



Summer Squash

Produced by:



— THE LAND —
CONNECTION

When to Plant Seeds:

Plant seeds indoors in late April/early May

When to Plant Starts or Seedlings Outdoors:

June 1, using plants that are at least 3-4 weeks old

Container Size for Container Gardening:

Use a 8-10 gallon container that is approximately 12-14 inches wide and 16 inches deep

Ground Spacing for In-Ground Gardening:

18-24 inches of space between plants

Hours of Sunlight: 12+ per day

Amount of Water: 9-12 cups per week

Harvest:

Days Until Harvest: 35-45 days from planting outdoors

Watch for flowers on the plant to find squash/zucchini. You do not have to wait for the squash/zucchini to ripen and can eat the fruit at any point, but once it reaches full size, it will quickly begin to rot. Check your seed packet for the length of full size fruit. Once a plant begins producing squash/zucchini, check every day and harvest regularly to encourage the plant to produce more fruit. Wear long sleeves and gloves to avoid irritation from prickly plants. Use a knife or scissors to cut squash/zucchini from the plant. Wash before eating.



The information provided in this card is not exact for every growing experience and was designed for Champaign, Illinois in Zone 5b. You should read your seed packet or consult your local Extension agent for questions specific to your growing conditions.

Planting:

Plant seeds in 2-inch square by 3-inch deep containers with potting soil or seed starting mix. The containers should be made from compressed paper, coir, or peat because squash/zucchini do not like having their roots disrupted. Entire containers should be planted when the time comes. Seeds should be planted 1/4 inch below the soil and kept damp and warm (86 degrees Fahrenheit) until plants appear. After the danger of frost has passed, overnight temperatures are around 50 degrees, and plants are 3-4 weeks old, you can plant in ground 18-24 inches apart or one plant per 12-inch wide by 16-inch deep container.

Care:

Keep the area around the plant free of weeds. Use a liquid fertilizer 4 weeks after growing begins. Give plants a little water every 3-4 days, either from rain or faucet, trying to maintain about 9-12 cups of water per week. Water plants in the morning, if possible, since plants produce nutrients during the day and need water to do this. Squash/zucchini can be trellised to keep them off the ground and make it easier to harvest.

Pests & Disease:

Cucumber beetles and squash bugs are the main pests of concern. To prevent the bugs, use a fabric row cover until flowering begins. This allows the plant to grow big enough that it can survive damage from the bugs. Removal of the fabric is also important for the squash/zucchini to be pollinated. Many diseases can be managed by providing fertilizer and water regularly, having good airflow without overcrowded plants, and keeping water off of the leaves.