

Veg Storage and Presentation

Storage Zones

Two temperature zones are necessary. More are possible if you have the money, space, turnover of stock, etc., but generally not needed.

- Ambient storage: potatoes, tomatoes, onions etc.
 - Onions need air around them.
 - Dry, dark & cool best for onions & potatoes
 - Bananas need managing carefully! (see below)
- Chilled storage: 7°C will cover most everything else

Spraying

A key component of veg care is to mist-spray appropriate vegetables with cold water before wrapping the products in plastic bags. Again, the water must be chilled and the even the bags are best cooled first (we re-use liner bags from banana boxes). Spraying (and in some cases bagging) produce might seem labour-intensive, but it dramatically prolongs the life of vegetables. See the Veg Aftercare leaflet for a list of produce that should be sprayed and/or bagged.

Banana care

As the UK's favourite fruit, bananas might be one of your biggest sellers and they need daily attention!

- If going too yellow:
 - Open up boxes, let the heat escape, get air around the boxes (re-stack the boxes to do this).
 - If necessary, refrigerate but make sure you cover the fruit back up again (or it will turn brown!). Ideally cool boxes down in small stacks before stacking bigger, as heat can stay in big stacks.
- If too green and not ripening:
 - Put another piece of fruit in with the bananas (e.g. apple, tomato) and cover with fleece. Find a warm spot in your building.

Presentation

- Good first impression (if presented well) of freshness, bountiful, good value, etc.
- Eye line = buy line (as elsewhere in shop)
- Big volume products need to be more visible: carrots, onions, etc.
- Encourage all staff to remove any blemished specimens (or swap at the till) to the compost or 'free box'. Encourage customers to expect high quality!
- Wooden shelves give more of a market stall/greengrocer feel

Keep cool

If low turnover of stock, you may want to consider a chilled display, especially for sensitive lines (e.g. soft fruit, tender leaves). But be careful, chillers are expensive! In addition, chilled cabinets give a bright, controlled-atmosphere, more conventional (supermarket) feel.

Alternatively, for cheaper temperature control in a non-refrigerated display:

- Regularly spray produce with cold water mist sprays
- Slate shelves

Mist-spraying has two functions:

- Helps keep produce cool
- Makes products shine a little and look more attractive to customers.

However, don't spray mushrooms, broad beans and onions. All other things benefit from a brief spray (sheen), and leafy greens need a good soaking.

A full display

The Veg section should look full and bountiful, but also consider:

- How sensitive to bruising/blemishing is the product? E.g., plums vs. pineapples: Pineapples can stack high; plums – especially UK ones – need to be in shallow boxes.
- How quickly does the product sell? E.g., only have a couple of bags of sage out for sale and keep rotating with chilled stock in your store. On the other hand, double up your display of quick movers like red peppers and vine tomatoes and stack them high if possible.
- Keep rotating the stock. One has to be suspicious of the mini-mountains of vegetables you get in some supermarkets; this produce is likely to blemish or not get sold.
- Visual buying culture. People buy on the appearance of abundance. If something is running out or selling slowly, put in a smaller box / basket to continue appearance of abundance.

Really, the size of display is determined by turnover of stock. Don't have a big display if it's going to sit there all day, and don't have a small display that's constantly empty. The fresh produce section needs near-constant attention to keep it looking its best – if this isn't possible, you may want to avoid it entirely!