

How Safe Are Waxes On Fruits And Vegetables?

More than 20 kinds of fruits and vegetables, including cantaloupes, eggplants, oranges, peaches, persimmons, squash, sweet potatoes,

sweet peppers, cucumbers and tomatoes, are often waxed before they reach supermarket shelves. This is done to reduce moisture loss and prevent premature shriveling. The waxes replace natural wax lost when the produce is washed. Waxing also improves consumer acceptance. Oranges, for example, have a natural dull matte finish, but shoppers tend to choose those that are shiny.

etable, petroleum or insect sources. For example, carnauba, a common vegetable-based wax, is made from a type of palm leaf. Petroleum-based waxes contain the same ingredients as chewing gum bases. And the "shellac" used on some items is derived from the secretions of the lac bug.

Some consumers are concerned about the safety of eating waxed fruit.

"All waxes used on foods have been approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA)," says University of Delaware interim Extension home economist Bea Phillips.

According to Phillips, these waxes are derived from either veg-

The FDA requires that all waxed produce at the supermarket be accompanied with a card above the bin or with a label on the bin or container itself listing the specific ingredients in the wax used on that particular commodity. Even so, one rarely sees such information displayed. One reason for this lack of labeling, Phillips says, is difficulty in enforcement. Also packers often change the type of wax used due to changes in a variety of conditions such as temperature and humidity.

Ida's Notebook

Ida Risser



It is wonderful to be able to keep busy doing things that you enjoy. I think that is why some people farm. Most of them certainly don't do it to get rich. But if you like being your own boss, to a certain degree, and love the outdoors, it can be a good life.

Now that our children have all left home, I certainly do not have the load of household chores that I had ten or twenty years ago. And, so I look for new challenges. Each winter I take advantage of various

classes that our township offers.

The Parks and Recreation Department in my area offers many different courses. They range from swimming and gymnastics for toddlers to crocheting and scuba diving for adults.

The variety of classes always amazes me. Over the years, I've taken "Furniture Refinishing," "Psychology of Life," "Stocks and Bonds," and "Seasonal Color Analysis." There are many others available such as computer train-

ing, interior design, watercolor, aerobic dance and racquetball.

I've also taken sewing machine quilting at the Extension office and a class on rug braiding at a local museum. It gives me a good feeling to be able to re-finish a chair or bureau and also to know how to braid a beautiful ring.

Keeping a house and a garden is enjoyable but since we have no near neighbors, it is refreshing to be able to get out of the house in the evening and meet other residents of our township.

There are lots of opportunities to learn new things and keep busy if we only avail ourselves of them. Somehow we become "senior citizens" before we are ready to assume the designation.

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