



Promoting sustainable agriculture since 1974

# PRODUCE NOTES

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## TIPS FOR THE BEST NECTARINES, PEACHES AND PLUMS

Are you happy with your stone fruit sales? If not, is it because the fruit turns mealy, brown or overripe on display? You're not alone; mealy fruit is perhaps the biggest complaint voiced by shoppers seeking a good peach, plum or nectarine. Internal browning and overripe fruit are also problems. Most of the problem stems from storing fruit at the wrong temperature, but unripe fruit and improper displaying can also cause problems.

The California Tree Fruit Agreement, a stone fruit marketing group, recommends selecting fruit carefully, then storing it appropriately based on the degree of ripeness. Above all, they caution against storing any stone fruit at 36-51° F. Known as the Killing Zone or Internal Breakdown Zone this is the worst temperature range to store peaches, nectarines and plums. Fruit is better kept above or below

Most stone fruit is harvested at the "well mature stage" but not completely ripe. Picked at this stage, peaches, plums and nectarines have all their sugar but need further ripening to develop their texture, juice and color. By exposing them to temperatures ranging from 68-77° F (warm room temp) they will produce enough ethylene to continue ripening. Once ripe, fruit can go on display or into a cold cooler (32-35°F) for holding.

Keep in mind, that fruit that is green, or has a high degree of greenish color, is hard or dull may have been picked unripe and may not ripen properly.

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Peaches** were first cultivated in ancient China, where they were considered a symbol of long life and immortality.

**Nectarines** are not, as is commonly thought, a fuzzless peach but they are one of the oldest of all fruits. Raw nectarines are good for your teeth and gums.

**Plums** are excellent cooked, and because the skin adds so much to a plum's character, it's seldom removed before cooking.



## QUIZ: IS IT RIPE YET?

Everyone who's ever bought a green banana knows they continue to ripen in taste, color, and texture, after being picked. But the banana is a lone wolf in that regard. Some fruits and berries do not ripen one bit after being picked. One ripens only after it's been picked. Others get sweeter after being picked, while another group sees changes in its texture, color, and juiciness, but, sadly, does not get even a little bit sweeter as it lingers on your counter.

Match the fruit or berry with its post-picking behavior:

To check your results, compare them to the answers!

- a. Do not ripen after picking
- b. Ripen only after picking
- c. Ripen in color, texture, and juiciness, but not sweetness
- d. Only get sweeter after picking

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**Raspberries**

a. b. c. d.

**Blueberries**

a. b. c. d.

**Cantaloupes**

a. b. c. d.

**Apples**

a. b. c. d.

**Peaches**

a. b. c. d.

**Cherries**

a. b. c. d.

**Grapes**

a. b. c. d.

**Pears**

a. b. c. d.

**Oranges**

a. b. c. d.

**Apricots**

a. b. c. d.

**Figs**

a. b. c. d.

**Olives**

a. b. c. d.

**Avocados**

a. b. c. d.

**Lemons**

a. b. c. d.

**Kiwis**

a. b. c. d.

**Mangos**

a. b. c. d.

**Limes**

a. b. c. d.

**Pineapples**

a. b. c. d.

**Papayas**

a. b. c. d.

**Nectarines**

a. b. c. d.

**Watermelons**

a. b. c. d.

**Honeydews**

a. b. c. d.

