

Squash

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Squash is a popular warm-season garden vegetable that grows well in all areas of Texas. Squash plants take up a lot of space, but because they are prolific producers, it takes only a few plants to feed a family and all their neighbors.

🌱 Grow it

Types and Varieties

- There are two types of squash: summer and winter. Both can be grown in the spring and fall. Summer squash have thin skin and a short storage life, whereas winter squash have hard rinds and can be stored for several months. Summer squash have a bush-type growing habit, and most winter squash have a vining growth habit.

Winter:

- **Acorn:** Carnival, Table Queen
- **Butternut:** Waltham

Summer:

- **Yellow Squash:** Dixie, Early Prolific, and Multipik
- **Zucchini:** Ambassador, Aristocrat, Gold Rush
- **Scallop:** Patty Pan, Sunburst

Soil Preparation

- Incorporate 2 to 3 inches of compost into the top 8 to 10 inches of soil.

Planting

- In the spring, plant after all danger of frost has passed. In the fall, plant 12 to 14 weeks before the first freeze date.
- Plant vining types 4 feet apart and bush types 1½ to 2 feet apart. Space rows 3 to 8 feet apart.
- Seeds should be planted 1 inch deep and in groups of five to six. Water seeds after planting.
- After the seeds come up, thin them to three plants per group.

Fertilizing

- Add 2 to 3 tablespoons of 15-5-10 fertilizer for each set of plants. Work it into the top 3 to 4 inches of soil and water the plants.
- When the first blooms appear, place about 2 tablespoons of nitrogen fertilizer (21-0-0) around each group of plants and water them.

Watering

- Water the plants enough to keep them from wilting—usually about an inch per week.

Care During the Season

- Keep squash plants weed-free by hand-pulling weeds.

Insects & Diseases

- Squash can attract insect pests such as squash vine borer, squash bug, and cucumber beetle. For information on controlling pests and diseases, contact your county Extension agent.

Harvesting

- Harvest summer squash when the fruit is small and glossy.
- Harvest winter squash when the skin is hard, and the portion of the fruit touching the soil is cream- to orange-colored.
- Squash is best when cut, not pulled, from the vine.



Sun:
Full



Soil:
Well-drained



Planting:
Warm



Harvest:
Warm



Life Cycle:
Annual



Container
Friendly



Buy it

- Summer squash: Choose a firm, well-developed squash that has glossy skin. Avoid squash with discolored or pitted areas.
- Winter Squash: Choose firm, well-shaped squash that are heavy for their size and have a hard, tough skin. Do not choose those that have cuts in the skin or sunken or moldy spots. Slight variations in skin color do not affect flavor.

Store it

- Summer squash can be stored in the refrigerator for about a week.
- Winter squash can be stored in a cool, dry place for several months.
- For canning and preservation instructions, visit nchfp.uga.edu



Use it

Quinoa Butternut Squash Fall Bake

Course: Side Dish Serves: 6

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. ground turkey, fat free
- 6 cups butternut squash (about 2 whole squash), cubed
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- ¾ cup dry quinoa
- 5 cups spinach leaves
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. ground black pepper
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese reduced fat
- ½ cup dried cranberries

Instructions:

Start with a clean prep area and washed hands.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Cook ground turkey in a skillet on medium heat until done.

On a separate burner, cook quinoa according to the package instructions.

In a separate bowl, combine butternut squash, olive oil, spinach, garlic, Italian seasoning, salt, and ground pepper to a bowl.

Once ground turkey and quinoa are finished, add both ingredients to butternut squash mixture.

Place in oven-safe pan and bake for 55 minutes.

Top dish with Parmesan cheese and cranberries, and serve.

Chicken and Summer Veggies Grilling Pocket

Course: Main Dish Serves: 6

Ingredients

- 1 large red bell pepper sliced into strips
- 1½ cups mushrooms, sliced
- 1 onion thickly sliced
- 2 medium zucchini, sliced
- 1 medium summer squash
- 1½ pound chicken breast, cut into equal-sized cubes
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. oregano dried
- 1 Tbsp. parsley dried
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. paprika

Instructions:

Wash your hands and clean your preparation area. Heat your grill to cook over medium-high heat.

Cut the vegetables as directed. Cut the chicken in to evenly sized cubes.

Combine the olive oil, oregano, parsley, garlic powder, and paprika in a small bowl.

Cut six sheets of foil approximately 12 inches in length each.

Divide the vegetables and chicken evenly among the six sheets of foil. Top each with some of the oil mixture, spreading it over the vegetables and chicken.

Fold the foil so that it creates a sealed pocket.

Grill the foil packets over medium-high heat for 35 to 40 minutes, or until chicken reaches 165°F.

Learn about it

Squash is a good source of vitamins A and C, dietary fiber, folate, and potassium. It is also low in calories, fat, and sodium.