

Problems

Weeds: Plastic and organic mulches effectively control weeds. Hand weeding is often used to control weeds in other areas. Heavy vine growth by squash 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

Summer squash take 35-45 days to come into flowering. Summer squash are generally harvested immature (3-5 days after the flower opens). If left on the vine longer, the skin begins to toughen and quality decreases. Handle carefully as the fruits bruise easily. Store at 45-55°F for 2-4 days. Winter squash take 45-55 days to mature from flowering. Use the following guide to determine maturity. Squash are mature when fruits are fully colored, when vines begin 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 in cool (50-55°F), dry conditions. Check fruits monthly for softening and rots. Buttercup and banana squash store longer than butternut and acorn squash.

Productivity

Plant 1-3 hills per person for fresh use and an additional 1-3 hills for storage, canning and freezing. Expect 100-150 lbs per 100 feet of row.

Nutrition

Winter squash are a good source of complex carbohydrates (sugar and starch), fiber and are rich in potassium, niacin, iron and beta carotene (Vitamin A). Because summer squash is eaten immature, they are considerably lower in nutritional value than winter squash. A cup of cooked or raw squash is considered a serving size.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Why don't the first flowers that open on my pumpkins form fruits?** This condition is natural for cucurbits (cucumbers, melons, pumpkins, and squash). The first flowers are almost always male. Female flowers will have small fruits behind the flowers. By producing male flower first, the likelihood of getting the female flowers pollinated by bees is greatly improved.

- **I have vine borers in my squash. Can I control them with insecticides?** Vine borers cannot be controlled effectively with insecticides. Reduce future damage by disposing of infested plants. You can achieve some control by carefully splitting open the stem and removing the larvae or use a long needle to stab the larvae through the stem.

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