

PLANTING AND GROWING GOURDS

Georgia Gourd Society

WHEN: after the last frost, in GA around the end of April.

WHERE: we love a nice sunny spot during the day, with warm nights.

GOURDS THAT GROW ACROSS THE GROUND: the heavy variety, like large kettles and bushels.

The Nigerian (giant) Bushel Variety grows on the ground, of course; and here's a tip for getting the biggest gourds--as the vines grow, you should eventually find one or two larger gourds in amongst the smaller ones. Go ahead; pick the smaller ones, keeping the large gourds. That way, the nutrients will go straight into the larger one, feeding them so they will grow bigger! As ground gourds grow and mature, it's sometimes wise to place a pallet underneath, to keep rotting to a minimum. Also, it's the easiest way to spray for insects, and it helps the heavy gourds keep a nice uniform shape.

GOURDS THAT CLIMB: the dipper and luffa varieties--also smaller gourds like egg gourds or mini bottles. A trellis, arbor, or a good tree or fence is good; watch us climb! You may need to tie up stray tendrils to help them to grow the direction you prefer.

CARE: we all like some sort of chicken or horse manure; also some kind of veggie fertilizer will help out. When we've grown 8-10 feet long on our main vine, please prune the growing end so the fruit already started will get a good growth on our side branches. After that we can take care of ourselves except for the creepy crawly things that like to eat us; a soapy bath or Sevin dust will help.

HARVESTING AND DRYING: around mid-fall or before the first frost, our vines and stems begin to turn brown and wither. It's safe to remove us from the vine then. When cutting, please leave at least 2" of stem on us so it's easier to handle our bulk weight. We like to air dry, so please place us in a well ventilated place, so we can breathe; up off the ground, on pallets, or anything that can hold our weight. Then let us dry out fully. When our color changes to brown or tan, and seeds rattle when shaken, we're all ready for you to clean and decorate or hang up for the birds.

CLEANING: soak us (when we're completely dried out) in warm soapy water for about 20 minutes; then use a metal pot scrubber and clean us all up. Oooo, that feels great! At times that yucky stuff will be hard to deal with; just use a little chlorine bleach to help that out. Now, we're ALL yours!

Tips from Jan Cash
GGG Gourd Seed Sales