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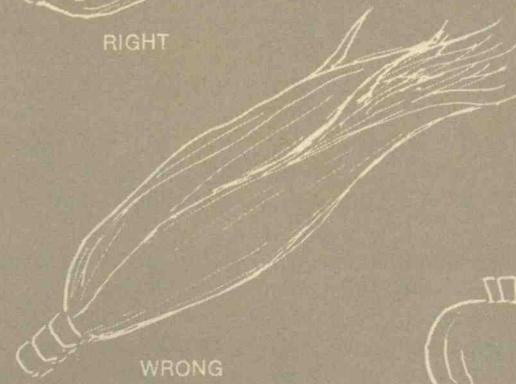
# Selecting and Preparing Vegetables for Exhibit



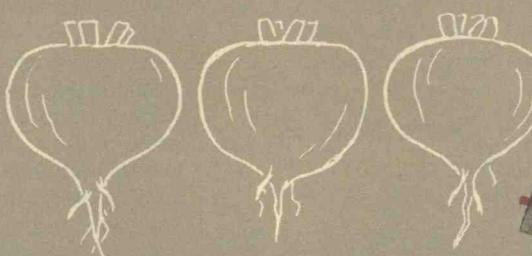
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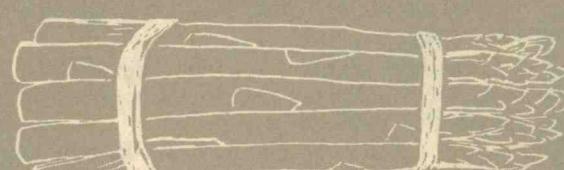


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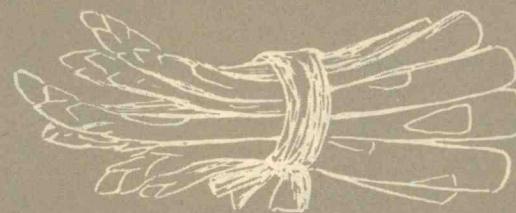
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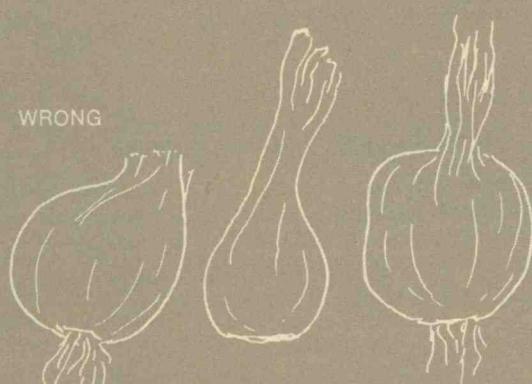
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# **M**any gardeners, both youth and adults, enjoy growing vegetables and exhibiting their finest specimens in county and state fairs. This publication gives you guidelines for selecting and showing your exhibits.

Fair and garden shows are happy activities in which an exhibitor plays a major role. A well-planned display of the many attractive vegetables that can be produced on a relatively small plot of land contributes much to the success of a fair. Reasons for participating include:

- Education and experience gained from growing and exhibiting fresh produce.
- Service to your area by showing the different kinds of vegetables and characteristics of varieties that can be grown.
- Fellowship and excitement gained from competing.
- Sense of accomplishment from recognition for good exhibits.

## **Steps in Planning and Preparing Vegetable Exhibits**

1. Review the current fair premium book. It is the best source of information regarding rules on how vegetables should be displayed.

2. Grow varieties adapted to local conditions. Information on recommended varieties, planting dates, and gardening hints are found in *Home and Farm Vegetable Gardening*, EC 871. Talk with local vegetable growers and exhibitors.

3. Read circulars, bulletins, and magazines on growing vegetables.

4. Schedule planting for best quality at time of showing. Consider the time requirement from planting to harvest for each variety grown in relation to the opening date of the fair. Timing is particularly important with sweet corn, snap beans, and lima beans. Allow for weather variation by making an additional planting for these crops.

5. Grow enough produce for a good selection. A prime specimen or collection of well-matched specimens is best achieved when the quantity of produce grown permits rigid selection.

6. Handle vegetables carefully. Avoid bruising and prolonged exposure to sun or high temperature. Wrap individual tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers in paper and place in a strong container, protecting different layers with several sheets of paper. Take extra specimens along to replace any that may spoil or become damaged.

