

Squash - Summer

Early Yellow Crookneck *Cucurbita pepo*

Family: Cucurbitaceae (Gourd family) Includes melons, watermelon, gourds, pumpkins, and squash.

Native: North America

General Squash Information: Squash can be classified into two major types, winter and summer. **Summer Squash:** Includes zucchini and crookneck types. Soft, tender. Eaten skin and all. Harvested before maturity. Doesn't taste as good after storage as winter types. Plants grow in bush shape. Generally steamed, sauteed, or grilled. **Winter Squash:** Includes butternut, acorn, and buttercup types. When mature, hard, inedible outer shell, very richly flavored, sweet tasting flesh. Harvested at maturity, after first light fall frost. Stores very well up to several months. Long, sprawling vines (except for bush types). Generally baked. Another type of squash is **Pumpkins** which grows under conditions similar to winter and summer squash. Often under used as a food source, pumpkin flavor is delicious in soups, casseroles, muffins, and pies.

Hardiness: Annual, warm season. Very frost sensitive.

Variety Information: Compact vines are 2' tall, 4' - 6' wide. Squash is smooth, light-yellow skin with white flesh, curved neck, 6" long or less.

When to Plant: **CUESA:** Spring, 2-4 weeks

after average last frost and when soil temperatures have risen above 60 degrees.

Notes: Not recommended. In very short season climates, 3-4 weeks before last frost. Sow in individual pots for direct planting.

Optimal Growing Conditions: **Soil:** Must be well drained and rich in organic material. **Water:** Keep evenly moist. **Exposure:** Full sun.

Fertilizer: Squash are heavy feeders. Incorporate into the soil before planting 2.5 pounds of 10-10-10 fertilizer per 100 square feet. A light application every 4 weeks is recommended.

Companion Planting: Old time gardeners recommend squash be planted with beans, corn, sunflowers, marigolds, nasturtiums, radishes, or mint. Keep away from potatoes.

Special Growing Instructions: > Floating row covers are highly recommended for squash during the early days of their lives. Not only do they warm up the soil, but they also protect the young plants from squash vine borer and cucumber beetles. Plants will outgrow their vulnerability to these insects. > When young, keep planted area free of weeds. Plant will eventually shade out any weeds.

Special Sowing & Germination Instructions: Seeding into a black plastic mulch is HIGHLY recommended because it 1) keeps down weeds, 2) traps moisture, 3) warms the soil.

Harvesting - How to & when to: Harvest as soon as squash reaches at least 1" in length (baby vegetable) and up to 4" to 7" in length. Squash get pithy when they get too big; squash are most tender and flavorful before maturity when young. If allowed to mature, squash are 8" - 10" long, orange, and bumpy, warty skin.

How to Store: **Fresh:** Does not store well fresh. Best to eat as much as you possibly can during the summer and anticipate the next spring while hibernating during the winter. Can be canned or frozen.

How to Cook: Can be cooked in any number of ways including boiled, microwaved, sauteed, grilled, or baked. Cook until you can pierce it with a fork.

Recipe: Oven Onions: Slice 1 pound of squash into 1/2" slices. Sauté with 1 small coarsely chopped onion. **Hot Tomatoes:** Boil squash for 3-5 minutes. Add chopped fresh tomatoes to squash after it is done. **Judy's Squash Delight:** Slice 4 crookneck or zucchini squash and mix with 2 cups of tomato pasta sauce and 1 cup Italian bread crumbs. Top with jack cheese and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Kids love it!

Quality You Can Grow With! Botanical Interest's seed is of top quality and fully guaranteed. If you have a problem with your seed, please write us! Botanical Interests, 11324 Boulder, CO. 80301.



Seeding

Date Seed Planted:

(Write in date)

Days to Maturity: 52

Artist: Donna Clement of Longmont, Colorado is a graduate of the School of Visual Arts, NYC. Her work includes set design, scenic art, murals, paintings, and graphic arts. Donna is an advanced master gardener. Hobbies include scuba, motorcycling, and Star Trek. "Live Long and Prosper!"

Your last day of frost.

The last day of frost (32 degrees or less) is defined as "the first day on which there is less than a 50% chance a frost will occur." This information is crucial when planting a garden. To find out your last day of frost, call your local independent garden center or your **COUNTY** Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service. Also inquire about the average date of the first fall frost.