of fresh fruit and vegetables are available all year in almost every part of the state, because of excellent transportation and storage facilities. For the greatest nutritional value and flavor, however, choose fruits and vegetables at the peak of their freshness. The guide below will help you select fresh fruits and vegetables.

## Fruits

Fruit	Peak Season	Look For
Apples 	September - May	Good color for variety; firm to touch. Avoid those that are soft and mealy.
Apricots	June - July	Golden yellow; plump; firm. Avoid pale yellow or green, very hard or soft, shriveled and wilted ones.
Avocados	All year	Yield to gentle pressure; vary in size, shape and color from green to black. Brown markings on skin do not lower quality.
Bananas 	All year	Firm; bruise free; yellow touched with green. If needed, ripen at room temperature.

**Berries**

**Blueberries**

June - August

Firm; plump; full-colored; bright, clean, fresh appearance. Only strawberries should have hull (stem cap) attached when mature.

**Cranberries**

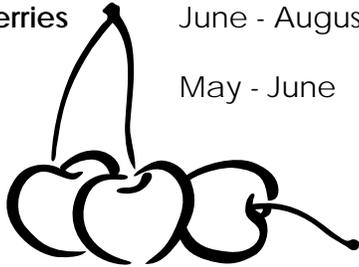
September - December

**Strawberries**

March - July

June - August

**Cherries**



May - June

Fresh appearance; firm; good size for type of cherry.

**Coconuts**

September - March

Good weight for the size; milk inside still fluid. If no milk, coconuts are spoiled. Avoid ones with moldy or wet-looking eyes.

**Figs**

July - September

Fairly soft to touch. Use at once, spoils quickly. Sour odor indicates overripe fruit.

**Grapefruit**

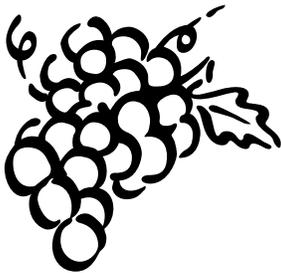
October - June

Firm; well-rounded; heavy for the size; smooth textured. Avoid coarse, puffy, rough-skinned fruit.

**Grapes**

June - December

Fairly soft; tender; plump. Well-formed clusters with green, pliable stems. Darker varieties are free of green tinge; green grapes have a slight amber blush.



**Kiwi**

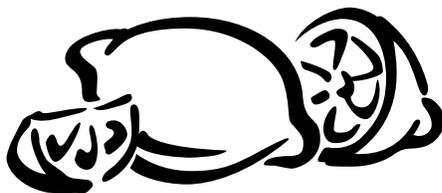
June - August

Soft to touch, like avocado. Sometimes called Chinese gooseberries.

**Lemons**

All year

Fairly firm; smooth and glossy-skinned; heavy for size.



**Limes**

May - October

Heavy for size. Green variety more acidic than yellow.

**Mangoes**

April - August

Solid and not too soft to touch. Can vary in size from a plum to an apple and in color from yellow to red. Smooth skin often speckled with black. Green mangoes are sometimes used in cooking.

**Melons**

**Cantaloupes**

May - September

Color and aroma best guides. Delicate aroma; thick netting that stands out; yellow-tinged skin under the netting. No evidence of stem at blossom end.



**Casabas**

July - October

Buttery-yellow, wrinkled rinds, lengthwise furrows.

**Crenshaws**

July - October

Yellow-gold rind; pleasant aroma.

**Honeydews**

February - October

Creamy, yellow rinds; pleasant aroma.

**Persians**

July - October

Thick webbing; gray-green to brown skin under webbing.

**Watermelons**

May - August

Dull surfaces with cream-colored undersides; symmetrical shape.



**Nectarines and Peaches**

June - September

Plump; fairly firm depending on type. Skin color white or yellow with a red blush.

**Oranges**

November - June

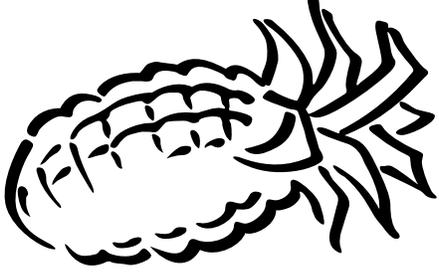
Heavy for size; firm; skins not too rough.



**Papayas**

All year

Greenish yellow to full yellow in color; flesh gives slightly when fruit pressed in palm of hand.

<b>Pears</b>	August - May	Yield to gentle pressure at stem end. Color ranges from creamy yellow to russet. Ripen at room temperature.
<b>Persimmons</b>	October - January	Firm; shapely; plump; orange-red color; attached stem cap. Handle gently. Looks like a large red tomato in shape and firmness.
<b>Pineapples</b>	February - August	"Piney" aroma; golden yellow; slightly soft. Ripe when leaf is easily removed. Green fruit may not ripen properly. Over-mature fruit may show soft watery darker spots on the base or sides.
		
