

Fruit & Veggie Pesticide Residue Test Results



Are you growing your own vegetables and fruit or do you need to purchase them from grocery stores? The U. S. Department of Agriculture tests produce every year. Do you know that 65% of produce samples in recent tests contained pesticide residue?

After analyzing the data from USDA and FDA tests, the Environmental Working Group has produced a [Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce™](#) containing test results from 48 popular fruits and vegetables. This report classifies those with the most pesticides as the "Dirty Dozen PLUS™". The most contaminated fruits are Peaches, Apples, Nectarines, Strawberries and Grapes. The vegetables include Sweet Bell Peppers, Hot Peppers, Spinach, Cucumbers, Cherry Tomatoes, Snap Peas, Potatoes, Celery and Kale/Collard Greens.

Of note, all the nectarines and 99% of the apples tested positive for at least one form of pesticide; and a single sample of grapes tested positive for fifteen pesticides. The average potato sample tested more positive for pesticides by weight than any other food. If these are favorites on your list, consider buying organically grown. Kale/Collard Greens and Hot Peppers tested positive for pesticides that are toxic to the human nervous system.

The report also includes a list of produce with the least pesticide concentration, they are referred to as the "Clean Fifteen™". The least contaminated fruit are Avocados, Pineapples, Mangoes, Kiwi, Papayas, Watermelon, Grapefruit and Cantaloupe. The veggies include Onions, Cauliflower, Asparagus, Sweet Peas, Cabbage, Eggplant and Sweet Potatoes. Avocados were the cleanest and over 80% of pineapples, kiwi, papayas and mango had no pesticide residue.

Use this report to shop smarter as you enjoy healthy fruit and vegetables. Remember to peel or [wash them](#) well before eating.

Ask Billie

Our Question and Answer column, covering topics of interest to our readers.

Judy from IL Asks: What can be done with used canning lids?

Answer: Sharon from Simply Canning.com just had a [blog post](#) about this. Her readers came up with lots of ideas. Some of my favorites are 1. By using a hole punch to make an opening that fits a drinking straw, you can make a travel drinking jar. 2. Used canning lids can be used to vacuum seal dry goods like sugar, oats, tea bags, or beans. Remember to mark them somehow to avoid reusing them in the water bath or pressure canning process.

What is your Most Burning Question about Food Storage or Emergency Preparedness? Send your questions to editor@sunoven.com



Billie Nicholson



Order Your Sun Oven® Today

Wildfire is Coming. Are You Ready?

Billie Nicholson

Due to continued drought, the possibility of wildfire continues throughout the western states. When fires burn through areas, some homes are spared and others are not. Is there a way to make your property more fire resistant?

One way to help protect your home is to create a defensible space around it. What does this mean? It's a buffer you create between buildings on your property and the trees, grass, shrubs or any wildland that surrounds it. This space will slow or stop the spread of wildfire and protect your home from catching fire. Defensible space will also



provide protection for firefighters defending your property. To create a 100 foot space, divide it into two zones.

Zone one is 30 feet around your house or any other structure associated with it. In this area work on a major clean up removing all dead plants, grass and weeds from your lawn. Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters. Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees and from your house. Remove any dead branches that hang over your roof. Move any wood piles out of this perimeter. Remove any vegetation that could ignite and spread to decks or patio furniture.

Zone 2 includes the next 70 feet outside Zone 1 to make a total of a 100 feet perimeter. Cut or mow annual grass to a maximum of 4 inches. Create horizontal and vertical spacing between shrubs and trees. Remove all tree branches at least six feet from the ground. Lack of vertical space will allow fire to move from the ground to the brush and then to trees. Remove fallen leaves, needles, bark, cones and small branches that accumulate to a depth greater than 3 inches. When you landscape, consider planting fire-resistant plants and place them strategically to resist the spread of fire to your home. Have multiple garden hoses that are long enough to reach around property.

Homes located up to a mile from wildland fires can be destroyed by flying embers. Here are some things you can do to harden your home to make it more fire resistant.

- **Roof** - the most vulnerable part of your home. Wood or shingle roofs are very flammable. Use composition, metal or tile. Block any spaces between decking and covering to prevent embers from catching fire.
- **Vents** - create openings for flying embers. Cover them with 1/8" to 1/4" metal mesh. Don't use fiberglass or plastic because they can melt and burn.
- **Eaves and Soffits** - should be protected with non-combustible materials.
- **Windows** - can break from wildfire heat before the house catches fire. This allows embers to get into and ignite fires inside. Install dual-paned windows with one pane of tempered glass to reduce the chance of breaking during a fire.
- **Walls** - Wooden products on the outside of houses as siding materials are combustible and not recommended for fire-prone areas. Use ignition resistant building materials like stucco or other approved materials. Extend them from the foundation to the roof.
- **Decks** - should be made of ignition resistant materials. Keep combustible materials removed from beneath your deck. Use the same materials for patio coverings also.
- **Rain Gutters** - should be screened or have gutter guards installed to prevent gutters from accumulating plant debris. Keep them clean of dried leaves and pine needles.
- **Garage** - Have a fire extinguisher and fire emergency tools available. Install weather stripping around and under door to block embers.

