

Checking Dried Fruits For Bugs:

A Hands-On Overview and Presentation

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Reprinted from The OU Kosher Israel Guide

How to Check for Bugs in Produce

Please note:






Differences in climate and agricultural techniques can affect bug infestation of food. Just because a particular fruit or vegetable is assumed to be bug free in the US doesn't necessarily mean it is bug free in Eretz Yisrael. The following pages are designed to help raise your awareness about which foods are most likely to have bugs.

This is a brief summary of the topic rather than a comprehensive list so it should not be your only source.

Even when an item may be easily cleaned and checked for bugs there may be times when the product is infested. When an item has bugs, throw it out. In addition to being unappetizing, it is considered muchzak betolaim and is halachically prohibited.

When checking for bugs, make sure that you are in an area with ample light. Many of the products in the chart are sold by companies that are certified as bug free or relatively bug free. While we strongly recommend buying such produce, we nonetheless urge you to read all the information on the packaging and labels for further instructions. Additional checking or cleaning may still be necessary.

Herb and Vegetable Inspection Chart

Fresh Vegetables	Type of Insect*	Location of Insect
<p>ARTICHOKE</p> 	Aphids and thrips	Deep between the leaves
<p>ASPARAGUS</p> 	Thrips	Under triangle parts along the stem and in the tips
<p>BEANS</p> 	Worms, when stored prolonged or improperly	Can be in the middle of the bean
<p>BROCCOLI</p> 	Aphids, thrips or broccoli worm; may appear brownish after parboiling	Lodged in the floret head, or at the base of area connecting the floret to the stem
<p>CABBAGE</p> 	Thrips or cabbageworms	Most often in the outermost six leaves

* Aphids – size of a pin head, light-green, round insects; Thrips – size of a “1” in a dollar bill serial number; linear, black or grayish insects.

This is only a brief summary to serve as a quick reference guide. Please do not rely on this summary alone.

Method of Inspection**

Artichoke leaves: Examine one by one.
Heart of the artichoke: Spread apart the artichoke leaves; carefully examine around and between the leaves. If no sign of insect infestation, wash thoroughly. Due to the difficulty involved in checking, they are not allowed in OU restaurants.
Solid artichoke bottom: No inspection. Rinse prior to using.

Green asparagus: Shave down the tips; remove the triangle parts along the stem and in the tips.
White asparagus: Wash thoroughly before using.

Soak for approximately 1/2 hour; remove wormy beans that float to top of water.

Fresh broccoli, stems: Wash thoroughly.
Fresh broccoli, whole: Parboil for no more than 1 minute. Segregate each head individually. Look carefully at the branched area of each floret, in the crevice formed by two branches forking out from a single trunk like a Y; spread apart each floret head and look through the florets, into the branch area; if 1 or 2 insects are found, continue examining the remaining sections of head; if 3 insects are found, the entire head should be discarded.

Green cabbage: Detach loose leaves; discard; core the cabbage and split head in half. Peel 3 layers; carefully check these 6 leaves under direct light; check both sides. If 1-2 insects are found, check an additional layer. If last three consecutive layers were clean and the remaining leaves are tightly packed together, the remaining leaves of the head may be used without further checking, but should be washed well before use.

** When checking leafy vegetables or herbs, both sides of each leaf must be checked.

Fresh Vegetables Type of Insect* Location of Insect



Thrips or cabbageworms

Most often in the outermost six leaves

CAULIFLOWER



Thrips or small orange insects

Inside or between small thin white branches

CELERY



Thrips, flies or worms

On inside and outside of stalk, especially close to base or on leaves

ENDIVES



Thrips

On leaf

HERBS



Aphids or thrips

On surface of leaves or stem

ICEBERG LETTUCE



Aphids or thrips

In the folds and crevices of the first four layers

MUSHROOMS



Small white or red worms

Embedded in under part or in inner sections of mushroom

Method of Inspection**

If 3 or more insects are found, the remaining leaves must be washed and checked before use.

Red cabbage: Same as green cabbage.

Separate and remove florets from stem.

Examine the under part of the floret; wash thoroughly.

Remove all leaves; hold celery firmly under strong stream of water; brush down both inside and outside of stalk with finger or a vegetable brush; if a worm burrow is spotted, slit open celery stalk, remove worm, and wash thoroughly. Leaves must be washed with soapy solution.

Remove leaves and wash, no visual inspection needed.

Soak in cold water; add several drops of concentrated, non-scented liquid detergent or vegetable wash; agitate herbs in the water, removing all foreign matter and soap from leaf surface; alternatively, a vegetable brush may be used on both sides of leaf. Check each leaf on both sides under direct light. If one or two insects are found, rewash the herbs.


