

Mesh produce bags: Easy batch processing

Washing leafy greens by hand is back-breaking and time consuming. You can use mesh produce bags to speed the process. A mesh bag is a woven or knotted polyester or nylon sack that costs approximately \$2 to \$6 each. When you need to wash a large number of small items (such as salad greens, peas, beans), a mesh bag can save you time and help reduce stress and strain on your body.

What is “batch processing”?

Batch processing lets you move a large amount of produce at one time through the harvest, washing, and drying processes. This amount, or batch, speeds the entire process because you eliminate many short repetitions along the way. For example, you can line your harvest container with a mesh bag, then lift the entire bag and its contents into the wash basin. Leave the produce in the bag to soak and rinse, and then lift the entire batch to dry. Dry light produce by placing the bag into a commercial salad spinner, or use an old washing machine set to “spin” cycle. The mesh allows water to drain out. If you don’t have a spinner or washing machine to dry produce, spin the bag lasso-style in the air.

Benefits of using mesh bags

Less Stress on body.

Batch processing lets you maintain an erect posture while removing and draining produce. It also minimizes the amount of time your hands are immersed in



cold water. By comparison, hand washing involves repeated stooping, lifting, and gripping. Also, holding produce while it drains puts stress on your arms.

Faster. Compared to hand washing, batch processing lets you wash 50% more greens (by weight) in the same amount of time.

Less damage to crop. Faster washing and drying maintains crop quality. Also, gentler handling reduces damage to leafy greens from crushing.

Will using mesh bags save me money?

The time savings you get from batch processing will increase your profit. You will also indirectly save money by improving product quality and preventing stress and strain on your body.

WORK EFFICIENCY



Tip Sheet

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

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Where can I get mesh bags?

Several companies sell mesh bags for various uses such as laundry bags and storage bag. Check ads in magazines such as the *American Vegetable Grower*, *Growing for Market*, and the *Packer*.

The Nylon Net Company sells a 22 x 22 -inch square bag with 1/4-inch mesh. Cady Industries sells 32 x 27 -inch knotted McKnit bags. These sources are provided as a convenience for our readers. They are not an endorsement by the University of Wisconsin-Extension, nor is the list exhaustive.

Cady Industries

P.O. Box 2087
Memphis, TN 38101
(800) 622-3695

Nylon Net Co.

845 North Main St.
Memphis, TN 38107
(800) 238-7529

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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Research for this publication was funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

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