Thank you for volunteering in our Grocery Gleaning program! We appreciate your dedication to helping us reduce food waste and hunger.

The information in this guide will assist you in determining acceptable produce for donation. If you find a fruit or vegetable not in this guide, use your best judgment or ask a PG staff member.

For food safety reasons please do **not** accept:
Milk, dairy products, eggs or meat products.
Apples

**Receiving and inspecting**
Apples should be firm and have smooth skin.

**Storing and handling**
Apples should be stored at 32-34°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. Susceptible to freezing; do not store below 29°F.

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**Acceptable**

**Figure 2**

- Bruises
- Superficial spot

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**Not acceptable**

- Blue mold
- Gray mold
- Alternaria rot
- Bull’s eye rot
Apricots

Receiving and inspecting
Apricots should be firm to slightly soft (ripe), but not overripe (mushy).

Storing and handling
Apricots should be stored at 32-36°F, 85-95% humidity. Do not store below 31°F.

Acceptable

Sunburn or ripe fruit OK.
Surface scarring, mechanical damage OK

Not acceptable
Rot-mushy and discolored
Split skin
Bell peppers

Receiving and inspecting
Bell peppers should be firm in texture.

Storing and handling
Bell peppers should be stored at 45-50°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. Avoid storing below 42°F to avoid chill injury.

Acceptable

Variations in colors
Surface cracks, blemishes, slight puckering

Not acceptable

Decay, heavy puckering or rotting
Mold
Berries (black, blue)

Receiving and inspecting
Berries should be firm and fairly dry. Berries do not ripen after harvest; discard any green berries.

Storing and handling
Blueberries and blackberries should be stored at 32-34°F at 90-98% relative humidity. Do not store below 30°F, as blackberries are very susceptible to freeze damage. Blackberries in particular are very perishable, so handle with care and use soon after receiving.

Acceptable

Should not be green or underripe

Check that cartons are not oozing, slight moistness ok

Not acceptable

Mushy and discolored fruit

Mold
Broccoli

**Receiving and inspecting**
Broccoli should be firm and not limp. Some yellow is ok.

**Storing and handling**
Broccoli should be stored at 32°F, at 90-98% relative humidity. Handle with care to avoid damage to bud clusters.

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**Acceptable**

- Some yellowing
- Multi-colored varieties

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**Not acceptable**

- Discoloration from rot (soft, dark spots)
- Moldy
Brussels sprouts

Receiving and inspecting
Brussels sprouts should be firm, green, and have compact leaves.

Storing and handling
Plums should be stored at 32-36°F, at 90-98% relative humidity. Do not store below 31°F.

Acceptable
Firm, green, some surface spots OK

Not acceptable
Yellowing due to age or ethylene exposure
Rot, large black spots
Cabbage

**Receiving and inspecting**
Cabbages should be fairly even colored and heavy for its size. Can remove outer leaves if damage is superficial.

**Storing and handling**
Cabbages should be stored at 32-36°F, at 90-98% relative humidity.

**Acceptable**
Small spots on outer leaves

**Not acceptable**
- Black rot
- White rot
- Downy mildew
Cantaloupe

**Receiving and inspecting**
Cantaloupes should be round with good netting or webbing over creamy-colored rind. They have a distinctive aroma and the blossom end will yield to gentle pressure when ripe.

**Storing and handling**
Cantaloupes should be stored at 36-41°F, at 90-98% relative humidity. Susceptible to freezing; to prevent chill injury, do not store below 30°F.

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**Acceptable**

- Slight discoloration
- Variations in shape (e.g., oval)

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**Not acceptable**

- Mold
- Decay
- Anthracnose
Carrots

**Receiving and inspecting**
Carrots should have firm, smooth exteriors (i.e., should snap when bent far enough). Color should be vibrant orange to orange-red.

**Storing and handling**
Carrots should be stored at 33-35°F, at 90-98% relative humidity. Do not store below 30°F.

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**Acceptable**

- Spots on outer surface
- Odd shapes

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**Not acceptable**

- Rot
- Mold
- More rot
Cauliflower

Receiving and inspecting
Cauliflower should be firm in texture. Most are white, though there are other color varieties as well.

Storing and handling
Cauliflower should be stored at 32°F at 90-98% relative humidity. Do not store below 31°F to avoid freeze injury. Cauliflower is susceptible to bruising; handle with care and do not drop shipping containers on the floor.

