

Table 11: Approximate Time from Pollination to Market Maturity Under Warm Growing Conditions

Vegetable	Days to Market Maturity
Bean	7-18
Cantaloupe	40-50
Corn, market	18-23 ¹
Corn, processing	21-27 ¹
Cucumber, pickling (3/4-1 1/8-inch diameter)	4-5
Cucumber, slicing	15-18
Eggplant (2/3 maximum size)	25-40
Okra	4-6
Pepper, green stage (about maximum size)	45-55
Pepper, red stage	60-70
Pumpkin, jack-o-lantern	60-90
Pumpkin, baking	65-75
Squash, summer, zucchini	3-4 ²
Squash, winter, butternut	60-70
Squash, winter, hubbard	80-90
Squash, winter, acorn	55-60
Tomato, mature green stage	34-45
Tomato, red ripe stage	45-60
Watermelon	40-50

¹From 50% silking.

²For a weight of 0.25-0.5 lbs.

Precautions with Pesticides

Pesticides are designed to poison or otherwise manage pests. Many pesticide products may poison people, pets, livestock, wildlife, ornamental plants, and other non-target organisms. Pesticide applicators and their families are at increased risk of pesticide exposure. It is important to keep all pesticide exposures to an absolute minimum.

You must protect your family members, field workers, and other people from pesticide injuries. Most pesticide accidents result from careless practices or lack of knowledge about safe handling. The time you spend to learn about the safe use of pesticides is an investment in the health and safety of you, your family, and others.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) places certain restrictions on the use of pesticide chemicals. These restrictions apply to chemicals applied to control

insects, mites, plant diseases, weeds, nematodes, and other pests. Such restrictions may prohibit the use of a chemical or allow residue tolerances on harvested vegetables. Growers must know what chemical to use on each vegetable; how to apply the products; the post-treatment re-entry interval, if any; when to use the chemicals with respect to farm worker and/or picker safety; and the environment and the harvest of each vegetable crop.

Growers must follow all label instructions regarding harvest restrictions to assure consumers that the food is free of dangerous residues and to comply with the law to prevent seizure of their crops. Here are some rules for the safe use of pesticides:

- Only mix the amount of a pesticide you can use in one day
- If you do have leftover spray mix, the best way to dispose of it is by applying it to a labeled crop in a legal manner
- Never dispose of surplus pesticides in a way that will result in the contamination of ground or surface waters
- Rinse all empty containers three times before disposal.
- Pour the rinse water into the spray tank. Puncture or break triple-rinsed containers to facilitate drainage and to prevent reuse for any other purpose.
- Then dispose of the container according to label directions.

Pesticide Signal Words

Each pesticide container is required by law to have signal words to quickly communicate information about the product's possible toxicity. The three signal words, as provided by the National Pesticide Information Center, are:

- **CAUTION.** This signal word means the pesticide is slightly toxic if eaten, absorbed through the skin, or inhaled, or it causes slight eye or skin irritation.
- **WARNING.** This signal word means the pesticide is moderately toxic if eaten, absorbed through the skin, or inhaled, or it causes moderate eye or skin irritation.
- **DANGER.** This signal word means the pesticide is highly toxic by at least one route of exposure. It may be corrosive, which would cause irreversible damage to the skin or eyes. It may be highly toxic if eaten, absorbed through the skin, or inhaled. If this is the case, then **POISON** must also be included in red letters on the front panel of the product label.

Rules for Pesticides with ‘Danger’ Signal Word

Formulations of Monitor®, Lannate®, Thimet®, DiSyston®, Guthion®, and Gramoxone® are highly poisonous. They should not be applied unless applicators strictly follow all precautions listed on pesticide labels.