7. Enter correctly. Follow rules and regulations in tagging each entry to be certain that it is in its correct class and contains the proper number or amount of specimens.

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Portions of this bulletin were adapted from EC 74-1231 by R. E. Neild, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Nebraska—Lincoln. This publication was revised by N. S. Mansour, Extension vegetable crops specialist, Oregon State University.

8. Prepare an attractive display. Consider the following when you select and prepare vegetables for exhibit:

- Trueness to type—specimens should be typical of the variety in shape, color, and size.
- Quality and condition—specimens should be edible, in prime condition, and free from blemishes or damage from insects, disease, or handling. Specimens with deepest color are preferred.
- Uniformity—specimens should be alike in size, shape, color, texture, and stage of maturity.
- Size—contrary to popular opinion, large entries do not have a competitive edge over other entries (except for special entries such as largest pumpkin, watermelon, or head of cabbage). Largeness suggests coarseness, overmaturity, and possible poor quality. Medium-sized specimens are more typical of a variety and most desired.
- Cleanliness—dirt detracts from the natural attractiveness of vegetables and conveys an unfavorable impression to judges and the public. Wipe cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, and other soft-skinned vegetables with a damp cloth. Wash or lightly brush soil from potatoes, carrots, and beets. Clean leafy vegetables such as Swiss chard by dipping in cool water.
- Neat arrangement in containers—carefully align specimens to enhance their most attractive and desirable characteristics.

## **Judging**

The following characteristics of vegetable exhibits are listed with their relative importance in judging:

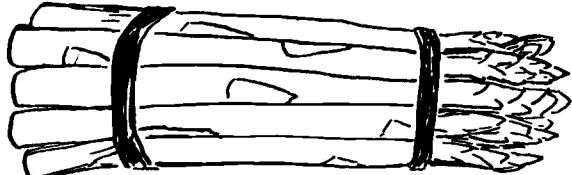
### **Specimen Vegetable Exhibits**

Uniformity—size, shape, color .....	25
Condition—free from dirt, disease, blemish .....	25
Quality—crisp, firm, edible, mature .....	20
Typical of type .....	20
Size in relation to market demand .....	10
	100

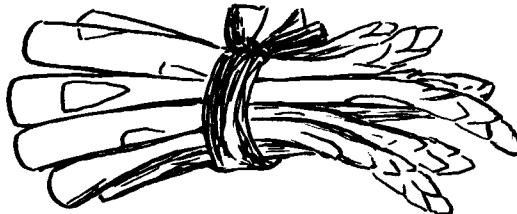
### **Vegetable Collection Exhibits**

Quality and condition .....	40
Attractiveness of display .....	30
Number of kinds of vegetables .....	15
Uniformity—size, shape, color .....	10
Neatness and labeling .....	5
	100

<b>Vegetable</b>	<b>Desirable characteristics</b>	<b>Possible faults</b>	<b>Preparation</b>	<b>How to keep fresh</b>
Asparagus	10 spears of equal thickness. Compact tips, butts trimmed, leaving 1" white showing. Stalks a minimum $\frac{3}{8}$ " diameter and $5\frac{3}{4}$ " long.	Stalks branched, wilted, varied in color.	Tie bunch of 10 stalks at both ends, using bright ribbon.	Keep butts wet. Store in humid place at $32^{\circ}\text{-}34^{\circ}$ F.

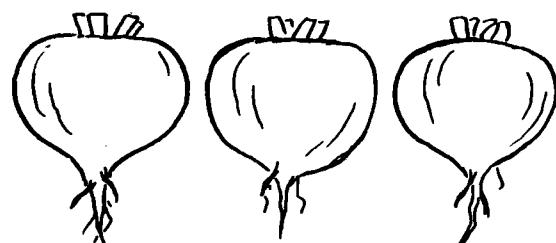


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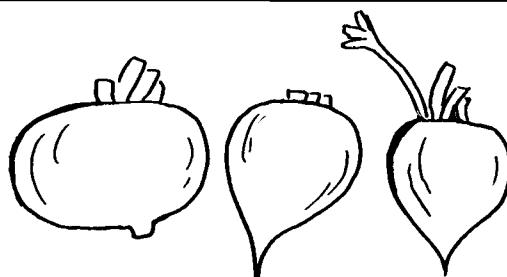


