

LEARN

facts



Crookneck

- Spanish translation: *La calabaza de verano* • Hmong translation: *Taub Meskas Me*
- Squash was originally found in Mexico and parts of Central America. People have been eating squash for more than 10,000 years!
- Zucchini is the most popular summer squash grown in Wisconsin. Other types include yellow straightneck, yellow crookneck, Patty pan, and Mexican squash (calabacita).
- Squash is technically a fruit since it flowers and contains seeds. Summer squash is in the same family as melons and cucumbers.
- The skin, seeds, and flesh can all be eaten raw or cooked. Did you know that the bright orange blossoms of the squash plant are edible as well? Serve squash blossoms fried, baked, or added to pasta or quesadillas.
- Squash is classified as either winter or summer squash based on storage length. Summer squash is harvested in the summer and has thin skin, so it cannot be stored fresh for the winter.



Zucchini

EAT

nutrition & seasonality



- **Key nutrients:**
 - Folate** - Helps prevent birth defects, is needed to make DNA, and helps your cells divide, including red blood cells.
 - Vitamin C** - Helps wounds heal, is important for the immune system, and is an antioxidant, which protects cells from damage.
 - Vitamin B6** - Important for immune system and brain function and helps you get energy from your food .
- Fresh summer squash grown in Wisconsin is available from July through September.

TASTE

taste testing



Summer squash can be enjoyed in many ways! Try making raw squash noodles by using a spiralizer or shaving the squash with a vegetable peeler to create squash ribbons. You could also try crispy and crunchy zucchini chips. Very thinly slice a large zucchini into round circles, brush with olive oil, sprinkle with sea salt, and bake at 425 degrees for 20-30 minutes, or until crispy. Encourage kids to use their five senses to observe, smell, feel, listen, and taste summer squash prepared in different ways.



FUN



Nutritious,
Delicious,
Wisconsin!



activity: Summer Squash, A Look Inside

Objective: Kids will explore the inside of summer squash.

Supplies: Several varieties of summer squash, including zucchini, Patty pan, and crookneck, paper plates, a knife and cutting board.

Procedure: Show the kids a couple varieties of summer squash. Cut the squash in half to reveal the inside. Let the kids know they will get to touch the inside if they want a little later. Cut a section of summer squash into small wedges with the peel and seeds intact. On a plate, give each kid a small wedge of squash to look at, touch, and smell. Talk with the kids about the inside of each squash. Ask the following questions:

- What color is the inside of the squash?
- What does the inside of the squash look like?
- How does the inside feel?
- How does the squash smell?
- How are the squashes the same or different from each other?

Follow this activity with a tasting of one or more varieties of summer squash.

— Activity adapted from U.S. Department of Agriculture, Team Nutrition. USDA does not endorse any products, services, or organizations. Provided by FoodWise.

This activity can be done in multiple settings: classroom, outdoors, garden, or virtual.

Tips for adapting to virtual learning: This activity is simple to do in a home environment if kids have access to summer squash. If this is not feasible, provide pictures of different types of summer squash. Share several ways that squash can be prepared, including baked into bread (zucchini bread), hollowed out and roasted with filling (zucchini boats), sliced into thick rounds and topped (mini pizzas), or spiraled into noodles! Ask kids to brainstorm other ways they could get creative in the kitchen with summer squash.

Share pictures and engage with the Wisconsin Harvest of the Month community by using #WIHarvestoftheMonth on social media.

READ



books

- *Carlos and the Squash Plant* by Jan Stevens
- *The Giant Zucchini* by Catherine Siracusa
- *I Heard it from Alice Zucchini* by Juanita Havill
- *Zora's Zucchini* by Katherine Pryor

GARDEN CONNECTION

planting

Summer squash is a tender vegetable that prefers warm weather. Plant seeds in the garden after the threat of frost has passed, from spring to mid-summer. Summer squash need full sun and plenty of room to grow. You can also plant summer squash in large containers.

harvesting

Harvest summer squash when they are small and tender. Most elongated varieties, like zucchini, can be picked when they are 2 inches wide and 6 to 8 inches long. Harvest Patty pan squash when they are 3 to 4 inches wide. If a squash is left on the plant too long, it becomes large, hard, and seedy. Sometimes it is fun to see how large they can grow!