

Squash (Summer)



Sun: Plant in full sun (6 to 8 hours). Space 15 to 24 inches apart within rows or 1 plant per 5- to 7-gallon container. Plant April through July after any danger of frost has passed.

Soil: Amend with organic matter to create well-drained soil. Avoid planting in unamended sandy or heavy clay soils. If a soil test shows pH is below 6.2, apply lime in early spring and as recommended. If the pH level is above 6.2, apply a pH-neutral calcium supplement, such as gypsum. Add ¼ cup gypsum per plant to prevent blossom-end rot.

If growing in a container garden, amend each pot with ¼ cup gypsum. For proper drainage, use potting mix and ensure that containers have drainage holes. You could also use self-watering containers.

Water: Keep soil consistently moist, but not saturated. Apply approximately 1 to 2 inches of water each week and more during hot summer days. Keep leaves dry to prevent fungal diseases. Mulch helps retain moisture.

Plant: Direct sow seeds 1 inch deep and 24 inches apart. When sprouts are 4 to 5 inches tall, thin plants to 12 inches apart. Plants will not grow well or produce if overcrowded. Transplants are not recommended.

Fertilize: In you don't have a soil test, apply all-purpose fertilizer (8-8-8 or 10-10-10) at planting and according to label directions. Reapply beside plants, 4 to 6 inches from stem (side-dress), when plants are 8 to 10 inches tall.

Insects/Diseases/Weeds: Scout plants frequently for insect and disease damage. Use insecticidal soap (for soft-bodied insects) or Bt dust or spray (for caterpillars, also known as "worms"). Spray fungicide regularly to suppress common fungal diseases. Always follow label instructions. Mulch inhibits weeds and diseases.

Harvest: Harvest at 35 to 40 days. Harvest time varies depending on the variety.

Other: Summer squash are large plants and are usually planted in raised hills, 15 to 36 inches apart (if space allows, 36 to 48 inches apart is optimal) to ensure good soil drainage. Visit www.aces.edu/go/growmore for more information.

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