

Squash

Ancient members of the Cucurbita family, both winter and summer varieties provide the home garden with sometimes unusual shapes and an array of color and texture.

PLANTING: Squash like to keep their roots undisturbed, so gently set transplants out in a compost-rich medium when the soil temperature has settled between 65-75°. Space 1-2 feet apart

CULTURE: Keep squash in full sun and mulch around plant when the weather has become hot to conserve heat and moisture. Make sure the soil is well-drained to ensure the plants don't rot from a waterlogged bed. Plants have both male and female flowers and require bees to pollinate. Planting flowers nearby that are attractive to bees can help ensure good pollination which equals good, consistent yields.

FERTILIZING: A good organic fertilizer mixed into the soil before planting will keep squash happy. Supplement throughout growing season with a liquid fish and/or kelp emulsion.

HARVESTING: Start harvesting summer squash when they are still young for optimum tenderness. Harvest winter squash, leaving an inch of dried stem, before the first fall frost.

STORAGE: Before storing winter squash, let fruit sit in the sun for about a week to cure before being placed in a cool, dry place for the cold season.

CAUTION: Squash are susceptible to some bacterial, viral and fungal viruses especially in our rainy region. Look for resistant varieties.