

Grandpa's Goody Getter

Preparing and cracking black walnuts

After gathering the nuts, you need to hull them as soon as possible. If you can't hull them right away, store them in bags that will breathe, as they will mold in, just a few days when stored in a solid bag or barrel. It is easiest to take them to a huller where they will remove the hulls. Spread them out, or place them in a mesh bag to dry. In a day or two I like to wash them with a hose (or power washer) in the bag or in a basket while turning frequently. You can also wash them in a wheelbarrow or any other container using a rake to tumble them. Be sure to store them where the squirrels can't get to them. (They probably like them better than we do.)

After about two weeks, start testing them to determine if they are ready to crack. They should be easy to crack, and the nutmeats should fall out in large pieces. If they do, the nuts are now ready to be cracked.

After a few weeks of dry storage the nuts will become too dry and be harder to crack, and the nuts meats will crumble rather than come out in large pieces. Even more so when stored indoors (less in humid outdoor areas). Simply at any time (even years later) put the nuts in a bucket barrel of water and test daily until they start cracking just like they did at first. The nutmeats will re-absorb moisture and fall out in large pieces. Some nuts are ready to go in one day but some take as much as a week. This, I'm told, is because there are over thirty varieties of black walnuts in North America. Some have thin shells and some have thick ones. After soaking, dry to the touch and crack immediately. You may store them in a sealed container for up to week, and they will retain the best cracking condition, but longer than that and they will start to mold. Never store nuts in a sealed container for any length of time no matter how dry they are. Nuts can also be frozen and thawed many times with little or no effect.

Hickory Nuts:

When smooth bark (referring to the bark on the tree) hickory nuts fall from the tree, they will not crack easily. It is best to store the nuts in a breathable container for one year and then crack them. The long drying period will allow the nutmeats to dry and shrink away from the gills of the shell and make them easier to remove and do not need to be soaked.

(Exception) Some smooth bark nuts fall with the hull still on them. This nut can be cracked immediately after hulling with excellent results. They must be fresh off the tree.

Shag bark Hickory nuts are perfect for cracking immediately after they fall and will crack well for several weeks. If you have had the nuts more than two or three months, they will be dry. Just soak them in water for a day or two, then let them dry to the touch, and you are ready go. Almost as good as the fresh ones were.

Check the videos "Demo, Preparation and Maintenance"

www.grandpasgoodygetter.com/videos.html

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