Some label precautions include:

- Wear the proper respiratory equipment when handling or applying.
- Wear protective clothing that covers as much of the body as possible.
- Always use rubber gloves, not leather or cloth gloves, and never use bare hands to handle pesticides.
- Do not breathe in these pesticides when opening containers or mixing into spray tanks.
- Always wash hands, arms, and face immediately after handling, and before eating or smoking.
- Never smoke while handling or applying.
- Reduce all possible hazards of coming into direct contact with spray drift, and avoid spraying if conditions are too windy.
- Shower or bathe thoroughly after each day’s work, and change clothes.
- Wash spray clothes separately from the family wash, then run another complete hot water and detergent wash cycle before washing other clothes.
- Wear clean overalls, underwear, socks, and cap each day you spray.
- Always keep pesticides in their original labeled containers, and store in a safe place.
- Store and dispose of containers according to information on pesticide labels.

Restricted Pesticides

Most states have laws that restrict the use of certain pesticides and that describe where such pesticides can be obtained and used. Only individuals who are licensed by the state can apply restricted use pesticides.

Some restricted pesticides require applicators to notify occupants of land within 1,000 feet of the area to be treated at least 24 hours before application. Occupants also must be notified of any precautions they must take to ensure the safety of livestock and humans.

The U.S. EPA, state regulatory agencies, or pesticide companies can label specific pesticide formulations as “Restricted Use Only.” To learn more about your state’s laws about restricted use pesticides, contact your state department of agriculture or local extension office.

Handling Pesticides

Ground Equipment

Boom-type Sprayers

High-pressure, high-volume sprayers have been used for row-crop pest control for many years. However, there is a growing trend to use sprayers that use lower volumes and pressures, and satisfactory pest control is possible at lower rates (if the sprayer is properly calibrated).

Boom Sprayer Calibration

For effective applications, make sure to calibrate boom sprayers carefully. To calibrate a boom sprayer:

1. Clean the sprayer and replace all worn parts
 2. Fill the tank with water.
 3. Adjust sprayer pressure and tractor speed for nozzle size and output by following manufacturer’s directions.
 4. Spray 1/8 of an acre (5,445 square feet) — the actual distance you travel will vary with boom width. For example, a 22-foot boom must travel 248 feet to cover 5,445 square feet.
- $$\frac{1/8 \text{ A (5,445 square feet)}}{\text{Boom width (22 feet)}} = \frac{\text{Distance}}{\text{(248 feet)}}$$
5. After spraying, measure the amount of water you need to refill the tank. This is the amount you applied to the test area of 1/8 acre; thus, you need 8 times that amount to spray an acre.
 6. Adjust spray output by varying the tractor speed or changing the nozzle sizes or pressure. Recalibrate after making any adjustments.
 7. Calculate the acres covered by the tank of spray solution and add the required amount of pesticide for the total area to be sprayed.

It is of utmost importance that the spray unit functions properly. To obtain complete plant coverage and penetration, check the cleanliness of nozzles, nozzle wear, boom height, pressure gauge accuracy, agitation in tank, forward ground speed, mixing of materials, and nozzle spacing.

Also, due to lower pressures and volumes, paying attention to the wind becomes more important. Avoid using a boom-type sprayer in high winds. For more information, see *Boom Sprayer Calibration* (Ohio State University Extension FactSheet AEX-520-92), available from Ohioline, ohioline.osu.edu.

Airblast-type Sprayers

Vegetable growers use airblast sprayers to control insects and diseases. However, pest control has been erratic. Airblast sprayer operation is more critical than a boom-type sprayer, so the operator must fully understand the machine and the job.

Do not operate an airblast sprayer under high-wind conditions. Preferably, that means wind speeds should be less than 5 mph unless it is necessary to apply the pesticide for timely control — even then, applicators must consider drift.

Do not overextend the coverage of the machine. Considerable visible mist from the machine moves into the atmosphere and does not deposit on the plant. If in doubt, use black plastic indicator sheets in the rows to determine deposit and coverage before a pest problem appears as evidence.

