



Consumerism during *shemita*

Every year we should try to buy fruits and vegetables only from stores with *kashrut* certification and during the *shemita* year much more so. When you don't know the source of fruits or vegetables, keep two things in mind:

✗ **The *sefichin* prohibition** – *Chazal* forbid eating vegetables that began growing during the *shemita* year. Vegetables sold in the market without *kashrut* certification could be forbidden to eat due to *sefichin*.

✓ ***Kedushat shevi'it*** – Fruits and vegetables that have *kedushat shevi'it* (*shemita* sanctity) should be handled as such and it is forbidden to buy or sell them.

If you received fruits or vegetables and don't know their source, refer to the *shemita* calendars on the Torah VeHa'aretz website: if during this time of the year, vegetables might be *sefichin*, they should not be eaten. Fruits and vegetables that at this point generally have *kedushat shevi'it* should be handled as such.

What will be in the supermarket?

During the *shemita* year it is forbidden to work the ground as usual and grow fruits and vegetables like any other year. To supply produce to the general produce in Israel, there are several solutions. Consumers have several options to buy their groceries:

Stores with various *Badatz* certifications

These stores sell produce imported from abroad or *yivul nochri*, produce grown in fields of non-Jews in the Land of Israel. This does not support Jewish farmers in Israel or our stronghold on the Land of Israel.



Stores with regular *kashrut* certification

These stores sell various types of produce: imports, *yivul nochri*, and produce from Jewishly-owned fields sold to non-Jews through *heter mechirah*.

Otzar Ha'aretz stores

Otzar Ha'aretz is a unique initiative to sell the most preferable produce during the *shemita* year. This program brings consumers fruits and vegetables grown by Jews, based on the most optimal halachic ranking during the *shemita* year.



- 1 Otzar beit din.** Fruits and vegetables that grow in fields where *shemita* laws are observed in full. It is preferable to buy such produce since (1) it has *kedushat shevi'it* and (2) in this way we support *shemita*-observant farmers.
- 2 Sixth-year produce.** Fruits and vegetables grown during the 6th year and stored in refrigerators. This produce does not have *kedushat shevi'it*.
- 3 Detached platforms.** Vegetables that grew in hot houses on platforms detached from the soil. These vegetables do not have *kedushat shevi'it*.
- 4 Aravah / Olei Mitzrayim.** Vegetables that grew in southern Israel in these areas the laws of *shemita* are less strict. Vegetables grown there at the beginning of *shemita* have *kedushat shevi'it* while those that grow during *shemita* rely on *heter mechirah lechumra* and don't have *kedushat shevi'it*.

When purchasing produce in Otzar Ha'aretz stores, look at the signs on the produce. If the produce is from *otzar beit din* it has *kedushat shevi'it*; if the produce is from other sources, it does not. Produce from *otzar beit din* should not be purchased at greater quantities than the amount purchased for average weekly groceries and should be handled as sacred.

Ready-made food during *shemita* (restaurants, catering)

Besides all of the other *kashrut*-related details, check out the sources of fruits and vegetables. Most businesses with a *mehadrin* certification use *yivul nochri* or imports. Most businesses with regular *kashrut* certification use *heter mechirah* produce.

Buying flowers

During *shemita*, only buy bouquets from stores that keep the laws of *shemita* and whose flowers were not planted during *shemita*.