

HARVESTING AND SORTING PLANT PRODUCE

Processing Area

A designated area should be set aside to process all produce. There should be:

- A clean source of running water
- A sink with large stainless steel, or other non-porous surface as working area
- A cover over the area for protection from sun and rain
- Rags for cleaning soaked in a 10% solution of bleach and water*
- Clean cutting tools








** A solution should be prepared daily in a small plastic tray for continuous use throughout the day. Surfaces should be allowed to completely dry after cleaning.*

Harvesting

For most crops, harvesting should occur during the early morning hours before 9:00 AM. This will ensure the plants are not stressed by heat and the plants are crisp and juicy, and contain the highest levels of plant sugars.

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Step by Step Procedures for Processing Produce

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6	STEP 7
<p>WASH HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER</p>	<p>CLEAN THE PRODUCE</p>	<p>PROCESS/CUT PRODUCE ON CLEAN SURFACE</p>	<p>INSPECT PRODUCE, REMOVE ANY DAMAGE OR BUGS</p>	<p>RINSE PRODUCE IN COLD WATER</p>	<p>DRY PRODUCE SPIN OR USE ABSORBENT MATERIAL</p>	<p>STORE PRODUCE AT 35° F (1.7° C)</p>
<p>Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.</p>  <p><i>One of the greatest sources of food contamination is from dirty or improperly cleaned hands.</i></p>	<p>Wash thoroughly with water.</p> 	<p>Process/cut produce on disinfected surface area. Use sterilized cutlery that is very sharp to reduce damage to produce.</p>  <p><i>If produce touches the ground, it must be re-cleaned or discarded.</i></p> <p><i>If the whole plant is removed, such as lettuce, immediately wash the roots. If customers prefer roots to be left on plant, leave roots and trim them as necessary; if customers prefer roots to be removed, remove the root system.</i></p>	<p>Inspect the produce. Remove any bruised or discoloured produce or leaves that show signs of insect damage, and remove any insects or worms that might be present.</p>  <p><i>Damaged and diseased produce may be burned to prevent cross contamination.</i></p>	<p>Rinse the produce in cold water. After rinsing, immediately immerse the produce into a prepared ice bath.</p>  <p><i>The ice bath is prepared with a half bucket of ice in a sink filled with water. This helps make the leaves crisp and prevent spoilage bacteria.</i></p>	<p>Dry the produce by spinning or using an absorbent material.</p> 	<p>Store the produce in a container at a temperature of 35° F (1.7° C) and rush to market.</p>  <p><i>An ice chest can be used where there is no refrigeration. Note that not all plants (e.g. Basil) do well in such cold conditions.</i></p>