

400 Laurel Suite 215 • Texarkana, AR, 71854 • 870-779-3609 • www.uaex.edu/miller
cdue@uaex.edu • Facebook & Twitter @millercountyfcs/

TOO GOOD TO WASTE

BY

Carla Due
CARLA DUE

COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT-STAFF CHAIR/FCS



Most refrigerators have two crisper drawers and they are not the same, even if they visually look like they are. One of the drawers is designed to keep certain produce, typically fruits, at a lower humidity, while the drawer is designed to keep other produce, typically vegetables, at a higher humidity.

The short version of why humidity is important to storing produce has to do with ethylene gas, which is a naturally occurring hormone of plants which triggers some produce to ripen. Too much of it though, for too long, and it will cause the produce to pass ripening and go to spoiling and rotting.

One of the simplest things you can do to keep your produce fresh longer is to make sure you're using your two crisper drawers properly, and separating out the produce that is sensitive to ethylene from the produce that is not.

Here is a simple list of some common types of produce and whether it should go in the high or low humidity drawer. While the lists are not perfectly aligned between fruits and vegetables, many more vegetables go in the high humidity drawer while more fruits go in the low humidity drawer.

The **high-humidity drawer** – the one that is closed up all the way or that doesn't have any controls at all – protects produce that can lose moisture quickly. Store ethylene-sensitive fruits and vegetables, like asparagus, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, carrots, cauliflower, citrus, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, greens (like chard or spinach), herbs, lettuces, okra, peppers & squash.

The **low-humidity drawer**, sometimes labeled fruit drawer, lets out some of the ethylene gases that lead to faster rotting, thereby keeping fruits and vegetables longer. Ethylene producing fruits and vegetables should be stored here and include apples, apricots, avocados, berries, cantaloupe, figs, grapefruit, honeydew, kiwi, lemons, limes, mandarin oranges, mangoes, nectarine, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, tangerines, tomatoes, and watermelon.



Never refrigerate bananas, sweet potatoes, potatoes, and dry onions, uncut.