Acceptable

Light brown spots are fine as long as cauliflower is still firm

Color variations

Not acceptable

Rot – soft/mushy, discolored or moldy
**Celery**

**Receiving and inspecting**
Celery should be firm in texture and not too limp; ribs should snap crisply when bent. Color is green but some yellow is ok.

**Storing and handling**
Celery should be stored at 32-36°F, 90-98% humidity. Do not store below 30°F.

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**Acceptable**

Some yellow is ok  
Some brown at base is ok

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**Not acceptable**

Soft and slimy  
Mold
**Corn, sweet**

**Receiving and inspecting**
Sweet corn should be firm but kernels not hard and dry like feed corn. Color varies white to deep yellow. It should have fresh green husks with silk ends that are free of decay or worms.

**Storing and handling**
Corn should be stored at 34-38°F at 95% relative humidity. Do not store below 32°F.

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**Acceptable**

Varied colors and odd shaped or missing kernels

Dark silks can be ok (check kernels for moisture)

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**Not acceptable**

Corn worm

Corn smut mold
Cucumbers

**Receiving and inspecting**
Cucumbers should be firm in texture. Color should be green (or mostly green).

**Storing and handling**
Cucumbers should be stored at 45-50°F at 85-95% relative humidity. To avoid chill injury, avoid storing below 45°F.

**Acceptable**
- Outer blemishes
- Slight yellowing

**Not acceptable**
- Rot-puckered and soft (especially common after chill injury)
- Moldy
Grapefruit

**Receiving and inspecting**
Grapefruit should be firm and heavy for its size. Grapefruit may exhibit some regreening of the skin, but that does not affect the internal fruit quality.

**Storing and handling**
Optimal storage temperature varies by type. CA and AZ: 50-55°F; FL and TX: 50-60°F, 85-95% relative humidity.

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**Acceptable**

- Slight greenish skin
- Some surface blemishes

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**Not acceptable**

- Rot
- Mold
Lemons/Limes

**Receiving and inspecting**
Lemons and limes should be firm in texture.

**Storing and handling**
Lemons and limes should be stored at 45-48°F, 85-95% relative humidity.

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**Acceptable**

Variations in colors are ok

Some surface blemishes are ok

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**Not acceptable**

Diseases or rotting

Moldy
Lettuce

**Receiving and inspecting**
In general, avoid wilted and discolored leaves. For iceberg lettuce, some browning of the core end is natural and occurs from oxidation after lettuce has been harvested and trimmed.

**Storing and handling**
Lettuce should be stored at 34-36°F, at 90-98% relative humidity. Keep lettuce away from drafts to avoid dehydration.

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**Acceptable**

- Brown core
- Tear/slight bruising

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**Not acceptable**

- Wilted leaves
- Translucent leaves (freeze damage)
- White mold
Mushrooms

**Receiving and inspecting**
Mushrooms should have a firm texture and be free of spots. Open veils are not a sign of poor quality. Size and color do not affect quality. Some common types are portabella, cremini, white, and oyster.

**Storing and handling**
Mushrooms should be stored at 32-36°F, at 90-98% relative humidity.

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**Acceptable**

Irregular shapes or dirt

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**Not acceptable**

Sliminess or dark spots
Shrivelled or dehydrated
Nectarines

**Receiving and inspecting**
Nectarines should be firm to slightly soft (ripe), but not overripe (mushy).

**Storing and handling**
Nectarines should be stored at 32-36°F, 90-98% relative humidity. Do not store below 31°F.

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**Acceptable**

Slight pitting OK

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**Not acceptable**

Shrivelng  
Rot, mold
Onions, bulb

Receiving and inspecting

Good quality onions should be firm and hard with short, tight necks and dry papery skin. Slightly loose outer skin is common and should not affect quality.

Storing and handling

Onions should be stored at 40-60°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. For extended storage (longer than 7 days), hold at 32-36°F. Keep out of direct sunlight.

Acceptable

![Small sprouts](image1)
![Unusual shape](image2)

Not acceptable

![Bulb rot](image3)
![Bacterial soft rot](image4)

![Neck rot](image5)
![Sour skin](image6)
Oranges

**Receiving and inspecting**
Oranges should be firm, heavy for size, and have fine-textured skin. Skin color of a ripe orange ranges from orange to greenish-orange. Many oranges go through a regreening process on the tree in which the skin color begins to turn from orange back to green again. Regreening is a natural occurrence and does not affect the flavor quality of the orange.

**Storing and handling**
Optimal storage temperature varies by type. FL: 32-34°F; CA: 45-48°F; AZ & TX: 32-48°F, at 85-95% relative humidity.

