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consumer radio briefs

Buying Fruit

(0:50)

When buying fresh fruit, Minnesota Extension Nutritionist Mary Darling says look for fruit of characteristic color and medium size. Large fruits may be coarse and over mature, and small fruit often has too much waste in relation to the edible portion.

Buy fresh fruits for use within a short time. Some fruits must be held to soften and ripen, but long storage is not practical. Cantaloupe should have a smoothly rounded, depressed scar at the stem end, but do not expect to find ready-to-eat cantaloupes at the store. They need to ripen three or four days at room temperature before being refrigerated.

Look for firm cherries ranging from bright red to nearly black. Hard, light colored cherries are immature and won't ripen. Keep cold and use within a few days. Grapes are as ripe when shipped as they will be so don't hold to ripen. They should be plump, smooth and firmly attached to the stem. Keep cool, covered and use within a week.

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Strange Veggies

(0:35)

Broccoli, spinach and Swiss chard are often-overlooked greens that can add variety and nutrients to more common garden fare. They contribute significant amounts of vitamins A and C, iron and calcium.

Eggplant, summer squashes and kohlrabi are other interesting variety vegetables. They do not have as many vitamins and minerals as the dark green vegetables, but they offer a change of pace and are low calorie.

Eggplant is often pared, cut into quarter-inch slices, dipped in eggs and then bread crumbs and fried until golden brown. Summer squash such as zucchini can be cooked whole or in slices. Zucchini combines well with tomatoes and grated cheese in baked vegetable casseroles.

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