

Cool Storage Superstars

These crops will keep for two to six months at cool room temperatures, and they require no processing, containers or refrigeration. Can things get any easier than slipping a few buttercup squash under your bed, or finding a place in your closet for sweet potatoes? The sweet flavor of these two crops actually improves under good storage conditions, so

you're not settling for less by storing your own. When bringing winter squash home from a farmers market, cradle them in towels to avoid accidental nicks or bruises.

Garlic benefits from cool conditions, but most varieties will keep at room temperature for several months. Do keep nuts out of the reach of hungry rodents, and freeze them after their protective shells have been removed.

Crop	Peak Season	Handling and Storage Tips
Garlic	Midsummer	Cure at 70 to 75 degrees for 2 weeks. Optimum storage conditions are 60 to 65 degrees with moderate humidity. <i>(May also be dried.)</i>
Sweet potatoes	Late summer to fall	Cure at 80 degrees for 7 to 10 days. After curing, optimum storage conditions are 55 to 60 degrees with high humidity. <i>(May also be frozen.)</i>
Unshelled nuts	Fall	Dry at 70 to 80 degrees for 4 to 10 days. Optimum storage conditions are 45 to 60 degrees with moderate humidity. <i>(May also be frozen.)</i>
Winter squash	Late summer to fall	Harvest with stub of stem attached, wipe clean. Optimum storage conditions are 45 to 55 degrees with moderate humidity. <i>(May also be frozen.)</i>