Detach loose leaves; discard; core lettuce; split head in half; peel 4 layers off the head; carefully check these leaves by holding the leaf under direct light; check both sides of each leaf. If 1-2 insects are found check an additional layer. If last three consecutive layers were clean and the remaining leaves are tightly packed together, the remaining leaves of the head may be used without further checking, but should be washed well before use. If 3 or more insects are found, the remaining leaves must be washed and checked before use.


Shiitake and Button: wash thoroughly.


Oyster: Break apart in several places, especially the base, examine inner sections. If insects are found, discard mushroom.


Portobello: remove stem, examine detached cap. Remove entire brown fan-like under-part. Wash thoroughly.

Fresh Vegetables	Type of Insect*	Location of Insect
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 <p>OPEN LEAF LETTUCE (e.g., green/red leaf, Boston, chicory, bok choy, romaine, etc.)</p>	Aphids or thrips	Found even in the inner leaves due to its open growth
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 <p>ONION</p>	Thrips	Tips or outer layers
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 <p>SCALLIONS</p>	Light-green or brown thrips	Mostly in upper area of bulb, also between branches and occasionally on outside and inside of shoots
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 <p>SPINACH & ARUGULA</p>	Thrips or worms	In curls and inside of leaf
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Frozen Vegetables	Type of Insect*	Location of Insect
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ASPARAGUS	Thrips	See "Fresh"
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BROCCOLI (spears or florets only)	Aphids, thrips, or worms	Lodged in the floret head, or at the base of area connecting the floret
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CAULIFLOWER	Thrips	See "Fresh"
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* When checking leafy vegetables or herbs, both sides of each leaf must be checked.

Method of Inspection**

<p>Cut off lettuce base; soak lettuce in cold water with several drops of concentrated, non-scented liquid detergent or vegetable wash; agitate leaves using a strong stream of water to remove all foreign matter and soap from leaf surface or use a vegetable brush on both sides of the leaf; check leaves under direct light.</p>
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<p>Cut off onion tips; peel off inedible and loose layers of skin; wash thoroughly</p>
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<p>Cut scallion root from top to the bottom of bulb; examine between thin layers where they merge from the bulb. If no insects are found, the remaining scallions may be consumed after thorough washing. If insects are found, the entire head must be checked carefully.</p>
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<p>Soak in cold water; add several drops of concentrated non-scented liquid detergent or vegetable wash; agitate leaves in water to wash their surface; use a strong stream of water to remove all foreign matter and soap from surface of the leaf; check leaves under direct light.</p>

Method of Inspection**

<p>Not recommended.</p>

<p>Allow to thaw completely; look carefully at branched area of each floret, in the crevice formed by two branches forking out from a single trunk like a Y; inspect inside the floret from the top into the branch area. If 3 insects are found, the entire package should be discarded. Frozen broccoli is difficult to check; it is therefore best to avoid uncertified product.</p>

<p>Same as fresh.</p>

**Aphids – size of a pin head, light-green, round insects; Thrips – size of a "1" in a dollar bill serial number; linear, black or grayish insects.

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Fresh Vegetables **Type of Insect** **Location of Insect**

ARTICHOKE HEARTS	Aphids or thrips	Deep between leaves
ASPARAGUS	Thrips	See under "Fresh Vegetable"

Fresh Berries **Type of Insect** **Location of Insect**

BLACKBERRIES	Thrips or mites	On surface of berry, nestled in crevices
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BLUEBERRIES	White maggots	Cultivated: Generally insect-free Wild: On surface or in center of berry
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RASPBERRIES	Thrips or mites	On surface of berry and in open cavity
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STRAWBERRIES	Aphids, thrips,	Under green leaf or on surface
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Dried Fruit **Type of Insect** **Location of Insect**

DATES	Worms	Inside of date
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FIGS	Wasps or worms	Inside of fig
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Method of Inspection

Avoid completely.

Avoid completely.

Method of Inspection**

Drop pint of berries onto white cloth or light box, then inspect one by one. If insects are found, do not use pint of berries. Due to the difficulty involved in checking, they are not allowed in OU restaurants.

Cultivated: place in a strainer or colander and wash thoroughly under running water.
Wild: Cut open and carefully examine on white cloth after washing.

Gently drop raspberries onto a white cloth or light box to dislodge the insects, then inspect one by one. If insects are found, do not use pint of berries. Due to the difficulty involved in checking, they are not allowed in OU restaurants.

Remove tops. Carefully rotate and inspect each berry. Place in soapy solution. Agitate each berry and soak for several minutes. Wash each berry under powerful spray of running water. Place berries with insects found previously in a glass bowl of fresh water. Check water for insects.

Method of Inspection**

Slice lengthwise and examine.
No checking necessary when using pitted dates.

Cut fig horizontally and split in half; check for obvious signs of insect damage or dark colored worms.

* Aphids – size of a pin head, light-green, round insects; Thrips – size of a "1" in a dollar bill serial number; linear, black or grayish insects.

** When checking leafy vegetables or herbs, both sides of each leaf must be checked.