

Standard containers

Standard containers are made of molded plastic, they have sturdy handles, and are stackable. They're easier to use than bushel baskets, buckets, or wooden crates to carry and move produce. Standard containers can save you time and effort. They offer indirect savings through faster harvest and handling, less stress and strain on your body, and easier monitoring of crop yield. Standard containers cost about \$5 to \$10 each and are available in several sizes for different uses and loads.



Benefits of using standard containers

Durable. Standard plastic containers, particularly those that are UV stable, will last for many years, offsetting the initial cost.

Easy to carry. Standard containers have molded, sturdy handles making them easy to work with. By comparison, bushel baskets, buckets, and crates are often missing handles or have poorly designed handles that make them difficult to carry. In addition, rectangular or square containers



place the center of gravity closer to your body than do round containers, reducing the load and strain on your body.

Multi-purpose. Standard containers can be used to wash and drain produce as well as for transport. Some containers have rounded bottoms so they can be pulled along as harvest “sleds” in the field or used as wash basins in the packing shed.

Easy to clean. You can help prevent the spread of plant disease by regularly washing plastic containers. When cleaning containers, be sure to sanitize all surfaces—both inside and out. Do not place containers on the soil to dry, and do not stack cleaned containers if they have been in contact with soil.

Save time. Since containers are stackable, you can increase efficiency by limiting the number of times you have to stoop to pick up containers. You can also save field time by tossing empty containers to strategic places along the row.

Reduce crop loss. Containers that fit the size and weight of your produce may improve harvested crop quality since less loss will occur from damage.

WORK EFFICIENCY



Tip Sheet

A series of tip sheets on labor efficiency for fresh-market vegetable growers.

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Monitor crop yield easily.

Knowing how much produce fits in one container simplifies estimating crop yield. When every container is a different size, yield estimates become more time consuming and less accurate.

Save storage space. Standard containers nest to save storage space.

Are there other tools that work well with standard containers?

Standard containers can be stacked on narrow (“half”) pallets or full-sized pallets and then entire pallet loads can be moved with a hand truck or hydraulic pallet jack.

Where can I get standard containers?

A number of companies sell standard containers; check ads in magazines such as the *American Vegetable Grower*, *Growing for Market*, and *The Packer* for sources. The following list of companies is provided as a convenience for our readers. It is not an endorsement by the University of Wisconsin-Extension, nor is it exhaustive.

Buckhorn Inc.

55 W. TechneCenter Dr.
Milford, OH 45150
(800) 543-4454

CSA Works

121 Bay Rd.
Hadley, MA 01035
(413) 582-0013
*recycled containers; bulk orders
for small and medium sized growers.*

Perstorp Xytec, Inc.

9350 47th Ave. SW
Tacoma, WA 98499
(800)423-3221

This material was developed by the Healthy Farmers, Healthy Profits Project, whose goal is to find and share work efficiency tips that maintain farmers' health and safety and also increase profits. For more information, call (608)262-1054 or visit our website at <http://bse.wisc.edu/hfhp/>

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Work Efficiency Tip Sheet: Standard Containers

