



Squash

Sally Jacobsen, UMN Extension Crow Wing County Master Gardener Volunteer

Summer and winter squash are popular and easy to grow in home gardens. They are members of the cucurbit family, which also includes melons, gourds, and cucumbers. Summer squash can be quite prolific and can be eaten in salads, stir-fries, or cooked. Winter squash can be baked, steamed or boiled.



Plant Requirements

Sun	Full Sun - at least six to eight hours of sun daily
Soil	Medium-textured, well-drained, weed free soil with a pH 6.0-6.5 which is slightly acidic
Soil Temp	At least 70 degrees, will not germinate in cold soil
Placement	Give the plants plenty of space. Allow 2-3 feet between plants. Vining plants may need up to 5-6 feet.

Plant Selection

Type	Characteristics
Summer- Zucchini, Straightneck, Crookneck, Scallop	Soft skinned, can be stored for 1 to 2 weeks
Winter- Hubbard, Buttercup, Butternut, Acorn, Spaghetti	Hard rinds, can be stored in a cool, dry location for 1 to 6 months. Various shapes and colors

Planting Recommendations

Sow seed directly in garden in early June. Make a small “hill” and plant 3-4 seed in each hill about ½” deep.

Maintenance

Watering - Squash plants like lots of water. Soak thoroughly, at least 1” of water a week, but more if the soil is sandy.

Problems and Pests-There are several pests and diseases that can be a problem for squash plants, including squash bugs, squash vine borers and powdery mildew.

For more information, see <https://extension.umn.edu/plant-diseases/insects-and-diseases-cucumber-pumpkin-and-squash>.



Harvest

Summer Squash

- Best picked when they are about 10” long or shorter.
- Squash blossoms are edible too, and should be harvested the day they open.
- With regular harvest, the plants should continue to produce until the first frost.

Winter Squash

- Winter squash takes much longer to mature.
- They should be picked before a hard freeze.
- Cut the fruit from the vine, leaving a few inches of stem attached.
- You can field-cure them by leaving them in the field for a week or two in dry, sunny weather.
- Move them inside to a cool place if it's too cold or rainy.

Storage

- Store summer squash in a refrigerator and use within two weeks.
- Winter squash should be stored in a cool but not cold place, ideally about 55 degrees F.
- You can preserve winter squash by freezing mashed squash or canning cubes in a pressure canner.

Visit us at crowingmastergardeners.org, on Facebook [@CWCMasterGardeners](https://www.facebook.com/CWCMasterGardeners) and on Instagram [@cwcmastergardener](https://www.instagram.com/cwcmastergardener).

Roasted Butternut Squash

Ingredients:

1 squash	3 tablespoons melted butter
1 tablespoon brown sugar	1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon salt	

Instructions:

1. Peel squash with a vegetable peeler. Cut in half, remove seeds and cut into cubes
2. Place on parchment lined baking sheet
3. Mix remaining ingredients together, pour over squash and stir.
4. Roast in 400-degree oven for 25-30 minutes-stirring after 15 minutes