

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

From Seed to Harvest: A beginner's guide to growing squash

Squash is a very versatile plant to grow, with many different options for the home garden. Squash is an easy plant with high yields and comes in many different varieties. Winter squashes such as acorn, delicata and butternut can be used in dishes or even for decoration as a centerpiece of a table.

To plant:

Squash grow well in mounds, so hill up some soil and plant three to five seeds per mound. Plant seeds 1 inch deep in mounds set 4 feet apart after all danger of frost has passed. Squash can be started indoors three to four weeks before the last frost date. Squash also grow well in pots or buckets. A 5- or 10-gallon bucket is large enough.

To grow:

Once seedlings occur, thin to two or three per mound. Squash grow best in full sun so, if possible, plant on a south or southeast facing slope. Water at least 1 inch a week. Squash do best when in soil with a pH of 6.0 to 6.7. To deter weeds, a light layer of mulch can be applied but squash is a sprawling plant that usually doesn't fall victim to weeds. Mulching also can help retain moisture.

To harvest:

Summer squash varieties like zucchini and yellow squash can be harvested when they are young and tender or you can wait until they reach their full size, which is generally 6 to 8 inches long. Zucchini will have a healthy sheen to its green skin. Winter squash like acorn, delicata or butternut squashes are ready to harvest when their outer rind resists



[Early Butternut Squash seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

puncture by a fingernail.

To harvest, use pruning shears or scissors to snip the squash from the vine. Do not try to pull or twist the squash off the plant, as it may cause damage to the squash and the plant. Harvest frequently, as the more you harvest the more squash will grow. If a squash becomes overripe, remove it from the plant to continue encouraging more yields. Squash blossoms are also edible. Pick the first blooms that appear, as those are the males and if picked, they will not affect plant yields later in the season. Remove the interior of the blossom and add the petals to salads.

What squash craves:

Squash plants have high yields, making them a heavy feeder. To encourage squash growth, it is important to fertilize prior to planting the seeds and during its growing season as well. Prior to planting seeds, mix up to 3 inches of compost into the soil where



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you plan to plant the seeds. Instead of composting, you can use a 5-10-10 fertilizer and spread 1 tablespoon per mound prior to planting. Throughout the squash's growing season, use the 5-10-10 fertilizer monthly.

Where to buy squash seeds:

Urban Farmer sells many varieties of squash – both winter and summer squashes such as zucchini, yellow squash, acorn, butternut, even small scallop squashes and more. Check out our website at ufseeds.com!



Scallop Blend Squash seeds
available at ufseeds.com



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