

## ROOT VEGGIE STORAGE

### Introduction

1. Food prices are higher every day & feeding your family with a healthy diet becomes more and more challenging.
2. Growing a garden or buying bulk directly from your farmer is a way to make root veggies price-friendlier, however storage can be an issue for many families.
3. Variety is VERY important & if looking to store it is important to keep this in mind. When looking to store, buy seed or local veggies that are meant to store well.

### A Scope in Van Loon History

- Oma & Opa bought the farm in 1958 and it took them 8 years to grow their FIRST crop of potatoes. In 1966 after their first successful harvest, they had NO STORAGE. They stored their potatoes in the hay barn for the whole winter, and guess what? It worked! In the spring they were able to sell their potatoes as seed.



- Nowadays, what we do at the farm is use our root house as our COLD STORAGE to keep veggies through the winter. No electricity required; we use the outside temperature (opening the doors during the times of the day where the air is closest to 1 degree Celsius). We store our potatoes in bulk boxes and our carrots & beets in homemade wooden bins built by Marty.

### Cold storage

- Does NOT mean refrigerator.
- Storing large quantities of vegetables in cool but not freezing conditions for a long period of time (months).
- 2 groups:
  - Dry vegetables (potatoes, winter squash, pumpkins, onions, garlic, etc.)
  - Moist vegetables (carrots, beets, etc.)
- Dry vegetables: Store in an open container, they like being exposed to dry air. Keep DARK & insulated.  
Traditional methods: hay or straw (Oma & Opa)  
Alternative methods: Burlap sacks
- Moist vegetables: LOVE Humid conditions- Store always in a container, NOT exposed to dry air.  
Traditional methods: Store in sand (Delores), sawdust, or newspapers  
Alternative methods: Plastic bags (good for carrots & beets, don't forget holes needed for ventilation), cardboard.  
BIGGER vegetables will dry out slower and stay fresh LONGER.

## HOW DO I STORE?

### POTATOES

- **Where?** Cardboard box, paper or mesh bag, basket, burlap sack
- Cool, DARK place (3-5 degrees is the ideal temperature range but anything under 10 degrees will work)
- Don't store them in the fridge for long term storage (>1 month)
- Don't store them in the kitchen or any place where there is an oven or other heat-generating device.
- Check regularly & remove any that are soft, shriveled, or sprouted- If your potatoes have sprouted, they are still safe to eat if they are firm to the touch.
- Keep potatoes away from onions.

### CARROTS & BEETS

- **Where?** Plastic bag with holes/ clean, large pails or plastic bins/ Styrofoam coolers or wooden crates.
- **Optional: Sawdust or sand that is slightly damp around the vegetables to keep them from drying out. Careful: Do not allow water to pool at the bottom of the container.**
- Cool, damp, and DARK place (0-0.5 degrees is the ideal temperature range)
- You can store them in the fridge (watch out for freezing & too much moisture: best in crisper)
- Check regularly: spray with misters the ones that are shriveled & take out any rotten ones

### Choosing storage location

- **Highly suggested tool: thermometer, trial & error in potential storage locations**
- Root cellar: ideal but not always available
- **Basement, crawlspace, garage, mudroom, unheated room, etc (somewhere cool but not freezing)**
- **Potential challenges:**
  - Freezing overnight temperatures (cold spells)
  - Warmer temperatures
- **Solutions:**
  - Building insulated box/closet: put insulation boards together to prevent temperatures from either dropping or soaring too far.
  - Wooden crate or a cardboard box with ventilation holes and a layer of straw or newspaper at the bottom/top & sides
- Using an old cooler/ broken freezer as insulated box- needs to be open from time to time to let excess moisture out.

### TIPS FOR BEST STORAGE

- DARK, DARK, DARK- COOL & ABOVE FREEZING.
- Cut foliage from the tops.
- Sort through them regularly: Remove any bad or damaged veggies (rot will spread to others)
- LARGER root veggies will store much better than thin or small roots – try to eat small ones first.
- Small root veggies quickly dry out and turn rubbery (slice them up & freeze them, dehydrate them, canned)
- Keep them away from rodents: raise boxes/sacks off the ground, storing them in rodent proof bins, set traps around storage space.
- Risk of temperatures dropping below freezing? Add extra insulation around your stored root veggies (straw, crunched up newspaper) or bring them inside a climate-controlled space during cold spells.