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Beans, dry	Clean, uniform seed of same variety.	Shriveled, cracked, or blemished beans. Foreign matter and insect damage.	Sort beans and remove foreign material by hand.	—
Beans, lima	Uniform, well-filled pods. Fresh bright green.	Misshaped or poorly-filled pods. Yellow, dried, rusted, or insect damaged pods.	Wipe with soft dry cloth. Do not wash.	Pick close to fair time and keep in humid place at $40^{\circ}\text{-}50^{\circ}$ F.
Beans, snap	Straight, fleshy, tender, well-filled pods with seeds about half mature.	Crooked, broken, poorly filled, or overmature, stringy pods. Pods wilted, rusted, or blemished.	Wipe with soft, dry cloth. Do not wash. Leave all stems intact or remove all without damaging pod.	Pick in cool of morning and store in humid place at $40^{\circ}\text{-}50^{\circ}$ F.
Beets	Smooth, round, uniform, medium- to small-size, free of side roots. Tops trimmed back 1" to 3". Deep red color.	Blocky or angular roots, rough skin, missing taproot, insect or disease damage. White or light colored internal rings. Roots too large.	Soak and wash in cool water.	Harvest close to fair date and keep in a humid place at $32^{\circ}\text{-}34^{\circ}$ F.



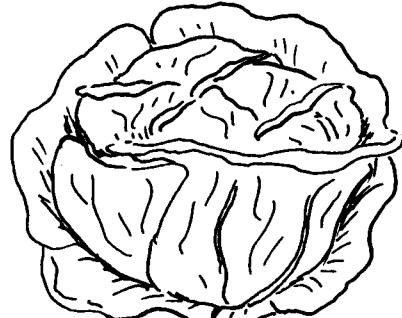
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Broccoli	Dark green, crisp head with tightly closed buds.	Buds open or showing yellow color. Wilted heads. Insect damage.	Rinse in cool water.	Store in a humid place at $32^{\circ}\text{-}34^{\circ}$ F.
Brussels sprouts	Uniform, medium-size, round. Heavy, firm, compact. Clean and green.	Loose, open sprouts. Yellow or light green in color. Oval or elongated in shape.	Trim all sprouts uniformly. Wash.	Store in humid place at $32^{\circ}\text{-}34^{\circ}$ F.

Vegetable	Desirable characteristics	Possible faults	Preparation	How to keep fresh
Cabbage	Uniform, solid heads, heavy for size.	Cracked or wilted head. Insect damaged, peeled, shiny heads.	Peel away only damaged leaves, leaving at least two layers of outer leaves. Wipe with moist cloth if necessary. Cut stem squarely no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ " long.	Store in humid place at 32°-34° F.

