

HARVESTING

(Field Exercise)

Demonstration (Demonstrate harvest techniques for three different crops)

- **Roots** – carrots, beets, radish, parsnips, etc. Use digging fork or shovel to loosen soil, if necessary. Pull roots, using wooden baskets for container. Should be set in shade until washed. If this will be more than an hour and it's a hot day, remove greens from the roots to prevent dehydration.
- **Fruits** – nightshades, cucurbitae, etc. Determine which will be harvested based on ripeness. For nightshades, gently pull, or snip, the fruit from the plant. For cucurbitae, cut at stem with knife. Skin of fruits is more sensitive, so a lined wooden basket or a plastic container is used. Should store in shade until washing or boxing.
- **Greens** – lettuce, spinach, broccoli. Determine which plants to harvest based on maturity. Demonstrate proper use of harvest knife for cutting heads. Also demonstrate picking or cutting technique if only leaves are harvested. Quick cooling of greens is essential. Keep out of sun and wash as soon as possible.

Post harvest

- Discuss how crop is moved from field to washing/packout station.
 - Some crops are not washed but directly packaged for delivery.
 - Some crops will be washed before packaging.
 - Discuss standards for cleanliness, quality, etc.
 - Demonstrate culling out of items that do not meet standards.
 - Proper storage until delivery is essential. (See chart with optimum storage temperatures.)

Timing of harvest

- Certain factors must be considered to determine the proper time to harvest.
 - Many crops must be harvested in the cool of the morning, when they do not have the accumulated heat of the day. (Important for greens and berries.)
 - Other crops (most fruits and roots) can be harvested in the late afternoon or evening.
 - Avoid any harvesting in the heat of the day.
 - Make sure that enough time is allowed to get the crop into its optimal storage conditions.