Use the correct gallonage and pressures to obtain proper droplet size to ensure uniform coverage across the effective swath width.

Adjust the vanes and nozzles on the sprayer unit to give best coverage. Vane adjustment must occur in the field, depending on terrain, wind, and crop.

Cross drives in the field allow the material to be blown down the rows instead of across them and help to give better coverage in some crops, such as tomatoes.

Sprayer Delivery Rates

It is essential to apply pesticides at the specified rates for best control and protection and to not exceed residue tolerance. Check sprayers carefully several times a season for accurate delivery rates. Use new nozzle disks when needed. Use a speedometer operated from a nondriven wheel to determine the speed and delivery rate of the sprayer.

Water Quality and Pesticide Applications

Water that is added to the pesticide spray tank may vary in pH, hardness and other qualities. These variations in water types may influence the effectiveness of the pesticide application. To learn about this subject, see

The Impact of Water Quality on Pesticide Performance (Purdue Extension publication PPP-86) available from the Education Store, www.edustore.purdue.edu.

Evaluating Compatibility of Pesticides Before Tank-mixing

1. Read the label and follow directions. If the label states, “Do not mix with other products,” that direction must be followed.
2. Add products to the mix in this order:
 - a. Wettable powders.
 - b. Flowables.
 - c. Water-solubles.
 - d. Adjuvants.
 - e. Emulsifiable concentrates.
3. If using different products, and one label states, “Add last to spray tank,” that direction must be followed.
4. If the label states, “Do not use adjuvants,” that direction must be followed.
5. Add 1 pint of the carrier to a 1-quart jar. Use the same water or liquid fertilizer that will be used in the field.
6. Add 1 1/2 teaspoon of the wettable product(s) for each pound per acre to be used.
7. Next, add 1 teaspoon for each quart per acre of the liquid to be used.
8. These ratios will approximate 25 gallons per acre.
9. Shake the jar after adding each ingredient, and let it stand for a few minutes to see if there is a reaction. Keep adding each ingredient until all are added.
10. If there is a precipitate, or the material greases out, don't use it in the field.
11. The allowable separation in the jar depends on the amount of agitation in your equipment.
12. Good agitation is very important.
13. Storage conditions also are important.
 - a. Temperature: read the label for precautions.
 - b. Avoid contamination.
 - c. Do not leave material in the spray tank overnight or for more than several hours.

14. Normally, if there are problems, a compatibility agent will help.
15. This test only indicates physical compatibility; it does not indicate chemical reactions between products.

Pesticide Formulations

The common types of pesticide formulations are:

- **Emulsifiable concentrates (EC):** the pesticide is dissolved and the emulsifying agent is added to an organic solvent.
- **Wettable powders (WP or W):** the pesticide is absorbed or adsorbed on powders that can be mixed with water because of an added wetting agent.
- **Dusts (D):** the pesticide is diluted with finely divided and ground materials.
- **Solutions:** the pesticide has a molecular mixture with the solvent.
- **Microencapsulated:** the pesticide is placed in pinhead-sized capsules that disintegrate slowly over a period of time.

Pesticides must be properly formulated and diluted to prevent injury to plants. Often, physical properties of certain pesticides make dilution difficult, leaving lasting residues that are hazardous to edible crops. New formulations enter the market each year.

Storing Pesticides for Next Season

Growers who store pesticides always should consider safety and product quality, whether they will store products for a few weeks or a year or more. It is best not to have leftover pesticides. However, there usually are surplus pesticides at the end of the season because pre-season purchases often are very economical.

Before storing pesticides always:

1. Read product labels. Certain formulations or products have special storage requirements, which are printed on the label.
2. Make certain the label is in good condition (legible) to know what is in the container and for directions for safe, effective, and legal use.
3. Write the purchase or delivery date on the label. Store the oldest materials near the front of the storage area and use older or opened products first. Products that are several years old may not be effective.