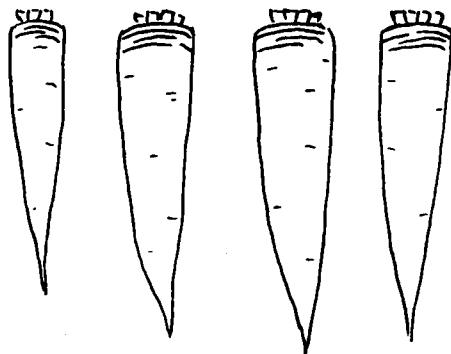


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Carrots	Uniform roots, true to size, shape and color of variety. Deep orange color, straight roots with smooth skin free of side shoots.	Forked or misshaped roots. Purple or green color. Too large or too small. Dirty roots. Cracked roots. Disease or insect damage. No taproot.	Trim tops 1" to 3" and wash thoroughly in cool water.	Store in humid place at 32°-34° F.
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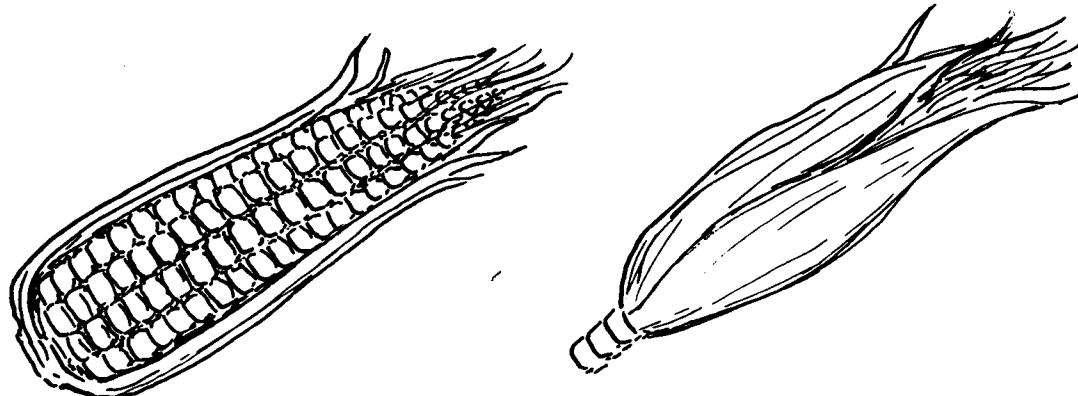
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Cauliflower	Firm, white, smooth head at least 4" diameter with 4 to 6 leaves trimmed slightly above head or curd.	Discolored, grainy head. Insect damage. Hollow stem.	Trim outer leaves slightly above head and wipe with soft dry cloth.	Store in humid place at 32°-34° F.
Celery	Large, firm stalks, uniform petioles. Butt white, cut squarely. Leaves, if left on, must be green.	Spindly petioles, wilted leaves. Dirt between petioles.	Trim all roots. Wash.	Store in humid place at 32°-34° F.

<i>Vegetable</i>	<i>Desirable characteristics</i>	<i>Possible faults</i>	<i>Preparation</i>	<i>How to keep fresh</i>
Corn, sweet	Well-filled, plump, uniform ears. Kernels with good color typical of variety.	Worm, bird, or insect damage. Immature or overmature kernels. Poorly filled ears. Yellow husks.	Trim silk to 1" of tip of husk and shank 1" to 2" from base of ear. Remove loose husks.	Harvest as close to fair time as possible. Store in humid place at 40°-50° F.