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**Acceptable**

- Slightly green oranges
- Small spots

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**Not acceptable**

- Mold
- Mold in navel
- Stem end decay
- More mold (green)
Peaches

**Receiving and inspecting**
Peaches should be firm to slightly soft (ripe), but not overripe (mushy).

**Storing and handling**
Peaches should be stored at 32-36°F, 90-98% humidity. Do not store below 31°F.

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**Acceptable**

- Skin discoloration (inking) OK
- Surface scarring OK

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**Not acceptable**

- Severe bruising
- Rot, mold
Pears

**Receiving and inspecting**
Pears should be at least fairly firm in texture.

**Storing and handling**
Pears should be stored at 32°F at 90-98% relative humidity. Do not store below 29°F to avoid freeze injury. Ripen at 60-70°F.

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**Acceptable**

Variations in colors and green unripe

Some surface blemishes and slight bruising

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**Not acceptable**

Heavy bruising and mushiness

Moldy
Plums

*Receiving and inspecting*
Plums should be firm to slightly soft (ripe), but not overripe (mushy).

*Storing and handling*
Plums should be stored at 32-34°F. Do not store below 31°F.

**Acceptable**

Skin discoloration, surface scarring OK

**Not acceptable**

Shrivelung
Rot, mold
**Potatoes**

**Receiving and inspecting**
All potato varieties should be fairly clean, firm, and smooth. Avoid potatoes with wrinkled skins, soft dark spots, or green appearance.

**Storing and handling**
Potatoes should be stored at 45-50°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. Susceptible to freezing; to prevent chill injury, do not store below 42°F.

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**Acceptable**

- Small peepers (sprouts)
- Odd lumps

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**Not acceptable**

- Moldy cut
- Green potato (solanine)
- Common scab
- Late blight
Squash, hard-shell

Note: Hard-sell squash types are generally larger than soft-shell types and have hard, inedible rinds. Major types include acorn, buttercup, kabocha, and spaghetti.

Receiving and inspecting
Squash should be firm in texture.

Storing and handling
Hard-shell squash should be stored at 50-55°F at 85-95% relative humidity. To avoid chill injury, avoid storing below 50°F.

Acceptable

There are many varieties—very similar needs in terms of handling and storage

Discoloration, slight surface blemishes

Not acceptable

Start of decay

Moldy and rotting
Squash, soft-shell

Note: Soft-shell squash are also known as summer squash. Common varieties include zucchini, straight-neck (yellow squash), crookneck, and pattypan.

Receiving and inspecting
Squash should be firm in texture with shiny, tender rinds.

Storing and handling
Soft-shell squash should be stored at 41-50°F at 85-95% relative humidity. To avoid chill injury, avoid storing below 41°F.

Acceptable

Irregular shapes
Discoloration, slight surface blemishes

Not acceptable

Blossom end rot
Mold
Strawberries

**Receiving and inspecting**
Strawberries should be firm in texture. Color should be red, though some lighter color is ok. Avoid strawberries that are green, or those that appear mushy, shriveled, or leaky.

**Storing and handling**
Strawberries should be stored at 32-34°F at 90-98% relative humidity. Berries should not be rinsed until just before they are used. Temperatures above 36°F will accelerate the growth of gray mold.

**Acceptable**
- Red in color, though some lightness is fine

**Odd shapes**

**Not acceptable**
- Rot-mushy and discolored
- Moldy
Sweet potatoes

Receiving and inspecting
Good quality sweet potatoes should be firm with smooth skins.

Storing and handling
Sweet potatoes should be stored at 55-60°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. Store in well-ventilated area.
Tomatoes

**Receiving and inspecting**

Good quality tomatoes should have bright, shiny skin and firm flesh.

**Storing and handling**

Ripe (nearly full red) tomatoes should be stored at 55-60°F; less ripe tomatoes should be stored at 62-68°F. 85-95% relative humidity is ideal.

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**Acceptable**

- Slight dent
- Greenish tint

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**Not acceptable**

- Moldy bruise
- Black rot
- Late blight
- Mold and bruising
Watermelon

**Receiving and inspecting**
Watermelons should be firm. Watermelons do not ripen after harvesting; a ripe watermelon will produce a distinct hollow sound when thumped.

**Storing and handling**
Watermelons should be stored at 50-60°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. Susceptible to freezing; to prevent chill injury, avoid storing below 41°F.

- **Acceptable**
  - White/yellow patch
  - Small spots

- **Not acceptable**
  - Decay
  - Anthracnose
  - Fruit blotch