

APPLES:

HOW TO STORE APPLES FOR THE WINTER AT HOME

APPLES CAN BE KEPT FOR MONTHS, GIVEN THE RIGHT VARIETY AND CONDITIONS. HERE'S HOW TO STORE APPLES FOR THE WINTER:

VARIETIES OF APPLES THAT STORE WELL:

IT'S ALMOST EASIER TO SAY WHICH APPLES DO NOT STORE WELL. IN GENERAL, SOFTER, THIN-SKINNED TYPES LIKE GALA AND DELICIOUS (RED AND YELLOW), DO NOT AGE WELL OR STORE WELL. SUMMER VARIETIES (EARLY RIPENING VARIETIES) AGAIN, LIKE GALA, ALSO DO NOT STORE WELL. YOU WANT HARDER, LATER RIPENING VARIETIES. THE APPLES NEED TO BE BRUISE-FREE!

HOW LONG WILL THEY STORE?

TYPICALLY, THREE OR FOUR MONTHS. AFTER THAT, THEY START TO DRY OUT, GET A WRINKLED APPEARANCE AND BECOME SOFTER AND MORE SPONGY FEELING. STILL GOOD TO MAKE APPLESAUCE OR APPLE BUTTER, OR EVEN DRIED APPLES.

STORAGE CONDITIONS

THESE ARE CRITICAL!

TEMPERATURE: COOL; JUST ABOVE FREEZING (BUT NEVER TO OR BELOW FREEZING) IS BEST. SHORT OF THAT, AS COLD AS YOU CAN GET WITHOUT FREEZING!

LIGHT: DARK OR DIM LIGHT. **NO** DIRECT SUNLIGHT!

HUMIDITY: 90% HUMIDITY KEEPS THE APPLES FROM DRYING OUT. UNLESS YOU HAVE A HUMIDIFIER WITH A SETTING FOR PERCENTAGE OF DESIRED HUMIDITY, THERE'S PROBABLY NOT MUCH YOU CAN DO ABOUT THIS. BUT THE APPLES MUST STAY DRY; IF WATER COMES IN CONTACT IT WILL START ROT!

VERMIN: NON- HUMAN TYPE, THAT IS: BUGS, ANIMALS ETC. NONE! FREE OF LIFE FORMS THAT WILL ATTACK YOUR APPLES!

SPACING: APPLES SHOULD NOT TOUCH EACH OTHER. THOSE POINTS OF CONTACT WILL SPREAD MOLD!

DO NOT STORE APPLES IN THE SAME SMALL ROOM WITH POTATOES OR TOMATOES. AS THESE AGE THEY RELEASE A GAS THAT MAKES APPLES SPOIL FASTER. A LARGE ROOM SHOULD BE FINE, IF THEY ARE NOT NEAR EACH OTHER. AND PUNGENT FOODS, LIKE ONIONS, CAN AFFECT THE FLAVOR OF APPLES, WHICH CAN ABSORB THESE ODORS.

WHILE A WALK-IN FRIDGE OR ROOT CELLAR IS IDEAL, AN UNHEATED BASEMENT, AN ENCLOSED, UNHEATED PORCH, A HEATED GARAGE THAT DOES NOT FREEZE, AN UNHEATED ATTIC, WILL ALSO WORK WELL.

MATERIALS NEEDED

NEWSPAPER

SHALLOW BOXES OR CRATES (GET FREE BOXES FROM COSTCO AND SAM'S CLUB WHICH ARE IDEAL FOR THIS (3 OR 4 INCHES DEEP AND ABOUT 18 INCHES BY 34 INCHES WIDE AND LONG)

A COOL DARK, DRY PLACE: A ROOT CELLAR IS IDEAL, IF YOU HAVE ONE. OTHERWISE A BASEMENT OR GARAGE THAT DOES NOT FREEZE (UNLESS YOU LIVE IN A CLIMATE THAT IS WARM IN THE WINTER - DUH!).

HOW TO DO IT

WRAP EACH APPLE INDIVIDUALLY IN A SHEET OF NEWSPAPER. I USE A PAGE EACH APPLE (TEAR THE DOUBLE PAGES IN HALF ALONG THE SEAM).

PUT AN APPLE IN ONE END OF THE PAGE AND SIMPLY ROLL AND WRAP IT UP! I TWIST THE ENDS A BIT TO KEEP IT FROM UNRAVELING.

DON'T MIX APPLE VARIETIES. DIFFERENT VARIETIES RIPEN AT DIFFERENT RATES, SO PUT DIFFERENT VARIETIES IN DIFFERENT BOXES.

SORTING: AS YOU WRAP, SET ASIDE ANY BRUISED APPLES. APPLES WITH EVEN SMALL BRUISES SHOULD BE SET ASIDE TO USE FIRST - DON'T EVEN BOTHER WRAPPING THESE. ONLY BRUISE-FREE APPLES SHOULD BE USED FOR LONG-TERM STORAGE. PUT EACH WRAPPED APPLE IN ONE OF THE STORAGE BOXES, 1 APPLE DEEP.

MONITORING STORAGE

THE BOXED APPLES NEED TO BE KEPT IN A COOL, DARK SPOT WHERE THEY WON'T FREEZE. PERIODICALLY (WEEKLY, AT LEAST) UNWRAP A FEW APPLES TO CHECK FOR SPOILAGE. LOOK FOR DARK OR WET SPOTS AS A SIGN. REMOVE SPOILED APPLES AND ANY CONTAMINATED NEWSPAPER RIGHT AWAY.