

## Program Products

The following is information on a selection of the fruits and vegetables served on a rotational/seasonal basis. Due to weather changes during the growing season, the distribution schedule of fruit and vegetable deliveries products available may vary.

We have created classroom information and activity sheets for each of the fruits and vegetables provided in the BCSFVNP. Encourage teachers to go to [www.bcaitc.ca/index.php/resources](http://www.bcaitc.ca/index.php/resources) and search for "Fresh Story"

### Plums

Plums are a tree fruit with a smooth skin and a stone or pit in the centre. Prune plums have dark blue skins with yellow flesh. Other plums can be red, golden or black on the outside and red or yellow on the inside. Prune plums have a natural powder-like haze covering the fruit, referred to as the "bloom." This is produced by the fruit for protection, has no flavour and does not wash off easily. The plums are safe to eat with the bloom and are very delicious.

#### Checking for Freshness:

Look for evenly-coloured, smooth fruit. Ripe fruit yields to gentle pressure.

### Pears

Pears are a tree fruit. The outer skin can be light green, yellow or even reddish or brown. They have a core in the middle like an apple.

#### Checking for Freshness:

Look for firm, well-shaped fruit. Use fully ripe fruit for immediate use. Minor scars and blemishes do not affect flavour.

### Cucumbers

Cucumbers grow on vines and belong to the same family as pumpkin, zucchini, watermelon and other gourds. We serve greenhouse-grown cucumbers that do not need to be peeled. The sweet, crunchy skin is rich in fibre.

#### Checking for Freshness:

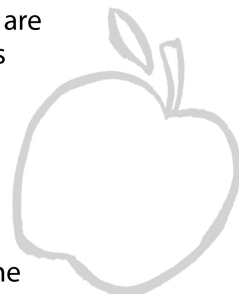
Look for firm, well-shaped bright green cucumbers. Discard soft, over-mature or yellowing fruit.

### Apples

An apple is called a "pome fruit," because it has seeds in the middle protected by a core. There are many varieties of apples, each with a slightly different shape and colour. Some common apples grown in BC are: Red and Golden Delicious, McIntosh, Royal Gala, Fuji, Ambrosia, Jonagold and Spartan. We serve both whole apples and sliced apples. The sliced apples are pre-washed, cut, packaged and ready to eat in portion sizes.

#### Checking for Freshness:

Look for well-shaped, smooth skinned fruit that is free of bruises. Brownish freckled areas on the skin are natural and do not affect flavour.



## Tomatoes

Tomatoes are the fruit of a vine plant. They have an edible skin that protects a juicy flesh. Most tomato varieties are red when ripe, but some are yellow and orange. We serve the following vine-ripened greenhouse-grown mini tomatoes varieties: strawberry tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, grape and concerto grape tomatoes.

### Checking for Freshness:

Look for smooth, well-formed, firm tomatoes that are uniform in colour.

## Carrots

Carrots are a root vegetable. We serve 'Sweet-Bites' and 'Sugar Snacks' baby carrots. These are special varieties of sweet carrots that have been peeled, cut and rounded off.

### Checking for Freshness:

Look for firm, clean, bright orange carrots that are well shaped. Peeled carrots may have a white discolouration called 'carrot blush'. Although completely safe to eat, it can be easily rinsed off.

## Oranges

Mandarin oranges are citrus fruits. They have orange skins like navel oranges, but the skin is loose and easy to peel. Mandarin oranges do not grow in BC, but for many years BC residents have looked forward to this seasonal winter treat imported from Asia.

### Checking for Freshness:

Look for plump fruit that is a uniform, bright orange in colour and free of blemishes.

## Grapes

Table grapes are fruiting berries that grow in bunches on a vine. Grapes come in lots of different colours – red, black, dark blue, yellow, green, orange and pink. They are meant to be eaten fresh, unlike the smaller wine grapes.

### Checking for Freshness:

Look for pliable green stems and plump fruit.

## Kiwi fruit

Kiwi fruit are egg-shaped, fuzzy brown berries, with a green decorative fruit on the inside, and edible skin.

### Checking for Freshness:

Look for well-shaped, smooth skin that is free of bruises. Kiwi fruit is ripe and ready to eat when you can press the outside with your thumb and it gives to light pressure. If it is firm, ripen on the counter for 3 days.

## Blueberries

Blueberries are small round blue berries grown on bushes.

