

Do you leave ripe pumpkins in the field or bring them indoors?

1. Pumpkins should ideally be harvested when fully mature, with a deep orange color (or any color they turn when fully mature) and a hardened rind. However, when there is high pest (disease or insect) pressure in the field or poor canopy coverage, it is better to harvest pumpkins that have started to turn color, as they can ripen off the vine under proper conditions (#3 below), rather than leaving them exposed to pests and sun.
2. Pumpkins can be stored in the field (even after they are ready to harvest) if vines and fruit are healthy. But field storage should last only a few weeks. Scouting for insect damage is important, particularly for squash bugs and cucumber beetles. Field storage may increase problems like Phytophthora blight, Fusarium fruit rot, or black rot, especially after wet weather or storms.
3. Ripening can be done in a well-ventilated barn or greenhouse.
 - Ideal temperatures for ripening: 80-85°F with 80-85% relative humidity.
 - Night temperatures should not drop below 60°F.
4. Curing in temp 70-80°F for about 7-10 days helps harden the rind, heal wounds, and ripen immature fruit.
5. Pumpkins should be stored in a cool, dry place (after curing):
 - Ideal storage temperatures: 50-60°F. (Green rind squashes should be stored at 50-55 °F because 59°F or higher temperature may cause degreening, undesirable yellowing, and texture loss.)
 - Ideal relative humidity: 50-70%.
 - Higher humidity can cause condensation and risk of disease.
 - Lower humidity can lead to dehydration.
 - Higher temperatures increase respiration and cause weight loss. For example, mature Kabocha squash lose 1.0 and 1.5% of their fresh weight per week of storage at 59 °F and 68 °F, respectively. Weight loss of butternut squash stored at 55 °F and 68 °F is 2.5% and 5.5% per month, respectively.
 - Temperatures below 50°F cause chilling injury.

Preparing for cold

Most cool season crops will tolerate temperatures as low as 28 °F. Cooler temperatures actually enhance the flavor of many cool season crops. Kale, collards, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, spinach, Swiss chard, carrots, onions, garlic, and leeks are among the hardiest of cool season crops. However, warm season crops such as tomato, pepper, eggplant, squash can be injured when temperatures are below 36 °F. Cold temperatures or frost can damage the surface of fruit vegetables. Light weight covers offer a few degrees of protection while the heavier grades protect plants from lower temperatures. PVC plumbing tubing or metal electrical conduit bent over beds can be used to make hoops.

End of summer season reminders

- Field clean-up for pest management: At the end of the season, field clean-up and removal of crop debris are important tasks that will help reduce diseases and insect carrier over to the subsequent season. There are many pests of vegetable crops that can overwinter in New England. [This article \(see page 3-6\)](#) published in Crop Talk has a table describing overwintering stage and recommendations focused on cultural control of major insect pests of vegetable crops.
- Cover crops: A fundamental goal of cover cropping is to avoid bare soil between cash crop plantings. This not only protects soil, but captures sunlight and produces biomass that enhances soil quality. Other benefits include improved trafficability of fields and reduced compaction, enhance aesthetics, and potential for animal feed production. See <https://nevegetable.org/cultural-practices/cover-crops> to get information about late summer-seeded and fall-seeded cover crops.
- Soil test: Fall is also a good time of year to perform soil tests on your fields. It provides you time to add lime if needed and be ready for spring fertilizer bulk orders. Instructions to collect soil samples and other relevant resources are available at <https://soiltesting.cahnrc.uconn.edu/sampling/>.

Farmer Grant Call for Proposals Open

The Call for 2025 Farmer Grant Proposals is Open. Proposals due Nov 12 at 5 p.m. EST

Northeast SARE Farmer Grant Administrator Candice Huber will be hosting a series of drop-in Q&A sessions from Noon to 1 p.m. EST on alternating Tuesdays and Wednesdays in October to answer any questions potential grantees have about their 2025 Farmer Grant proposals. Sessions will take place on: Oct 8, 16, 22, 30. from 12 to 1 EST.

The Farmer Grant program is open to all commercial farm business owners and farm employees in the Northeast region. This grant program accepts all types and scales of farms - large or small scale, organic or conventional, urban or rural, full- or part-time, etc.

Awards typically range from \$5,000 to \$30,000, depending upon a project's complexity and duration. Funds can be used to conduct the research project including paying farmers for their time, for project-related materials, for project costs like consulting fees or soil tests, and any communications or outreach expenses associated with telling others about project results. This grant program is **not** meant to help start or expand farm businesses. Farmer Grant funds cannot be used for capital costs associated with building a barn, greenhouse, or other major farm fixture, nor can funds be used to start a farm, purchase durable equipment like tractors or computers, or for any utility, telephone, or other costs that would be there in the absence of the project.

More information: <https://northeast.sare.org/grants/get-a-grant/farmer-grant-program/>

EPA Issues Emergency Order to Stop Use of Pesticide Dacthal to Address Serious Health Risk

Contact Information

EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

WASHINGTON – Today, Aug. 6, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is announcing the emergency suspension of all registrations of the pesticide dimethyl tetrachloroterephthalate (DCPA or Dacthal) under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). This is the first time in almost 40 years EPA has taken this type of emergency action, following several years of unprecedented efforts by the Biden-Harris Administration to require the submission of long-overdue data and then assess and address the risk this pesticide poses.

Full news release: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-issues-emergency-order-stop-use-pesticide-dacthal-address-serious-health-risk-4>

CT DOAG 2024 Organic Certification Cost Share

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture has received funding from the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP) Grant through the USDA Farm Service Agency.

Through this grant, Connecticut certified organic growers and processors can seek partial reimbursement for the costs of receiving and maintaining organic certification. The amount reimbursed will be 75%, up to \$750 per scope, of certification costs paid between October 1, 2023, and September 30, 2024.

More information:

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/CTDoAg/CTDOAG2024OrganicCertificationCostShare>

NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Offers Disaster Assistance to Agricultural Producers in Connecticut Impacted by Flooding and Hail

TOLLAND, Conn., Sept. 6, 2024 – Agricultural operations in Connecticut have been significantly impacted by recent flooding and hail. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers recover from these adverse weather events. Impacted producers should contact their local USDA Service Center to report losses and learn more about program options available to assist in their recovery from cropland, infrastructure, and livestock losses and damages. Full news release:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAFARMERS/bulletins/3b38021>

2024 New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference

December 17, 18, 19, 2024

Manchester,
New Hampshire
at the DoubleTree by Hilton Downtown

Conference website:
<https://newenglandvfc.org/>



Thanks for reading!

This report was prepared by Shuresh Ghimire, UConn Extension. All photos in this publication are credited to UConn Extension Vegetable Program unless otherwise noted.

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