GRANNY PLANTS

Harvest Overload Triage Guide

for when the garden gives you more than a weekend can handle

Some days the garden hands you a manageable basket. Other days it hands you a wagon. This is the guide for the wagon days — what needs your attention today, what can wait a day or two in the fridge, and what's better off going to a neighbor than rotting on your counter out of guilt.

The general rule:

Soft, thin-skinned, and bruised produce goes first. Hard, thick-skinned, and unblemished produce can wait. When in doubt, smell it and look at it — your senses know more than you think.

The Triage List

Tomatoes

Today: Any split, soft, or overripe ones — sauce or salsa base today.
Can wait: Firm, unblemished ones hold a few days on the counter.
Share it: Extras to neighbors, or roast a batch for the freezer.

Zucchini & Summer Squash

Today: Anything oversized or soft-skinned — shred and freeze, or bread it now.
Can wait: Small, firm ones keep about a week in the fridge.
Share it: The classic "leave it on a porch" candidate. Everyone has too much.

Cucumbers

Today: Any that feel soft or have yellowing skin — use today, they won't improve.
Can wait: Firm ones hold about a week refrigerated.
Share it: Great gift produce — people always want cucumbers.

Peppers

Today: Any with soft spots — dice and freeze today, no blanching needed.
Can wait: Firm peppers keep 1-2 weeks in the fridge.
Share it: Bell peppers especially — always welcome in someone else's kitchen.

Green Beans

Today: Any that feel limp — blanch and freeze today before they get tougher.
Can wait: Crisp beans hold about a week refrigerated.
Share it: Bundle a handful with a ribbon — instant thoughtful gift.

Winter Squash & Pumpkins

Today: Only if damaged or cut — use right away, they don't store once cut.
Can wait: Uncut, cured squash keeps for MONTHS in a cool spot. No rush at all.
Share it: These make excellent doorstep gifts — they travel well and last.

Method quick-picks:

Freeze: fast, no skill required, great for anything headed into soups or bakes later. Can: best for tomatoes, pickles, and anything you have a tested recipe for. Ferment: great for cucumbers, peppers, and cabbage — low effort, big flavor. Give away: sometimes the best preservation method is somebody else's dinner.