

Waste Watchers: Lack of Food Freshness Knowledge Can Cost Each Household Hundreds of Dollars A Year

(NAPSA)—Today in nearly every American household, uneaten fresh fruits and vegetables are on the verge of being sent to the garbage can. According to The Garbage Project, the average household throws away about 150 pounds of uneaten produce each year. If the typical price per pound for produce is \$2, this means a loss per household of about \$300 each year. Nationwide, the loss adds up to about \$30 billion.

“In addition to being a waste of food, throwing away produce can also mean valuable time and money just ending up in a trash bag on the curb,” said William Rathje, Ph.D., founder and director of The Garbage Project and one of the nation’s foremost experts on household trash.

Why all this trash talk? It could be that people really don’t know about proper produce storage. A new survey from GLAD® found that while most people (83 percent) consider themselves knowledgeable about produce storage, only about a third of respondents could prove their food freshness savvy when put to the test:

- Just 32 percent of people know that the best way to store apples is to place them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

- Only 38 percent are aware that a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator is the best place for keeping strawberries fresher.

In addition, the survey found one in five Americans have spoiled produce currently lurking in their refrigerators at home. Many are bothered by the unpleasant task of throwing away spoiled produce. According to the survey, 54 percent of people feel that they are wasting money and 43 percent feel guilty.

To help consumers learn how to stretch the food dollar, GLAD and Wal-Mart offer information to help keep produce fresher. For example:

- *Making Happy Neighbors:* Store fruits and vegetables that

GLAD® and Wal-Mart Guide to Storing Produce for Maximum Freshness			
<i>Fruit/Vegetable</i>	<i>How to Store</i>	<i>Freshness Peak</i>	<i>Additional Tips</i>
Apples	In sealed plastic bag in refrigerator	3 weeks	Do not wash until ready to eat
Asparagus	In sealed plastic bag in refrigerator	4 days	Wrap base of stalks with damp cloth or paper towel
Celery	In sealed plastic bag in refrigerator	1 week	To extend freshness, stand head in bowl of cold water and wrap rest with plastic bag/wrap
Grapes	In sealed plastic bag in refrigerator	1 week	Do not wash until ready to eat
Lettuce (head)	In sealed plastic bag in refrigerator	10 days	Wash under cold water and drain well before storing
Mushrooms	In original container or paper bag in refrigerator	5-7 days	Do not wash before refrigerating. Do not store in airtight container
Onions	In open container in cool, dry spot away from direct sunlight	4 weeks	
Potatoes	In open container in cool, dry, dark spot	3-5 weeks	Do not refrigerate
Strawberries	In sealed plastic bag in refrigerator	4 days	Do not wash until ready to eat
Tomatoes	When ripe, in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator	1 week	Ripen tomatoes at room temperature, stem side up and away from direct sunlight. Do not refrigerate whole unripe tomatoes
Tip: For produce that should be stored in a plastic bag, try GLAD® FreshProtect™ Food Storage bags which have a protective barrier and double-lock seal to help keep food fresher.			

produce ethylene gas separately from those that are sensitive to it, or they will spoil faster. Ethylene producers include apricots, avocados, bananas, cantaloupe, honeydew, kiwi, mangos, nectarines, papayas, peaches, pears, plums and tomatoes. Ethylene-sensitive fruits and vegetables include apples, asparagus, carrots, broccoli, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, lettuce/greens, potatoes, summer squash, and watermelon.

- *Wash Your Head:* Help keep head lettuce fresher longer by rinsing under cold running water, draining well, and storing in a sealed plastic bag, such as GLAD FreshProtect™ gallon-sized zipper storage bags.

- *Keep it Cool:* Keep the refrigerator temperature set between 35°F and 40°F.

For additional information about keeping fruits and vegetables fresher at home, visit www.glad.com/freshprotect.