How to Store Apples for Use All Winter

Anna Schremmer
Phillips-Rooks District Extension Agent
Family and Consumer Science

This year I vacationed in Westin, Missouri. If you have never been there it is a quiet little town north of Kansas City. What I like most about Weston was the orchards. There are several orchards where you can pick your own fruit. Peaches were in season at the time we were there, but the late spring freeze had reduced the number of peaches so there were none to pick, but they had apples! Many varieties, and they were just starting to be ready to pick. I chose Jonathan’s. They are my favorite, because they are a cooking apple but also good to eat fresh.

For many people, autumn means one thing: apple season! Family and friends get together for that long-anticipated trip to the orchard to pick fresh apples, sip on cider and bite into warm cider donuts. Apples can be canned, frozen, or dried, but apples can be stored to eat throughout the winter.

Believe it or not, even apples stored in cool basements may last until March. At home, it’s easy to preserve an apple’s life through the winter!

Follow these tips on how to store apples:

**1. Choose the Right Kind**
Before starting the storage process, make sure the apples are ones that keep well. They should have thicker skins and harder flesh. Think Granny Smith, McIntosh, Golden Delicious and Fuji. Grabbing an heirloom variety? Ask the farmer or vendor how long it will keep. (Many farmers will label apples as good storage fruit.)

**2. Time Your Picking**
Try to pick apples before they fully ripen. It’s easy to tell how ripe an apple is; just look at its color and taste it. If it’s not yet in full color and still has a bit of tartness to it, it’s ready to be picked for storage.

**3. Examine Each Apple Closely**
If you see any signs of bruising, rotting or cracks, remove these for use right away, think cobbler or apple pie. These apples will not store well, and if the apples are rotting, they will give off more ethylene and make nearby apples rot as well.

**4. Place Apples in a Plastic Container**
It’s best to store each type of apple in its own plastic container.

**5. Go the Extra Mile**
It’s optional, but to further prevent any possibility of a rotten apple touching other apples, you can wrap each one in newspaper. When it’s time to eat, wash off the apple to get rid of any newspaper ink that may have transferred.

**6. Store Apples in a Cool, Dry Place**
Somewhere between 35 and 40 degrees is ideal. The crisping drawer of a refrigerator works best, but if there’s not enough refrigerator space available, a garage, shed, or other sheltered outdoor area is fine. But it is extremely important to not let the apples freeze! This breaks down their cells, and they will become mushy when thawed.

**7. Check Frequently**
Make sure none have succumbed to any sort of rotting or bruising; remove any that are starting to go.

**8. Use ‘Em Up**
Once apples hit room temperature, they’ll ripen and spoil more quickly, so use them fast. With fall just around the corner, think about storing those fresh apples to use all winter and into spring.

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