

# EASY GARDENING... SQUASH

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Squash is a popular warm season garden vegetable. Squash will grow well in all Texas areas. Like most vining vegetables, squash grows best in sandy, fertile soils.

## Soil Preparation

Work the soil 8-10 inches deep. Remove rocks and trash, and rake the soil smooth. Work the soil only when it is dry enough not to stick to garden tools.

## Fertilizing

Add 2-3 pounds of fertilizer such as 10-10-10 for each 100 square feet of garden area. If you plan to grow only a few plants, use 2-3 tablespoons of fertilizer for each hill. Scatter the fertilizer evenly over a 2 foot by 2 foot area. Work it into the top 3-4 inches of soil.

## Varieties

### Yellow Squash

Dixie  
Yellow Summer  
Crookneck  
Goldbar  
Slendergold

### Green Squash

Zucco  
Elete  
Zucchini

### Winter Squash

Acorn  
Butternut  
Hubbard  
Buttercup

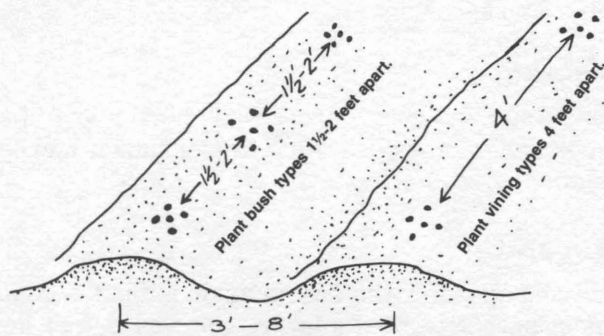


Fig. 1. Plant squash on rows 3-8 feet apart.

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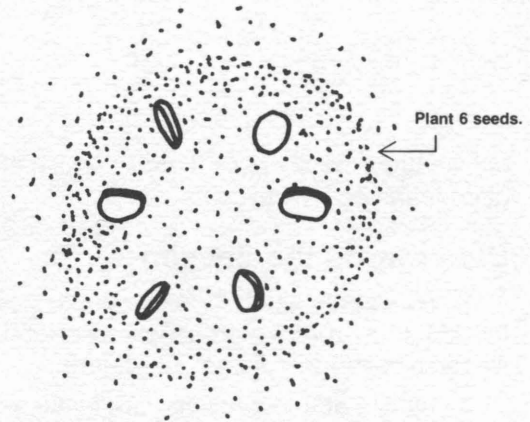


Fig. 2. Plant 5-6 seeds in each squash hill.

## Planting

Squash does not grow well in cool weather. Plant in the spring after all danger of frost has passed. For a good fall crop, plant early so they will mature before the first killing frost.



Fig. 3. When squash plants are 3-4 inches tall, thin to 3 plants per hill.

Plant squash in hills 18-48 inches apart on rows 3-8 feet apart. The vining types, such as hubbard or acorn, need more room than the bush types. See figure 1.

When seeding squash, plant the seeds about 1 inch deep. Plant 5-6 seeds in each hill. See figure 2. Water after planting the seed. After the seeds come up, thin them to three squash plants per hill. See figure 3.

## Watering

Water the plants enough to keep them from wilting. Water them once a week or more often in real

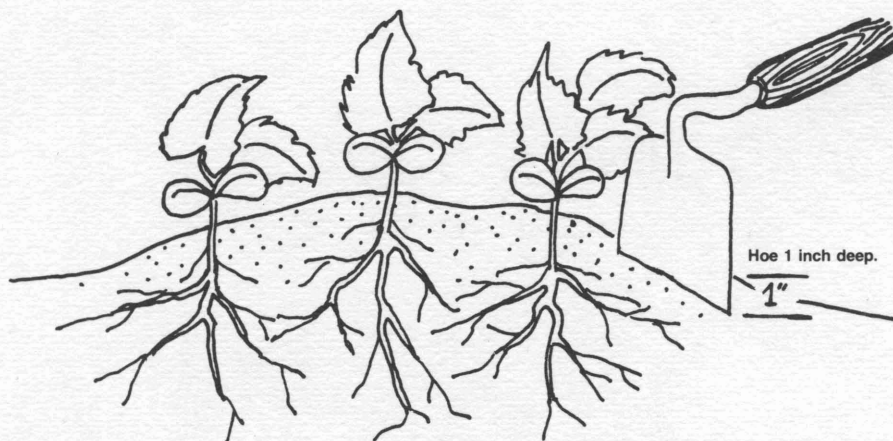


Fig. 4. Be careful when hoeing around squash plants so you will not hurt the roots.

dry weather. Sandy soils need to be watered more often than heavy, clay soils.

### Care During the Season

Keep squash plants free of weeds. Hoe around the plants to remove small weeds. Hand pull the weeds close to the plants. See figure 4.

When the first blooms appear, place about 2 tablespoons of garden fertilizer around each hill. Do not let the fertilizer touch the plants. Water the plants after fertilizing.

### Insects

#### Name and description

Squash Vine Borer: white larva about 1 inch long, usually found inside stem near ground, causes vines to wilt and die

#### Control

Sevin



Squash Bug: large, gray to brownish, flat-back, usually 1/2 to 3/4 inch long

Sevin



### Diseases

Squash can get many diseases, especially when harvesting begins. Spray with an approved fungicide to help control most diseases.

Ask your county Extension agent what to use to control squash insects and diseases. Follow directions on the container.

### Harvesting

Harvest yellow and green (summer) squash when the fruit and seeds are small. Always harvest squash which are ready so the plants will keep producing. Harvest winter (hard rine) squash when they are full sized, the skin is hard and the bottom of the fruits is cream-to-orange colored. A light frost will not damage fruits of winter squash. Squash is best when cut, not pulled, from the vine.

### Serving

Fresh squash adds color and variety to meals.

Green and yellow squash are fair sources of Vitamins A and C. Winter squash is a good source of Vitamin A. It has fair amounts of Vitamin C.

Squash can be served in many ways, from fried dishes to casseroles. Winter squash often is baked. Cook all types of squash only until tender to keep the vitamin content.

### Storing

Green and yellow squash can be stored in the refrigerator for about a week. Winter squash can be stored for several months.

### Clean-Up

Old squash vines should be added to the compost pile or worked into the soil well before the spring planting season.

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