### **Checking for Freshness:**

Look for firm, clean, berries that are uniform blue in colour.

## Sugar Snap Peas

Sugar Snap Peas are grown in pods on a plant.

### **Checking for Freshness:**

Look for plump, crisp pods that are bright green with no sign of yellowing or white spots.

## Mini Peppers

Mini peppers are smaller, sweeter varieties of peppers. They are grown hydroponically on plants in a greenhouse.

### **Checking for Freshness:**



Look for smooth, well-formed, firm peppers that are uniform in colour.

## Strawberries

Strawberries are red heart-shaped berries, grown on plants on the ground.

### **Checking for Freshness:**

Once picked, strawberries start to lose their sweetness, so it is best to eat them right away. Strawberries will stay their freshest when dry and cold, and any added moisture will soften the berries and encourage mold growth.

BC SCHOOL FRUIT AND VEGETABLE NUTRITIONAL PROGRAM			
FRUIT & VEGETABLE STORAGE GUIDE			
		<p>* READ <u>ALL</u> STORAGE &amp; HANDLING INFORMATION LOCATED ON PRODUCT CASE</p> <p>* KEEP SCHOOL REFRIGERATOR AT 4° C</p>	
		<p>* FOR PRODUCTS THAT MAY REQUIRE RIPENING (I.E.) PEARS , ENSURE CASE &amp; PLASTIC LINER ARE OPENED TO ALLOW PRODUCT TO BREATHE</p>	
FRUIT / VEGETABLE	ROOM TEMPERATURE STORAGE	REFRIGERATOR STORAGE	SPECIAL TIPS
	20° to 22° C	4° C / 40° F	
<b>APPLES</b> August - January	No - apples tend to soften 10 times faster at room temperature	2 months	
<b>APPLES</b> February - July	No - apples tend to soften 10 times faster at room temperature	2 to 3 weeks in perforated plastic bag in crisper	
<b>APRICOTS</b>	Store loosely until ripe	1 week; store uncovered in a single layer	
<b>BLUEBERRIES</b>	Do not store at room temperature	10 days, loosely covered	Store in shallow container.
<b>CARROTS</b>	Do not store at room temperature	check package best before date	Carrots absorb odours from apples and pears.
<b>CUCUMBERS</b> Greenhouse-grown	3 days; store at 10° C	If not serving within 3 days, store for up to 1 week	Greenhouse-grown products are happiest at the 5° C/41° F temperature
<b>MANDARIN ORANGES</b>	1 week; store loosely in open or perforated plastic bag	1 month; store loosely in open or perforated plastic bag	Mandarin oranges produce odours that are absorbed by meat, eggs and dairy products.
<b>PEACHES</b>	Store loosely until ripe then transfer to refrigerator	1 week; store uncovered in a single layer	
<b>PEARS</b>	Store loosely until ripe (Note: Ensure case and plastic liner are opened to allow pears to breathe!)	2 to 3 days; store uncovered in a single layer	Pears are ripe when flesh around stem gives to gentle pressure.
<b>PEPPERS</b> Greenhouse-grown	3 days; store at 10° C	If not serving within 3 days, store for up to 1 week	Greenhouse-grown products are happiest at the 5° C/41° F temperature
<b>PLUMS</b>	Store loosely until ripe (Note: Ensure case and plastic liner are opened to allow plums to breathe!)	Once ripe, 3 to 5 days	Grey bloom on plums is natural and indicates freshness. This does not have to be washed off.
<b>SUGAR SNAP PEAS</b>	Do not store at room temperature	1 to 3 days; store loosely in plastic bag	
<b>TOMATOES</b> Greenhouse-grown	3 to 4 days, uncovered, out of direct sunlight, until ripe; when ripe use in 1 to 2 days	No; stops ripening and affects flavour	Greenhouse-grown products are happiest at the 5° C/41° F temperature. Refrigerate only when well ripened, but will affect flavour.
<p>Source: Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), BCSFVNP Suppliers            Information about storing fruits and vegetables can be found on the CPMA website at the following link:  <a href="https://cpma.ca/docs/default-source/education/2022/cpma_2022_storage-guide.pdf">https://cpma.ca/docs/default-source/education/2022/cpma_2022_storage-guide.pdf</a></p>			
<p>Issued by BC Agriculture In the Classroom</p>			