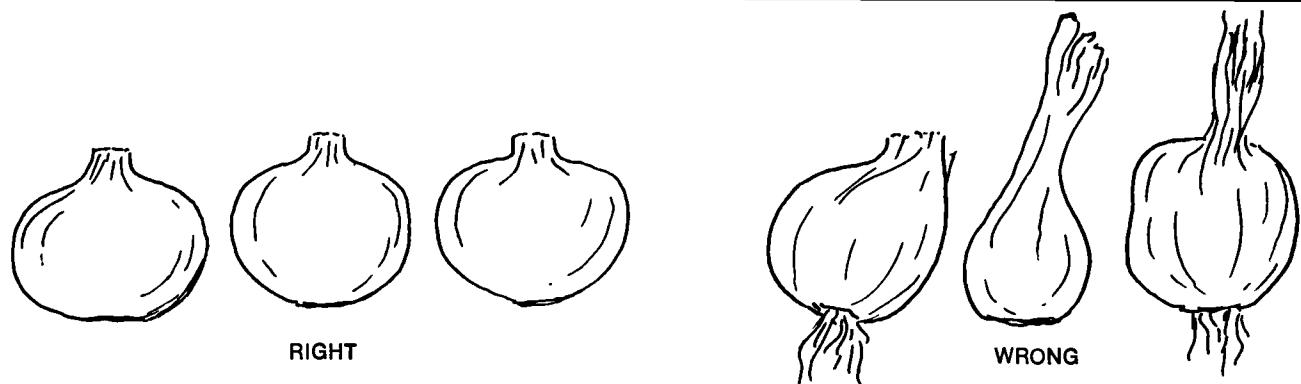


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Cucumber, pickling	Deep green specimens of uniform size and shape. Size no more than 3½" long and 1¼" diameter.	Misshaped or crooked fruit.	Do not wash or wipe fruit.	Harvest close to fair time and store in humid place at 40°-50° F.
Cucumber, slicing	Straight, dark green specimen of uniform size and shape. Fruit crisp, firm, free of blemish.	Yellow color, oversized, puffy fruit.	Wipe with soft moist cloth if necessary.	Harvest close to fair time and store in humid place at 40°-50° F.
Dill	Light green but mature and ready for use.	Immaturity with no "head" of seeds.	Cut seed head with 10" to 12" stems and tie in bunch at base and again near seed head.	—
Eggplant	Specimens matched for size, shape, and color. Firm, dark purple fruit with small blossom scar.	Immature fruit. Dried calyx. Bronze or green color. Soft fruit.	Wipe with soft dry or moist cloth if necessary.	Harvest close to exhibition time. Store at 40°-50° F.
Kohlrabi	Uniform specimens 2" to 3" in diameter.	Woody stems. Cracks or discoloration.	Cut stem ½" below "ball" and leaves even with its top. Brush or wipe with dry cloth.	Store in humid place at 32°-34° F.
Lettuce, head	Specimens well-matched, medium-size, firm and crisp. Keep two wrapped leaves attached.	Wilting wrapper leaves. Heads mismatched, too soft, light instead of dark green.	Trim butt squarely. Trim off all damaged leaves. Wash thoroughly.	Store in humid place at 32°-34° F.
Lettuce, leaf	Well-matched, crisp, tender, and fairly compact.	Damaged, discolored leaves. Dirt between leaves.	Trim butt squarely. Trim off excess loose leaves.	Store in humid place at 32°-34° F.

<b>Vegetable</b>	<b>Desirable characteristics</b>	<b>Possible faults</b>	<b>Preparation</b>	<b>How to keep fresh</b>
Muskmelon	Mature specimens matched for size, shape, color, and netting. Fragrant and of edible quality.	Soft or cracked fruit. Sun scald or lack of netting (if netted type).	Brush, if necessary, after soil is dry.	Store at 40°-50° F.
Okra	Small uniform pods not over 3" long. Pods are green color, fairly straight and tender.	Overmature, large, woody pods. Blemished or crooked pods.	Harvest with ½" stem attached to pod.	Store at 40°-50° F.
Onions, bulb	Uniform, solid, well-cured bulbs with smooth, clear scales.	Green colored, peeled skin, soft neck, sprouts, or double bulbs. Disease or insect damage.	Harvest early to allow for curing. Remove no more than 1 layer of skin to clean. Do not wash. Leave 1" at top and trim roots to ¼".	Do not cure in full sun.

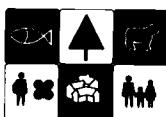


Onions, green	Dark green leaves with long, straight, slender, white shanks.	Enlarged bulbs. Crooked or discolored shanks. Dry or yellow leaves.	Remove only loose skin. Cut tops uniformly, 4" to 5" above white shank. Tie in bunch of 10.	Store in humid place at 32°-34° F.
Parsley	Clean, fresh, crisp, and dark green.	Diseased or injured leaves. Dirt between leaves. Bunches not trimmed evenly.	Tie bunches with ribbon or twist them.	Store in humid place at 32°-34° F.
Parsnips	Clean, medium- to large-size, smooth, well-shaped roots. Light, even colored skin and firm flesh.	Soft or woody roots. Green shoulders. Insect damage.	Trim tops to 1" length and soak and wash in cool water. Do not rub skin or remove taproot. Trim off rootlets.	Store in humid place at 40°-50° F and freshen in cold water if necessary.
Peppers, bell or sweet	Firm with deep color. All specimens same size, shape, color, and number of lobes.	Wrinkled or misshaped specimens. Sunburned or blemished. Traces of contrasting color.	Wipe with soft dry cloth and trim stems even with shoulders of fruit.	Harvest close to time of fair and store in humid place at 40°-50° F.
Peppers, hot	Well-colored, uniform, and true to type.	Wilted, sunburned or blemished.	Same as bell pepper.	Same as bell pepper.
Potatoes, sweet	Smooth, bright color. Free of pest damage or bruises. Uniform and true to variety. Medium-size.	Side roots, growth cracks. Too large or small. Poor shape. Rough skin.	Dig early enough to cure well before a fair. Clean by brushing or wipe with soft dry cloth.	Store in humid place at 55°-60° F.

