

WHEN TO PICK PEARS

VARIETY	ESTIMATED PICKING DATE		
Clapp Favorite	August 20	to	September 1
Bennett	August 22	to	September 3
Bartlett	August 25	to	September 5
Aurora	August 19	to	September 9
Rescue	August 25	to	September 10
Orcas	August 28	to	September 15
Sirrine	September 4	to	September 12
Flemish Beauty	September 10	to	September 26
Comice	September 19	to	October 9
Seckel	September 25	to	October 9
Highland	September 25	to	October 12
Anjou	September 25	to	October 15
Bosc	September 25	to	October 15
El Dorado	October 1	to	October 21

Pears are usually picked too late; they then brown from the core outwards, and become unusable – Bartlett is a good example. To avoid this, use the following general rule. **Pick the pears early, when the solid green (or brown) colour of the pear begins to turn to a lighter green (or brown).**

HERE IS ANOTHER WAY TO SEE IF YOUR PEARS SHOULD BE PICKED:

If you notice several pears dropping from the tree, you are likely already be too late (see above), but it's a pretty sure sign they should be picked immediately.

Better yet, every few days as you approach the harvest period shown above, give the pears the "lift test". Putting your Index finger on the stem, lift the pear from its hanging position to a horizontal or flat position, perhaps with a slight twist. If the fruit snaps off cleanly between the stem and the twig, the pears are ready to strip from the tree. If you have to wrench off the fruit, breaking either the twig or the fruit stem, the fruit is probably not ready. Note that on larger trees, fruit growing in the top often ripen earlier than fruit in the shaded interior area.

Certain late ripening pears such as Anjou, Bosc and Cornice may not ripen properly if just picked and allowed to ripen naturally. These varieties, especially Anjou, need 3-4 weeks of storage at 32 - 45 degrees F. This can be done in the refrigerator or possibly a cool root cellar. Some kind of wrapping to reduce shrivelling is a good idea. And don't store them by the apples.

How about Asian pears? These are easy since they ripen on the tree. Simply sample them from time to time as they ripen from greenish to various shades of yellow or orange. When they taste good, pick'em. You don't have to pick them all at once, but if they are left on the tree too long, they may develop core browning and a winey taste that you may not like.