<b>Plums</b>	June - September	Plump; full-covered, soft enough to yield to slight pressure. Softening at tip is usually a sign that fruit is mature. Avoid shriveled and hard plums.
<b>Pomegranates</b>	September - November	Thin-skinned; bright purple-red; looks fresh.
<b>Tangerines and Tangelos</b>	November - January January - October	Deep orange or yellow; glossy skin. Loose skin. Overripe fruit has puffy, dry skin.

## Vegetables

Vegetables	Peak Season	Look For
<b>Artichokes</b>	March - May	Heavy, compact, plump globes. Large tightly closed, fleshy leaf scales. Good green color. Heavy for the size.
<b>Asparagus</b>	March - June	Tightly closed buds. Straight, tender, rich green stalks. Open tips and angular or ridged spears are signs of over maturity.
		

**Beans**

**Green or Wax** April - October

Crisp, long, straight, blemish-free pods.

**Limas** April - August

Bright color for the variety. Crisp, dark-green, well-filled pods.

**Beets** June - October

Firm, round, smooth, deep red-colored roots. Fresh-looking tops. Avoid those with long roots and rough, scaly areas on surface, because they are tough, fibrous and strong flavored.

**Belgian Endive** October - May

Firm without bruises. Color should be white with greenish cast.

**Broccoli** October - May



Firm, closed, dark-green florets. Firm, tender stalks. Yellowing green-colored heads of broccoli are over mature.

**Brussel Sprouts** October - November

Miniature, compact, bright-green heads.

**Cabbage** All year

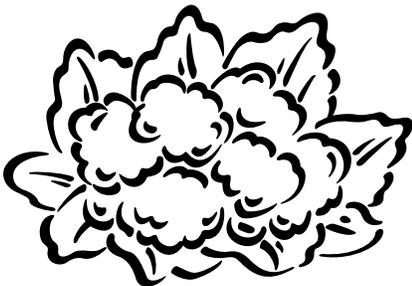
Well-trimmed, solid heads. Heavy for size.

**Carrots** All year



Firm; bright-colored; smooth; clean; well-shaped. Avoid rough, cracked or green-tinged roots.

**Cauliflower** September - November



Bright-green leaves enclosing firm, closely packed creamy-white curd or florets. Avoid bruised or open florets.

**Celery** All year

Fresh, crisp branches. Light green to green color. Should not have wilted, rough look or puffy feel to the stalk.

**Corn**



May - September

Fresh-leaved, green husks. Plump, milky kernels. Avoid cobs with small or large, dented or shrunken kernels

**Cucumbers**

May - August

Bright, shiny green; firm; well-shaped.

**Eggplant**

August - September

Firm; heavy; smooth; even dark purple. Free of bruises or cuts.

**Lettuce**

All year

Fresh green leaves with no wilted or bruised areas. Heading varieties of lettuce should be medium weight for size.

**Mushrooms**

November - April

Dry, firm caps and stems. Small brown spots or open caps are still good in flavor.

**Okra**

May - September



Tender, bright-green, bruise-free pods, less than 4 1/2 inches long. Pale, faded, hard pods are tough and fibrous.

**Onions**

All year

Well-shaped; hard; small necks. Dry, papery skins. Free of green spots or green-depressed leathery areas. Crisp green tops. Two- to 3-inch bleached-white roots.

**Parsnips**

October - April

Small to medium size; smooth-skinned; firm. Decay and bruise free.

**Peas, green**

April - July



Well-filled; bright green. Swollen, light-colored or gray-flecked pods contain tough, starchy peas.

**Peppers**

All year

Good shape; firm exterior; thick flesh and bright, glossy skin.

**Potatoes**  
**White**

All year



Fairly smooth; well-shaped; firm. Free of most blemishes. Avoid bruised, sprouting, shriveled or green-tinged.

**Sweet**

September - December

Thick, chunky, medium-sized with no bruises or decay. Should taper at the end.

**Radishes**

May - July

Medium-sized (3/4- to 1-inch diameter); good red color; plump; round; firm; crisp. Bright-green tops.

**Spinach**

March - May

Large, bright, blemish-free leaves with good green color. Yellowing indicates the start of decay. Avoid leaves with coarse stems.

**Squash**

**Summer**

June - August

Bright color; smooth, glossy skin. Heavy for the size; firm; well-shaped.

**Winter**

September - November

Heavy for the size. Hard, good-colored, unblemished rind.

**Tomatoes**

May - August



Well-formed; blemish-free; plump. Over all rich red color and slight softness.

**Turnips and  
Rutabagas**

September - March

Small to medium size; smooth; firm; heavy. Few leaf scars at top and few fibrous roots at base. Purple-tinged white ones are turnips. Yellow-skinned, larger roots are rutabagas.

Sources:

U.S. Department of Agriculture

American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, Handbook of Food Preparation.

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