# SELECTING STONE FRUIT

**NECTARINES:** Look and firm, ripe, skin inter

**PEACHES:** Look firm, ripe, skin inter

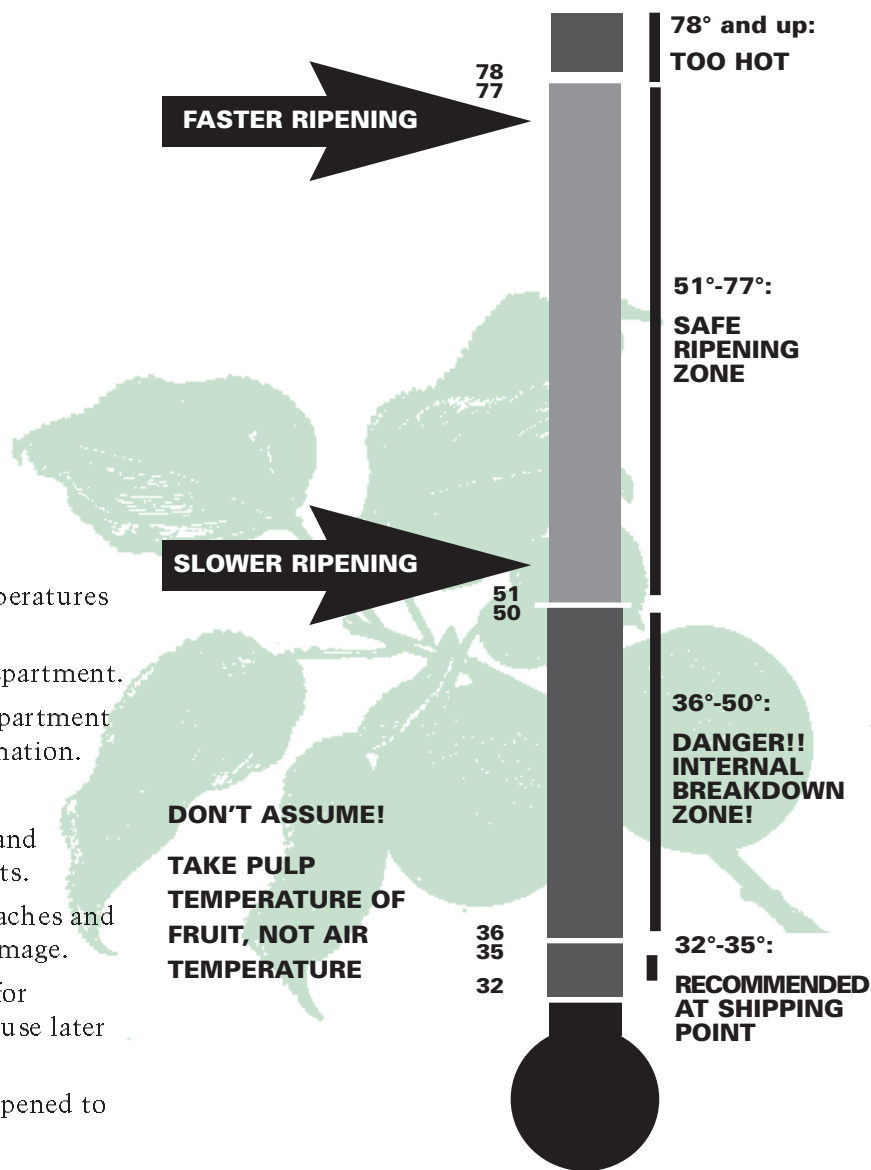
**PLUMS:** Look firm, ripe, skin inter

## DISPLAY TIPS

- Display on dry tables only. Cold table temperatures can kill the flavor and the aromas.
- Put ripe fruit at the front of the produce department.
- Display unripened fruit further into the department along with ripening bags or ripening information.
- Design displays for easy rotation.
- Nectarines are susceptible to dehydration and always should be displayed away from drafts.
- Cover displays at night and never stack peaches and nectarines more than two high to avoid damage.
- Encourage shoppers to buy ripe stonefruit for immediate consumption and unripened to use later in the week.
- Teach customers that stone fruits can be ripened to perfection in an ordinary paper bag.
- Offer samples of ripe fruit to your customers...but taste for yourself first!

# STONE FRUIT STORAGE

- Store: 32-34° F for holding; 51-77°F for ripening; 90-95% Relative Humidity
- No mist
- Typical shelf life: 14-21 days from receiving date
- Lot date each shipment to facilitate good rotation.



**QUIZ ANSWERS: IS IT RIPE YET?**

**Do not ripen after picking:** ■ raspberries ■ cherries ■ grapes ■ oranges ■ olives ■ lemons ■ limes ■ pineapple ■ watermelons

**Ripen only after picking:** ■ avocados

**Ripen in color, texture, and juiciness, but not sweetness:** ■ blueberries ■ cantaloupe ■ peaches ■ apricots ■ figs ■ nectarines ■ honeysuckles

**Only get sweet after picking:** ■ apples ■ pears ■ kiwis ■ mango ■ papaya