ReadyforWildfire.org

What to Do During a Wildfire



Billie Nicholson



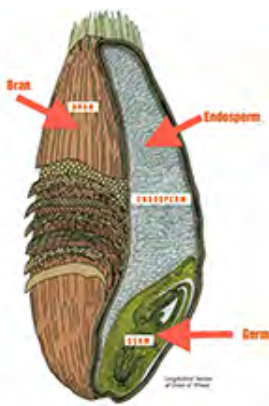
If you are warned of an approaching wildfire, get your family together, then:

1. Evacuate your pets and anyone with medical or physical limitations and young children immediately.
2. Wear protective clothing.
3. Remove any flammable materials like trash, lawn furniture and vehicles from around the house.
4. Shut off any natural gas, propane or fuel oil supplies at the source. Check garden hoses and be ready to soak roofs, shrubs and trees with water within 15 feet of buildings.
5. Close all windows and doors, and remove all flammable window coverings. Open fireplace damper and close the screen. Close outside attic, eaves, and basement vents. Close all shutters, blinds or heavy non-combustible window coverings to reduce radiant heat. Turn on outside lights and a light in every room for visibility in heavy smoke and distribute flashlights to all family members.
6. Fill pools, hot tubs, garbage cans and any other large containers with water.
7. Place a ladder against the house in clear view.
8. Back your car into the driveway and close all windows.
9. Disconnect automatic garage door openers so you can open the door without power, if necessary. Close the doors.
10. Monitor news reports so you know the danger you're facing. Prepare bug-out bags for evacuation and be sure to include your important papers and anything you "can't live without". Pack these items into the car.
11. If you are told to evacuate, follow routes directed by local officials. Leave doors and windows closed but not locked. It may be necessary for firefighters to gain quick entry to fight fire in your home. The area will be patrolled by sheriff's deputies or policemen. Fires can change directions quickly, be prepared to change your route if blocked.
12. If you're in a car, roll up the windows and close air vents. Drive slowly with headlights on. Watch for other vehicles and pedestrians. Do not drive through heavy smoke.
13. If you have to stop, turn the engine off, but keep headlights on for visibility. Keep windows and air vents closed. Get on floor of auto and cover yourself with a blanket. Call 911.
14. If you're caught in the open, go to a clearing. If you're close to a road, lie down in a ditch and cover yourself with anything that can protect you from the heat.
15. If you evacuated, don't go home after a wildfire until you're told it's safe to do so.
16. Hopefully your home is unharmed. Be sure to check roofs and attics for hot spots and sparks and extinguish them immediately. Check every few hours for a day.
17. Use caution when entering a building and avoid standing water. There may be an electrical charge.
18. Check all utilities and consult a professional if damage has been done.

References: [Nationwide Insurance](#)
[DoSomething.org](#)

Alternative Grains

Billie Nicholson



In an effort to have a more healthy diet, many people have incorporated whole grains into their meals. Whole grains consists of three parts: 1. Bran, containing a small amount of protein, three major B vitamins, trace minerals and insoluble dietary fiber. 2. Germ, the baby plant, contains a large share of B vitamins, some high quality protein, trace minerals and some fat. The germ is often separated from the flour in milling to extend it's shelf life. 3. Endosperm, the source of white flour, makes up the largest share of protein, carbohydrates, iron and B vitamins. It is also a source of soluble fiber. This whole food keeps you feeling full longer, keeps your blood pressure under control, balances blood sugar, and stores well.

There are more varieties of whole grains than just wheat. When you shop in the bulk section of your grocer, you will find many choices. Don't be overwhelmed by the variety, it's a good thing to have choices. Whole grains pick up flavors from whatever they're cooked with and are easy to cook, many within 20 minutes. Those that take longer, can be cooked ahead and refrigerated for up to five days, or frozen and reheated. Pre-soaking them over night will also shorten cooking times. This primer will help you understand their features.



Amaranth - has been cultivated for 8,000 years by Aztecs. It must be cooked to be digested and can also be popped like popcorn. Amaranth has 13-14% protein and contains the amino acid lysine. To cook bring 2 cups liquid to boil, add 1 cup grain, cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Yields 2 1/2 cups. Season it with olive oil and herbs or serve it as a cooked breakfast cereal like oatmeal. Grind two tablespoons and add to basic bread flour or pancake batter for added nutrition.

