

Constructing a Root Cellar

Location Selection: Choose a suitable location for your root cellar, ideally on a north-facing slope for natural temperature control.

Size and Design: Determine the size and design based on your storage needs, considering shelves, bins, and adequate ventilation.

Excavation Depth: Dig the cellar deep enough to reach stable underground temperatures, typically 4 to 8 feet.

Foundation: Lay a solid foundation to prevent moisture from seeping into the cellar.

Proper Insulation: Insulate the walls and ceiling to maintain a consistent temperature and humidity level.

Ventilation: Install vents for airflow regulation, ensuring proper ventilation without excessive drafts.

Entryway: Create a secure and weatherproof entryway with a sturdy door to keep out pests and maintain temperature control.

Shelving: Install shelves or bins to store produce, ensuring proper airflow around items.

Temperature Monitoring: Use a thermometer to monitor and adjust the cellar's temperature as needed.

Humidity Control: Maintain humidity levels between 85-95% to prevent produce from drying out or becoming too damp.

Humidifiers are available in many different sizes and costs.

Lighting: Install low-heat, energy-efficient lighting for visibility without raising temperatures.

Floor Drainage: Include a floor drainage system to remove excess moisture and prevent flooding.

Pest Prevention: Implement pest control measures like screens on vents and sealing entry points.

Air Filtration: Use air filters to keep the cellar's air clean and free from mold or contaminants.

Root Crop Storage: Store root crops like potatoes, carrots, and onions in bins or crates with good ventilation.

Canned Goods Storage: Dedicate a section for storing canned goods in a cool, dark environment.

Labeling: Label containers and shelves to easily locate stored items and track expiration dates.

Regular Inspection: Regularly inspect the cellar for signs of mold, spoilage, or pests.

Harvest Timing: Time your harvest to store crops when they are at their peak freshness.

Rotating Stock: Use the "first in, first out" (FIFO) method to rotate stock and minimize waste.

Emergency Backup: Consider backup cooling options like ice or a generator in case of power outages.

Security: Ensure the cellar is secure to prevent unauthorized access and theft.

Record Keeping: Keep records of what you store, when it was stored, and its condition to manage inventory effectively.

Produce Selection: Store only high-quality, disease-free produce to prevent the spread of spoilage.

Regular Ventilation Checks: Check vents and airflow regularly to prevent the buildup of harmful gases.

Emergency Supplies: Store essential emergency supplies in the cellar, like bottled water and non-perishable food.

Regular Maintenance: Perform routine maintenance to ensure the cellar remains in good working condition.

When the electricity goes out an old-fashioned root cellar can save your supplies.