<b>Vegetable</b>	<b>Desirable characteristics</b>	<b>Possible faults</b>	<b>Preparation</b>	<b>How to keep fresh</b>
Potatoes, white	Uniform, clean specimens, true to type.	Greening or sunburn. Diseased or damaged skin. Growth cracks.	Brush or wipe with soft cloth after specimens are dry. Do not wash.	Store at 40°-50° F in darkness. Exposure to light may cause greening.
Pumpkin	True to type in size, shape, and color. Thick flesh and heavy for size. Mature with clear color. Hard skin.	Misshaped fruit. Scars or blemishes. Light weight for size.	Wipe and polish with soft dry cloth. Leave portion of stem attached.	Store at 50°-55° F.
Radishes	Well-matched specimens. Fresh, neatly bunched, tops and roots left on. Bright red. Medium-size, firm, and crisp.	Loosely tied bunches. Wilted, damaged leaves. Dirt on roots.	Wash thoroughly and gently. Do not scour surface of roots.	Store in humid place at 32°-34° F.
Rhubarb	Uniform in size and color. Smooth, well-colored skin. Fresh, solid, straight.	Wilted stalks or those with lower end cut. Poor color or blemishes.	Pull, do not cut, stalks. Leave 1" leaf on stem. Tie bundles at both ends.	Soak in ice water.
Spinach	Well-matched, fresh, dark green. Leaves attached to the crown.	Spindly, damaged leaves. Dirt between leaves.	Wash thoroughly.	Store in humid place at 32°-34° F.
Squash, summer	Matched specimens true to variety in size, shape, and color. Medium-size with soft skin. Zucchini 6" to 10"; yellow 5" to 8".	Large and over-mature. Missing stems. Blemishes.	Clean by brushing. Do not wash.	Store in a humid place at 40°-50° F.
Squash, winter	Matched specimens, medium- to large-size. Rind hard and free from blemishes. Color fully developed.	Immature, soft, or damaged rind. Scars, blemishes.	Brush dirt off lightly. Leave short stem attached.	Store at 40°-50° F. Keep dry.
Swiss chard	Clean, fresh, well-colored leaves with bright, tender stems.	Wilted, poorly-colored leaves with damaged skins.	Wash in cold water.	Store in a humid place at 40°-50° F. Exhibit in jar of cold water to prevent wilting.
Tomatoes	True to variety in size, shape, and color. Smooth skin with uniform color.	Poor color, sunscald, puffiness, growth cracks. Disease damage. Overripe.	Avoid overmature fruit. Remove stems to prevent damage. Clean with moist soft cloth.	Store at 40°-50° F.
Turnips	Uniform size and shape with matched color patterns. Smooth skin, medium-size, and firm flesh.	Irregular shape and forking roots. Insect, disease, or mechanical damage. Soft spongy roots.	Cut tops back to 1" to 2". Leave 2" of top root. Soak and wash in cold water.	Store at 32°-34° F.
Watermelon	Typical of variety in shape and color. Ground spot should be yellowish and skin of good color.	Misshaped fruit. Blemishes. Sunburn.	Wipe with moist cloth.	Store at 40°-50° F.

**Suggested number or amount of vegetables to include in 4-H or other exhibit**

<b>Vegetable</b>	<b>Number if fresh</b>	<b>Amount if canned</b>	<b>Vegetable</b>	<b>Number if fresh</b>	<b>Amount if canned</b>
Asparagus		1 pint	Sweet corn		
Beans (in pod)			yellow (in husk)	5	1 pint
snap yellow	5	1 pint	white (in husk)	5	1 pint
snap green	5	1 pint			
lima	5	1 pint	Tomatoes		
other	5	1 pint	red (slicing)*	5	
Beets	5	1 pint	yellow (slicing)*	5	
Broccoli	2		small (canning)**	5	1 pint
Brussel sprouts	5		cherry or salad**	5	
Cabbage			paste	5	
green			Turnips	5	
round	2		Okra	5	
flat	2	1 pint	Onion		
savoy	2	1 pint	mature (dry)	5	
red	2		green (bunching)	5	
Carrots			Parsnips	5	
long	5		Peas		1 pint
heart	5	1 pint	Peppers		
Cauliflower (head)	2		bell (colored)	2	
Swiss chard (stalk)			bell (green)	2	
white	2		hot peppers	5	
red	2		others	5	
Cucumbers			Potatoes		
slicing	2		white	5	
pickling	5		red	5	
other	2	1 pint	russet	5	
Eggplant	2		Rutabaga	2	
Kohlrabi	5		Salsify	5	
Muskmelon	2		Spinach		1 pint
Pumpkin			Watermelon		
small sugar pie	2		long	2	
large field	2		oval	2	
largest & best	1***		ice box	2	
Squash			largest & best	1***	
summer	2				
winter			* 2" or over		
large	2		** Under 2"		
small	2		*** Depends on individual shows		
largest & best	1***				



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