



indicator of when fruits are mature for harvest. This is when the greenish skin ground color turns to a soft straw yellow, or in the case of white flesh peaches and nectarines, the skin turns to a cream color.

are ripe when they turn bright, or deep red, depending on the cultivar. Others, such as Stark gold are a rich, golden color when ripe.

are ripe when the flesh turns from yellow-green to amber.

For any fruit rely on the number of days from flowering to harvest. Harvesting time may vary slightly from season to season depending on weather, and other climatic condition.

Walnuts are mature as soon as the husk can be easily separated from the nut.

However, they usually are not harvested until after the fall rains have cracked the husk to the point of letting the nut fall to the ground. If the wind caused the nuts to fall to the ground before the hulls have cracked leave them on the ground until the hulls are loose. The nuts should be ready for removal after a week or two. This is especially true of Carpathian varieties (English walnuts). Black walnut husks may not rot entirely and you may have to give them a good whack with a hammer.

Harvest husk free walnuts as soon as possible after they drop. Kernels of nuts that are allowed to remain on wet ground rapidly become discolored. Harvested un-dried nuts left in the sack for a day or so may heat and become moldy. Start the drying process within 24 hours of harvest. Nuts are usually dried in the shell, but you can save a considerable amount of drying time and you will need less heat if you shell the nuts before drying.

The best drying temperatures are between 95°-105°F. Air circulation is vital, so it is desirable to dry the nuts on a screen-bottomed tray, in an onion sack, or in any other container that will permit free air passage. You can dry small lots in the warm air stream above a furnace or radiator, as long as the temperature does not exceed 105°F. This may require 3-4 days. If temperature exceeds 110°F the quality of the nuts will be impaired. The walnuts will have a roasted taste and can become rancid in storage.

Wash and dry the nuts before drying. The walnuts will be crisp at first, and then they will become soft and rubbery as they dry. When nuts are finally dry they will be crisp again. If nuts are not completely dry they will quickly mold. Walnuts will keep up to a year if they are kept in a cool, dry place.

\*Adapted from PNW 235, "Growing Walnuts in the Northwest"