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Karina Kramer

Month of May for education and awareness of environmental sensitivities/multiple chemical sensitivities

The Environmental Working Group's 2021 Dirty Dozen List

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) is a widely known organization that has an eminent guide to pesticides and produce. More specifically, the group takes in data from tests conducted by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and then categorizes produce into a list titled "Dirty Dozen,"



which ranks the twelve top produce items that contain the most pesticide residues, or alternatively the "Clean Fifteen," which ranks fifteen produce items that are contaminated with the least amount of pesticide residues.

The USDA conducts tests on produce samples to see their level of pesticide residue after they have been washed, and – if applicable – peeled. Despite preparing these vegetables and fruits, there are still traces of pesticide residues. It is a common misconception that if vegetables and fruits are washed and peeled the pesticide residues will disappear down the drain along with the water. The EWG is proving that this is not the case, and that in fact preparing our produce items does not do much in eliminating pesticide residue.





The EWG has recently released their 2021 Dirty Dozen list, and this year strawberries, spinach and kale – with a few other produce which will be revealed shortly – are listed at the top of the list. This year's ranking is similar to the 2020 Dirty Dozen list, with the few differences being that collards and mustard greens have joined kale at number three on the list. Other changes include peaches and cherries, which having been listed subsequently as seventh and eighth on the 2020 list, have now been flipped; the introduction – which the EWG has said is the first time ever – of bell and hot peppers into the 2021 list; and the departure of potatoes from the twelfth spot.

1. Strawberries
2. Spinach
3. Kale, collards and mustard greens
4. Nectarines
5. Apples
6. Grapes
7. Cherries
8. Peaches
9. Pears
10. Bell and hot peppers
11. Celery
12. Tomatoes

Comparatively, and on a good note, the 2021 Clean Fifteen list contains the following produce items:

1. Avocados
2. Sweet corn
3. Pineapple
4. Onions
5. Papaya
6. Sweet peas (frozen)
7. Eggplant
8. Asparagus
9. Broccoli
10. Cabbage
11. Kiwi



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12. Cauliflower
13. Mushrooms
14. Honeydew melon
15. Cantaloupe

These lists are created to help keep the public informed on their potential exposures to pesticides, which then allows for better and healthier food choices to be made.

In a statement, EWG toxicologist Thomas Galligan said that they “urge consumers who are concerned about their pesticide intake to consider, when possible, purchasing organically grown versions of the foods on EWG’s Dirty Dozen, or conventional produce from our Clean Fifteen.”

This is the advice that ASEQ-EHAQ also recommends. Stay clear of the dirty dozen by opting for their organic versions, and always be mindful of what you are eating and how it was grown. Try to eat organic as much as possible – whether it is on the list, or not. Make organic food your priority – as an important health measure. Consume locally grown organic vegetables and freeze or preserve them for the winter.

Happy Spring from ASEQ-EHAQ!