



TORAH VEHA'ARETZ

INSTITUTE

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# When Is It Permissible To Buy Vegetables in the Eighth Year Without Knowing Their Shemitah Status? #2

## Chanukah

Rambam (4:6) rules that *Chanukah* is a halachically significant date. “Until when are *sefichin* prohibited following the seventh year? From *Rosh Hashanah* until *Chanukah*. From *Chanukah* and on, *sefichin* are permitted.”

*Pe'at HaShulchan* (22:9) explains that this relates to vegetables about which there is a doubt as to when they were planted. From this date onward, it is possible to rest assured that these vegetables were planted during the eighth year. That is, *Chanukah* is the default date to permit *sefichin*. At this point, even vegetables that we are not sure about when a similar crop is available, will be permitted from *Chanukah* on.

## Explanation of the table

For most vegetables, we note *Chanukah* as the stage at which point it is permissible to purchase vegetables without having to check their *shemitah* status. Only for vegetables that definitely take a longer time to grow (for instance, onions take at least 130 days to grow, and garlic even more), we write later dates.

For hard vegetables with a long shelf-life,

such as carrots and potatoes, we at Torah VeHa'aretz Institute deliberated whether it is possible to use *Chanukah* as the date or if we should use a later date. Ultimately, the consensus was to use *Chanukah* since vegetables of the same type planted in the eighth may be available at this time.

## Supermarkets

Everything stated above relates to us as consumers. However, the mehadrin supermarkets that employ “*Shemitah Lechumrah*” solutions know what the source of the produce is. From what I understood, some of them only buy produce that was planted after *shemitah*, and do not rely on the chart, while others relay on the chart and after *Chanukah* bring even vegetables that were planted during *shemitah*.

## Bottom Line

From *Chanukah* and on it is possible to buy most vegetables without special *shemitah* supervision. Certain vegetables that grow quickly, such as lettuce and other leafy greens, can be purchased before this time. For onions and garlic, the date is later (mid-Tevet and early Nissan, respectively). ■