

# Gourmet Vegetables

# Summer Squash

(Cucurbita spp)



## DESCRIPTION

Squash ranks as one the easiest vegetables to grow and is the perfect vegetable for novice gardeners with their training wheels on! Summer squash have edible skins and seeds and should be harvested when the rind is still soft and has a shiny or glossy appearance. They grow on bushy plants that produce large yields. Unlike winter squash, summer squash are very perishable and only have a 1 - 2 weeks shelf life. Varieties of the summer squash include:

**'Eight Ball'** Has very productive vines and is known as a fantastic stuffer. This fruit is a dark green color and when cut in half makes an excellent single-serve bowl.

**'Sundance'** Is excellent for canning and freezing. Plants produce large yields of crookneck type zucchini.

**'White Scallop'** Comes in three different colors; yellow, white and green and are well known for their tiny size (2-3 in / 5.1-7.6 cm). The fruit is fairly flat and round in appearance with scalloped edges.

**'Golden Patio'** Also known as zucchini and courgette. Compact bush habit, ideal for patio container. 52 days

**'Sunburst Pattypan'** Glossy gold scalloped 3-6in/7.6-15cm wide,

Feed the Family

tender buttery flavor, compact, bushy, high yield, 55 days

**'Romanesco'** distinctive ribbed, striped, gray-green fruit, nutty delicious taste raw or cooked, 52 days.

**'Cocozelle'** Perfect for small-space gardens, this bush-form plant takes off early and begins setting fruit abundantly. Dark green with lighter green stripes.



## USES

Nutritionally, squash are an excellent source of Vitamin C and provide some protein and fibre as well as a range of vitamins and minerals.



Their high water content (91%) makes them a very low kilojoule vegetable. Stir-frying or sautéing is the best method of cooking because steaming and microwaving will emphasize their high water content.



## GROWTH

Traditional gardening folklore says that radishes planted among squash will repel a wide range of pests. Squash ranks as one of the most productive members of the vegetable patch so don't go overboard with your planting! Six plants will be plenty for a family of four.



## CULTIVATION

The time to plant squash is after all frosts have passed. They should be grown in full sun and where the soil is well drained and moderately fertile. Plant seedlings in hills spaced 3-4 ft/ 90-100 cm apart and about 2.5 cm/1 in deep with two plants per hill. Feed every two weeks with compost tea or seaweed extract. Once flowering, it will only take about 8 days for the vegetable to be ready for harvest. You can start picking as soon as they're about 6 in/15 cm long and when the vegetables rind is quite hard.



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