

Fertilization: After the vines develop runners, side dress with a nitrogen fertilizer (34-0-0) using 1-2 tablespoons per plant or mound. Incorporate the fertilizer at least 6 inches away from the plant.

Problems

Weeds: Plastic and organic mulches effectively control weeds. Hand weeding is needed to control weeds within the row. Heavy vine growth by pumpkins will also smother weeds..

Insects and Diseases:

Insect	Identification	Control
Aphids	Green or black soft-bodied insects that feed on underside of leaves. Leaves become crinkled and curled. May transmit virus diseases. Secreted honeydew makes plants appear shiny, wet, or sticky.	Use insecticidal soaps or strong water stream to dislodge insects.
Squash Bugs	Adults are gray or brown and 5/8 inch long. Adults and immature forms suck the sap from leaves leaving them speckled before they wither and die.	Trap adults under boards, check each morning and kill pests. Hand pick adults, immatures and eggs off leaves.
Cucumber Beetles	Adults have stripes or spots and feed on leaves and vines which reduces vigor. May transmit bacterial disease. Larvae bore into roots and stems causing plants to wilt and die.	Application of chemicals at first appearance is needed to control this pest.
Disease	Symptom	Control
Powdery Mildew	White fungal patches start on older leaves. The disease eventually spreads to all plant parts. The foliage dies, exposing fruits to the sun, which causes premature ripening.	Plant resistant varieties.
Wilt Diseases	Leaves wilt on one or more vines. Plants often die. Streaking, slime formation, or gummy exudates visible on stems. Diseases are caused by different pathogens.	Identify causal disease. Treat disease as recommended once identified.
Virus	Leaves are light green, mottled, malformed, dwarfed and curled. Early infection affects fruit shape and flavor. An aphid transmitted disease.	Control aphids. Destroy severely infected plants.

Harvest and Storage

Pumpkins take 45-55 days to mature after flowering. Pumpkins are mature when they are fully colored, when the vine begins to die back, and when the rind is hard and impervious to scratching from a fingernail. Mature fruits should be harvested with the stem attached and stored where they will not freeze.

Productivity

Plant 1-2 hills per person for fresh use. Expect 25-50 fruits per 100 feet of row depending on variety and fruit size.

Frequently Asked Questions

•**How can I grow pumpkins that weigh more than 100 pounds?** First, you need to plant a variety that produces very large fruits. Allow at least 100 square feet of garden space per hill. Plant 6-8 seeds per hill and later thin to the best one or two plants. After flowering starts, remove the first two or three female flowers to keep the plants growing more leaf are before setting fruit. Allow a single fruit to develop and pick off all remaining female flowers that form on the plant. Keep the soil well watered and feed the plant regularly. Control all insects and disease. By keeping the stresses to a minimum, the plant can then put all of its growth into the development of the large fruit.

•**Do pumpkins, squash and gourds cross-pollinate with each other?** Pumpkins, squash and gourds are members of the botanical genus classification of Cucurbita. The varieties within the same botanical species can cross-pollinate. Varieties from different species generally do not. For example, zucchini can cross with pumpkin, acorn or spaghetti squash because they are all members of the same botanical species (*Cucurbita pepo*). Cross-pollination does not affect the taste, shape or color of the current season's fruit. However, if you save your own seed from these fruits, you may see oddities the next year. Since bees carry pollen for many miles, pollinate fruits by hand then bag the flowers to make sure out crossing with a different variety doesn't happen.