



Harvest of
the Month
at Home

Summer Squash

Did You Know

- Zucchini is the most common variety of summer squash. Other varieties include: pattypan squash, crookneck squash, sunburst squash, yellow squash, chayote squash, and opo squash. Summer squash are harvested in the summer and have thin skins and soft flesh. Winter squash, on the other hand, are harvested later in the season and have thick rinds.
- While most squash varieties were brought from America to Europe, zucchini originated in Italy. Zucchini means "small squash" in Italian.
- Summer squash are members of the Cucurbitaceae (Cucurbit) family, which includes melons, pumpkins, cucumbers, and gourds.
- Summer squash are referred to as vegetables since they are commonly eaten this way, and due to their nutrient make-up, they are included in the vegetable food group. Botanically speaking, summer squash are the immature fruit of the plant.
- Summer squash are a good source of vitamin C and potassium, and contain manganese and vitamin B₆. Manganese plays an essential role in such functions as the formation of bones and healthy skeletons.

Buying Tips

Choose squash that have firm, undamaged, and glossy skin. Large summer squash are often tough and bitter, but they can be used in recipes that call for shredded squash, such as zucchini bread. Usually squash between 4-10 inches have good flavor and are not fibrous. Store summer squash in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to one week. Wash directly before using.

Cooking

Like most vegetables, summer squash are versatile in the kitchen and can be grilled, steamed, eaten raw, and cooked in a variety of other methods. Be careful not to overcook as summer squash can become mushy. Typically, just a few minutes of cooking is sufficient. Add grated zucchini to lasagna, pasta sauces, and baked goods to add nutrients and flavor. Try making a pasta salad with cooked or raw zucchini for a tasty picnic dish or grilled zucchini slices sprinkled with parmesan cheese for an excellent side to BBQ!



Green Zucchini



Yellow Zucchini



Costata Romanesco



Yellow Squash



Pattypan Squash



Cousa Squash



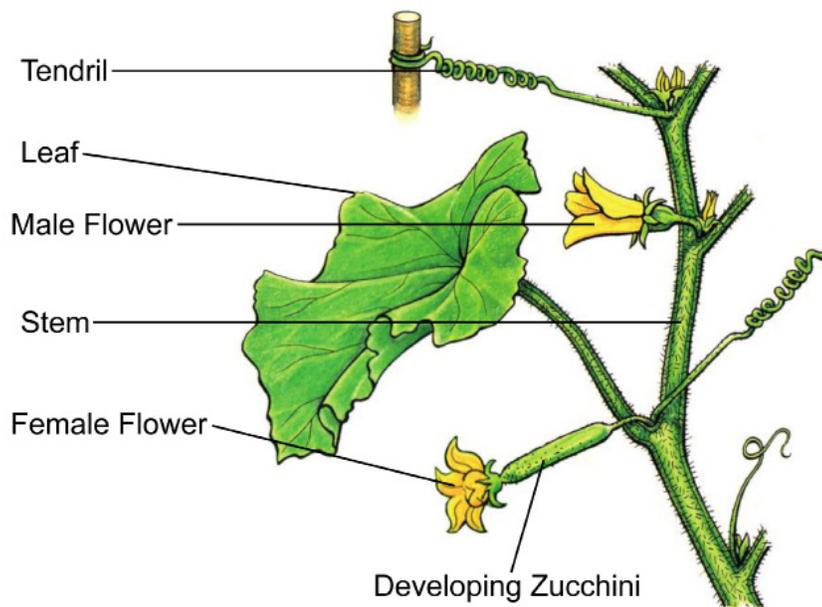
Zephyr Squash



Eight Ball Zucchini

Garden Tips

Summer squash are not a significant part of Montana agriculture, but are widely grown in gardens throughout the state. Direct seed or transplant summer squash 10 weeks before first frost. Summer squash need full sun and plenty of room to grow. Summer squash can be planted in large containers. Good container varieties include Early Yellow Summer Crookneck and Scallopine.



Recipes

Fresh Summer Squash Salad

This no-cook recipe is perfect for using produce from your garden.

Developed by: Morgan Kelly, Montana Dietetic Intern

Servings

4

Ingredients

3 small zucchini, rinsed, thinly sliced into half moons, can use any type or a variety of summer squash

5-6 radishes, rinsed, thinly sliced crosswise

2 carrots, rinsed, thinly sliced crosswise

1 tsp chopped garlic

2 Tbsp lemon juice

2 tsp Dijon mustard

1 Tbsp honey

1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar

Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

1. Wash and prepare all vegetables.
2. In salad bowl, mix garlic, lemon juice, mustard, honey, vinegar, salt, and pepper.
3. Toss in chopped vegetables; stir until all vegetables are coated in dressing.
4. Allow to rest in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes, serve.

Book Nook

Carlos and the Squash Plant,
by Jan Stevens

The Giant Zucchini, Catherine Siracusa

I Heard it from Alice Zucchini, by Juanita Havill



Baked Zucchini Chips

Go beyond the zucchini bread--this is a fun way to eat summer squash!

Source: Skinny Mom Blog

Servings

2

Ingredients

1 small zucchini, thinly sliced

2 tsp extra virgin olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

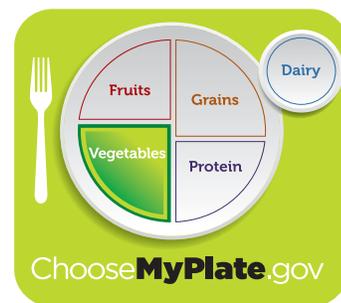
1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Lightly mist one baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. Slice zucchini into 1/8 - 1/4 inch thick rounds. Toss zucchini with olive oil to coat evenly and spread zucchini on baking sheet in a single layer. Sprinkle on salt and pepper.
3. Bake zucchini rounds until browned and crisp, about 25 to 30 minutes, flipping each over halfway through.
4. Check the chips often as cooking times may vary. Rotate the chips around the baking sheet if needed.
5. Once crisp and browned, let cool and store at room temperature. Enjoy the same day for best crunch!



Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit:

mtharvestofthemonth.org



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The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana schools and communities. This program is a collaboration between the Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Organic Association, and FoodCorps Montana. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemonth.org

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