Buckwheat - is not a grain cereal but rather related to rhubarb, so it is considered a fruit seed. It is gluten-free for those who are sensitive to wheat or other grains. The component rutin strengthens capillary walls. Nutrients in buckwheat may help control blood sugar and manage diabetes. It is a good source of magnesium, which relaxes blood vessels, improving blood flow. To cook boil 2 cups of liquid, add 1 cup of buckwheat kernels and simmer for 20 minutes until tender, Yields 4 cups. Its nutty flavor goes well with hearty vegetables like mushrooms or carrots. It works well as a filling for stuffed peppers, also.



Millet - not just for birds, this tiny gluten-free grain is a food staple in India, Africa and China. It is high in magnesium and aids in nerve and muscle function. Tastes like a cross between quinoa and corn., cooks in about 30 minutes, and requires no pre-soaking. Toast it in a skillet for 4 minutes to enhance its nutty flavor. To cook boil 2 1/2 cups liquid, add 1 cup millet, cover, simmer for 18 minutes and let stand for 10 minutes. Fluffing it with a fork gives individual grains. Cook it with more water and stir frequently to make a creamy, porridge type dish. It can be added to cornbread or muffin mixes or served like mashed potatoes.

Continued on Page 5

Alternative Grains

Continued From Page 4

Quinoa - Domesticated for human consumption 3,000 - 4,000 years ago, this ancient South American crop is high in protein. Available in three varieties, red, black and white, this seed has an earthy taste. Related to the beet and spinach family, it lacks gluten and can grow in dry soil. To cook boil 2 cups of liquid, add 1 cup quinoa, cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Yields 3 cups. Serve as a side dish instead of rice or toss it in a vegetable salad containing sauteed cherry tomatoes, olive oil, basil and Parmesan cheese. Freezes and reheats easily.



Barley - a versatile grain, comes in both hulled and pearled varieties. Hulled, has had the outermost hull removed. Pearled has had the hull and the bran removed. It has a nutlike flavor and is chewy, like pasta in consistency. When fermented, barley is used as an ingredient in beer and other alcoholic beverages. Hulled barley takes about an hour to cook. This time can be shortened by pre-soaking overnight. To cook add one cup of barley to three or four cups of water (like cooking pasta). One cup will yield 3 cups. It is starchy and soaks up liquid like a sponge. Add it to a big pot of simmering soup. Barley's fiber helps with regularity and intestinal health. Presoaking overnight with a tablespoon of yogurt in the liquid allows lactobacillus bacteria time to begin fermenting barley's insoluble fiber. This fiber is food for these friendly bacteria residing in your intestine. Friendly bacteria populations keep your intestine healthy.

Teff - the smallest grain in the world, this nutritional powerhouse has been a staple of Ethiopian cooking for thousands of years. Teff has a mild nutty flavor and contains lots of calcium, protein and fiber. It is added to porridge, stews, pilaf or baked goods. It is gluten-free as well. To cook bring 3 cups liquid to a boil, add 1 cup teff, cover, and simmer 20 minutes until liquid is absorbed. Yields 2 1/2 cups. It can be eaten as a breakfast cereal or added to pancake batter.



Wild Rice - is a grass, the only native grain in North America, originally harvested by Native Americans in canoes. Wild rice contains the bran, endosperm and germ so it takes longer to cook than white rice. It remains chewy after cooking with a distinct nutty flavor. Cook like pasta in lots of boiling liquid, cover, and simmer 45 minutes to one hour, Yields 2 1/2 cups. Mix with brown rice, use in stuffing or serve with sauteed mushroom. This is a great addition to soups or salads with nuts and fruits.

Any of these grains can be prepared in the SUN OVEN®. Cook 1.5 - 2 hours until grains are soft. Be sure to add salt when cooking, it brings out the flavor. Resist the urge to stir the grains, just fluff with a fork when moisture is absorbed.

[References](#)

SUN OVENS® , Stored or Used?

Are you the proud owner of a SUN OVEN®? We hope you are prepared for emergencies when the power to your cooking appliances is interrupted. There are many situations when we may need an alternative to our ovens and cooktops. The SUN OVEN® is an efficient option in disaster situations and in everyday use, too.

So, having purchased one, have you opened the box to examine and prepare it for use? The All American Sun Oven® ships with a set of pot and pans that are lightweight graniteware that heats up quickly. The baking pans are non-stick. What did you get? Have you washed them and started using them? They can be used on a conventional stove or campfire as well. When you

first open the package, set it up outside and preheat some soapy water. Steaming this inside the oven will prepare it for use. Once you've prepped the oven, why not go ahead and cook something? Our website is jammed with recipes to use. The three drying racks make wonderful supports with parchment paper to hold cookies while they bake.