4. Keep an up-to-date inventory of pesticides to assist in purchase decisions and in emergencies.
 - a. Maintain storage temperatures between 32°F and 100°F. Ventilation is important for storage of most pesticides. Keep pesticides dry and out of direct sunlight.
5. Store herbicides away from other pesticides to prevent use mix-up, contamination, and possible plant damage. Never store pesticides with food or seed or near food or drinking water.
6. Permanently identify and lock pesticide storage areas.
7. Keep a supply of cat litter or other absorbent material in the storage to scatter over spills of liquid chemicals.
8. Hang a Class B inflammable liquids fire extinguisher nearby.

Here are some common pesticides with observations on their shelf-life under normal conditions:

Insecticides

- acetamiprid (Assail®): Several years.
- carbaryl (Sevin®) WP: Several years.
- carbaryl (Sevin®) F: Watch for settling.
- Diazinon EC®: 5-7 years if tightly sealed.
- Disulfoton (Di-Syston®): 2 years.
- Malathion WP®: Many years, but decomposes under high temperatures.
- Metasystox-R®: 2 years.
- Methoxychlor®: Many years.
- phosmet (Imidan®) WP: 2-3 years.

Herbicides

- glyphosate (Roundup®): 2 years, but do not allow to freeze.
- Casoron® (G): 2 years if cool and dry.
- Dacthal® (WP): 2 years.
- Kerb® (WP): 2 years.
- simazine (Princep®) (G, WP): Many years.
- Surflan® (G): 3 years, must be mixed well.
- Treflan® (G): 3 years if dry and under 80°F.

Empty Containers

Most states have regulations that regulate the disposal of pesticide containers. The regulations often require that hazardous materials containers be disposed of in designated hazardous waste sites unless commercial applicators meet triple-rinsing and other requirements.

However, farmers and private applicators may be exempt from the regulations as long as they follow all label instructions when disposing of waste pesticides and containers.

Reduced-risk **RR**/Biopesticides **BP**

Every pesticide has a different impact on human health and the environment. Until recently, it has been impossible for growers to know the impact of the pesticides they apply. Now, however, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lists biopesticides and pesticides that have reduced risks in specific areas.

Pesticides classified as reduced-risk by the EPA are conventional products that have:

- Low impact on human health.
- Low toxicity to nontarget organisms (birds, fish, and plants).
- Low potential for groundwater contamination.
- Lower use rates.
- Low pest resistance potential.
- Compatibility with Integrated Pest Management.

The EPA bases reduced-risk decisions on specific uses of pesticide combinations. Thus, a pesticide may be considered reduced risk for one vegetable, but not another.

Biopesticides are derived from natural materials such as animals, plants, bacteria, and certain minerals. Biopesticides fall into three major classes: microbial pesticides, plant-incorporated protectants, and biochemical pesticides. The active ingredient in a microbial pesticide (or mycoinsecticide) is a microorganism (bacterium, fungus, virus, or protozoa). These are highly selective in activity against specific target insect pests. Plant-incorporated protectants are substances that plants produce based on genetic material that is incorporated into plants. Biochemical pesticides are naturally occurring substances that control insect pests through nontoxic mechanisms such as sex pheromones or scented plant extracts.

The EPA defines biopesticides as products that include: “naturally occurring substances that control pests (biochemical pesticides), microorganisms that control pests (microbial pesticides), and pesticidal substances produced by plants containing added genetic material (plant-incorporated protectants) or PIPs.”

In this guide, products that are defined as reduced risk for a given vegetable or vegetable group are denoted by the symbol **RR**. Biopesticides are denoted by the symbol **BP**.

As with any product, investigate these or any new products before you need them. If a product is not commonly used in your area, it may not be locally or quickly available.

More information about the EPA's Reduced Risk Pesticide Program is available at www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/conventional-reduced-risk-pesticide-program. More information about the EPA's biopesticide program is available at www.epa.gov/pesticides/biopesticides.

