

Pumpkins and Winter Squash at Growing Gardens



Family: Cucurbitaceae

Genus: Cucurbita

Species seen at Growing Gardens: C.pepo, C.maxima, C.moschata

1. Pepo-considered the "true pumpkin," woody and furrowed stem
 - ex. acorn squash, spaghetti squash, moonshine pumpkin, jack-be-little pumpkin, winter luxury pumpkin
2. Maxima-most diverse, fleshy stem
 - ex. buttercup squash, red kuri hubbard squash, sunshine kabocha squash, cinderella pumpkin
3. Moschata-longer/oblong fruits, deeply ridged stem
 - ex. butternut squash

Growing Tips

- Only plant seeds after all danger of frost has passed and the soil has warmed
- Refer to "Days to Maturity" on seed package to ensure plant has enough time to fully mature
- Requires rich and well-drained soil so feel free to use plenty of compost
- Make sure plant receives ample sunshine and good air circulation to prevent powdery mildew
- Use row covers to protect from insects, disease, and harsh sun during first days or weeks
- Thin seedlings by trimming at base of stem (pulling may disturb roots)
- Once blossoms appear, remove row covers and continue regular watering, add compost as needed
- To proactively avoid rot, carefully place a flat rock or wood under small fruits to avoid constant contact with damp soil

Harvesting Tips

- It is generally best to wait until "Days to Maturity" date has been reached
- Harvest when skin becomes very hard and turns a deep, solid color

- Handle carefully to avoid bruising
- Using shears, cut fruit leaving 1-2 inches of stem attached to fruit (breaking stem reduces storage life)
- Use damaged or rotting harvests right away

Cooking Tips

- Eat up! Winter squash especially is an excellent source of dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, and potassium
- Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees
- Rinse under water and scrub until all dirt has been removed
- Winter squash has thick skin, so to avoid any slip-ups, cut stem off to provide a flat surface
- Cut squash in half and remove seeds and stringy pulp (save winter luxury seeds for roasting!)
- Place squash or pumpkin skin side down in baking dish and poke a couple times with a fork
- Bake 45-60 minutes checking periodically
- When it is tender enough that fork goes through thickest part, take out of oven and scrape pulp away from skin
- Find your favorite recipe and get started!

Storing Tips

- Aside from acorn squash which loses quality from curing (only a 5-6 week storage period), pumpkins and winter squash are typically tastier after a small curing period (5-10 days)
- If storage area is cool, dry, and dark, storage of uncooked winter squash and pumpkin can be 2-3 months, with hubbards lasting as long as 5-6 months!
- Store cooked winter squash and pumpkin for 5-7 days in the refrigerator or pack tightly into container or air-tight bags and store in freezer for up to one year

Variety	Species	Description
Moonshine Pumpkin 	C.pepo	Turn green to white as they mature, long, dark-green stem, good for decorating or carving

<p>Winter Luxury Pumpkin</p> 	<p>C.pepo</p>	<p>Light orange, netted skin, one of the best tasting pie pumpkins because it has less water than most varieties</p>
<p>Cinderella Pumpkin</p> 	<p>C.maxima</p>	<p>Also known as "Rouge Vif D'Etampes" because of its bright red or orange color, squat and round shape, an heirloom variety</p>
<p>Jack-be-Little Pumpkin</p> 	<p>C.pepo</p>	<p>Small, flat orange pumpkin suitable for table decoration and perfect for children</p>
<p>Buttercup Squash</p> 	<p>C.maxima</p>	<p>Dark green skin with small button on blossom end, very sweet flavor compared to most winter squash</p>
<p>Butternut Squash</p> 	<p>C.moschata</p>	<p>Light tan/yellow skin with a thick cylinder-shaped neck, sweet and nutty flavor that increases as it matures to deeper yellow/orange</p>
<p>Acorn Squash</p> 	<p>C.pepo</p>	<p>Black/green skin usually with a single orange or yellow spot, distinctive outer ridges forming the acorn shape with a sweet orange pulp</p>

<p>Spaghetti Squash</p> 	<p>C.pepo</p>	<p>Yellow skin, oblong shape, inside can be scraped with a fork after cooking and final product will resemble spaghetti</p>
<p>Sunshine Kabocha Squash</p> 	<p>C.maxima</p>	<p>Kabocha is a Japanese variety of winter squash, sunshine is a first generation, bright orange skin with soft flesh good for baking</p>
<p>Red Kuri Hubbard Squash</p> 	<p>C.maxima</p>	<p>Tear-drop shaped with bright orange skin, a baby hubbard, (hubbard is a cultivar of the C.maxima species) can be light blue-gray</p>

References:

Johnny's Selected Seeds

<http://www.johnnyseeds.com/default.aspx>

North Carolina State University Department of Horticultural Science

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-24-c.html>

University of Florida Horticultural Sciences Department

<http://ne-postharvest.com/hb66/114pumpkin.pdf>

**The Compleat Squash: A Passionate Grower's Guide to Pumpkins, Squash, and Gourds
by Amy Goldman and Victor Schrager**

http://scholar.google.com/scholar?cluster=18121409873319938193&hl=en&as_sdt=4005&scioldt=0.6

One image from Garden.org

<http://www.garden.org/ediblelandscaping/images/201012/winter-squash1.jpg>