Are you planning a trip this summer? Will you be cooking? Take your SUN OVEN® with you. It can be used to keep food cool until you're ready to cook and works great if you're camping in a no burn area, where campfires are prohibited because of drought.

Look at using your SUN OVEN® as a challenge. How many times can you use it in a week? Take the time to listen to the [videos on our website](#) and become familiar with its set up and use. Remember familiarity will save you hours of guesswork during stressful times. With the longer sunlight hours of summer and lots of fresh foods available to cook, save some electricity in your home by cooking with solar energy. SUN OVENS® are not just for emergencies. They can be used every day. What is the most unusual thing you've cooked in your oven? Send your week's list to editor@sunoven.com. We look forward to reading your mail.



Call for Recipes

Many of our SUN OVEN® customers rave about how good and different grains taste when prepared in their SUN OVEN®. How do you prepare grains in your Sun Oven®? Please send your favorite recipes (along with your secret tips and a photo) to editor@sunoven.com. Your recipe could be published in an issue of our newsletter!

I Hate Mushy Soft Dill Pickles

Sharon Peterson, SimplyCanning.com

Are You pickle challenged?

I will here fully admit to being pickle challenged. In fact I did not make dill pickles for many years. This came as a result of a frustrating experience. I made dill pickles using the recipe from the Ball Blue Book. They were tasty, but soft and soggy. My family resisted eating them, and the jars were now a year and a half old. They were not spoiled and I could have saved them longer but, I realized they were never going to be eaten. and I threw them out.

I vowed to NEVER make pickles again. All that work down the drain, or actually out to the chickens. The chickens loved them!

I next tried a product called Pickle Crisp, and I did get some fairly nice pickles. But I don't want to always count on this product being available. (that self-reliant part of me goes deep!)

I found my solution! The low temperature process that I saw on the National Center for Home Food Preservation website works for me.

The trick with this method is a lower temperature process. The caution is that you must carefully monitor the temperature.

If you want to do this, use a thermometer and time things carefully. In addition, use this processing method ONLY with a tested recipe that specifically says low temperature pasteurization treatment.

Here is the [pickle recipe](#) and directions I used. Guess what? It worked. I am now happily filling my jars and ending up with nice crunchy dill pickles. I'm happy, my family is happy! Give it a try!

Here is a brief explanation of the process.

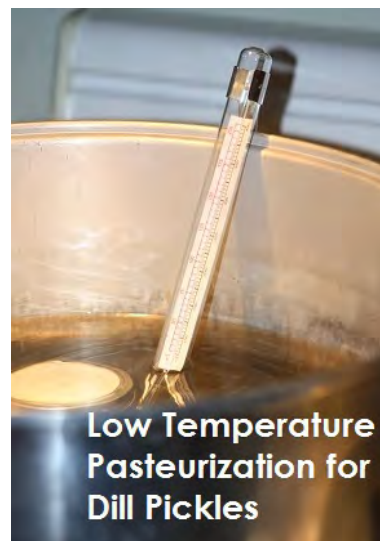
Remember to use a thermometer and monitor your time carefully. And remember only use this with recipe that specifically state that it is compatible with this method.

Have your canner ready and half full of warm water. About 120 to 140 degrees F. Also have a kettle or other pot of hot water ready.

Place your filled jars in the half full canner. Now add hot water to 1 inch above the tops of the jars. Turn on your heat and warm water to 180 to 185 degrees. Use your thermometer and be sure this is maintained for 30 minutes. This is longer than the time indicated in the regular water bath processing.

When 30 minutes is done turn your heat off and remove your jars to a counter to cool. Check the seals after the jars are completely cooled off. I usually leave mine until the next day and check them, label and store them.

Need some pickle recipes? [Pickle Recipes](#)



Multigrains in the Sun from the Solar Chef



This pilaf can be served as a side dish but, especially if you use soy beans, it is hardy enough for a vegetarian main course. If wheat berries and barley don't make frequent appearances on your table look for a market that sells in bulk. Get just enough for the recipe. You can always go back for more if you really like it.

SUN OVEN® Multigrain Pilaf

Ingredients

- 2/3 cup wheat berries
- 1/2 cup barley (not quick cooking)
- 1/2 cup wild rice
- 3 1/2 cups vegetable broth or water
- 2 cups frozen edamame (soy beans) or baby lima beans
- 1 sweet red pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped

- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3/4 teaspoon dried sage, crushed

Preparation

Set Sun Oven® out to preheat.

Rinse and drain the wheat berries, barley, and wild rice. Combine the rinsed grains and all the other ingredients in a pot. Cover and transfer to the Sun Oven, cook until the grains are soft, 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Adjust for salt. Drizzle with additional olive oil, stir, and serve.

Makes 4 servings.