

HOME HORTICULTURE

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MICHIGAN STATE
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Michigan
Groundwater
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Program

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Information Packet was Compiled from the Michigan State University Home Horticulture Database.

Squash

Summer squash are harvested and eaten while immature, while winter squash mature before being used or stored. Squash grow best in full sun and on loam soil high in organic matter. Squash are usually planted in hills near the end of May. Plant seed 1 to 1 1/2 inches deep. Plant 4 seed per hill then pull out all but the strongest two seedlings. Space summer squash hills 3 to 4 feet apart with hills of winter squash 4 to 5 feet apart. Use one large teaspoon of 5-10-5 fertilizer per hill, at planting time. Fertilize again, with 1 cup of fertilizer per 25 feet of area covered by the vines, at fruit set. Some vines may be cut off but allow fruit to set, then cut off the vine beyond the last fruit.

Harvest immature summer squash while a thumbnail easily punctures the rind. Zucchini and crooknecks should be 6 to 8 inches long and 3 inches in diameter. Scalloped or patty pan squash are harvested when grayish or greenish white but before they turn ivory. Harvest spaghetti squash when the rind turns golden yellow. Banana squash is harvested when golden orange.

Winter squash ripen on the vine and develop their characteristic color before harvesting. When ready, the rind is hard enough to resist puncturing by a thumbnail. Harvest before hard freezes, take 2 to 3 inches of stem and avoid bruising the fruit. Squash harvested with a stem left attached store best.

The first blossoms are male so incapable of setting fruit. If after a few days fruit are not being set, the problem may be lack of pollination.

Squash Facts

Availability: August through mid October (summer squash)

October through November (winter squash)

Days to Maturity: 50 to 60 days for summer squash and 85 to 100 days for winter squash.

Approximate Yield/10 feed of row: 15 pounds for summer squash and 10 pounds for winter squash.

Per Person Requirements: Fresh: 2 to 3 hills for summer and 1 to 3 hills for winter squash.

Preservation: 2 to 3 hills for summer squash and 1 to 3 hills for winter squash.

Weights:

Summer Squash:	1 pound = 2 cups, 1 lug = 25 pounds, 20 to 25 pints frozen or 8 quarts canned 1 bushel = 40 pounds, 32 to 40 pints frozen or 13 quarts canned 1-1 1/4 pound fresh = 1 pint frozen 3 pounds fresh = 1 quart canned
Winter Squash:	1 pound = 1 1/3 cup, cooked 1 1/2 pound fresh = 1 pint frozen, approximate 2 1/2-3 pounds fresh = 1 quart canned, approximate

Pumpkin, Squash Insects

Squash Vine Borer

The squash vine borer larva is a white worm that bores into and tunnels squash stems. Infested vines wilt.

Seed Corn Maggot

The maggots attack seed before or at germination.

Spotted Cucumber Beetle

The adults are yellow or yellowish green beetles with 12 black spots on the back. The adults feed on young plants and the larvae feed on roots. High populations may stunt the plants.

Striped Cucumber Beetles

The adults are yellow with black stripes and the injury is similar to spotted cucumber beetle. Striped cucumber beetles may dig to get emerging shoots. This insect carries bacterial wilt.

Aphids

The feeding of dark bluish green aphids causes leaves to curl downwards. Plants may be stunted. The insect carries mosaic and may infect plants it feeds on.

Thrips

Thrips are small, cream to brownish insects that rasp the undersides of leaves. The feeding causes deterioration of stressed vines. The damage is worse in dry seasons.

Mites

Mites are tiny insects causing yellow specks and fine webbing on the leaves. Infested plants may be stunted.

Flea Beetle

Black beetles feed on leaves causing small holes or shotholes.

Squash Bug

Adult squash bugs are brownish, flattened and about 5/8 inch long. The nymphs range in color from green, with a red head and legs, to greenish gray with black head and legs. The insect sucks sap from leaves and stems. Plants may wilt and die if heavily infested.

Pumpkin, Squash Diseases

Angular Leaf Spot

Angular leaf spot begins as light brown, angular spots on the leaves. The center later drops out leaving a ragged hole. On fruit, gray, water soaked spots form. The spots crack and produce a crusty tan to white lesion. An amber-colored ooze often seen on the spot. The disease is favored by humid weather, temperatures between 70 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit, and by mechanical or insect injury. Wind, splashing water and insects spread the bacteria.

Scab

Scab produces irregular spots on leaves and stems. The spots have yellow margins and brown center. The center drops out leaving a ragged hole, which is often confused with angular leaf spot injury. On fruit, water-soaked spots form and amber-colored ooze will come from the spots. The fruit spots become dark gray to black and are sunken. Humid, wet weather and temperatures between 60 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit favor the disease. Tools, wind, splashing water and insects spread the disease.

Anthrachnose

Round water-soaked leaf spots form then turn yellow to brown with red margins. The center drops out giving a shotholed appearance. Often, some defoliation occurs. On fruit, a circular dark brown to black sunken lesion forms with pinkish-orange spore masses in the center. Humid wet weather and temperatures between 60 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit favor the disease. Tools, wind, splashing water and insects spread the disease.

Alternaria Leaf Spot

Circular tan spots with concentric circles form on the leaves. Defoliation sometimes occurs. Bright sunshine, frequent dews and showers and temperatures between 60 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit favor the disease. Tools, wind, splashing water and insects spread the disease.

Bacterial Wilt

Infected leaves turn dull green then leaves, branches and the whole plants wilt and die. When the stem is cut and squeezed, sticky, stringy ooze comes out. Cucumber beetles spread the disease. Cucumber beetle migration and feeding is favored by dry weather. Temperatures between 50 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit and frequent dews favor the disease. Keep the cucumber beetles under control.

Powdery Mildew

Powdery mildew causes a white powdery growth on leaves and stems. Infected parts turn yellow, shrivel and plants are defoliated prematurely. The yield is reduced and fruit quality is reduced. Humid weather, frequent dew and temperatures between 70 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit favor the disease.

Cucumber Mosaic

Mosaic causes mottled dark and light green, crinkled leaves, with symptoms most noticeable on young leaves. Old leaves have V shaped dead areas extending from the leaf margins to the middle vein. The fruit are mottled, warty and misshapen. The disease is favored by poor weed control as many weeds act as hosts to the virus. The disease is spread aphids and cucumber beetles.