



early childhood

ACTIVITY GUIDE

SUMMER SQUASH

LEARN



facts

- Spanish translation:
La calabaza de verano
- Hmong translation:
Taub Meskas Me
- Zucchini is the most popular summer squash grown in Wisconsin.
- Squash is technically a fruit since it flowers and contains seeds. You can eat squash flowers too!



Crookneck



Zucchini



Zucchini flower

EAT



nutrition & seasonality

- Summer squash has folate. Folate is a B vitamin that our body uses to create new blood cells and keep our blood vessels and heart healthy.

Share with children: Folate is used in our bodies to make new blood cells and keep our heart healthy.

- Fresh summer squash grown in Wisconsin is available from July through September.

TASTE



Nutritious,
Delicious,
Wisconsin!

taste testing

Try making raw squash noodles by using a spiralizer or creating squash ribbons by using a vegetable peeler. Use both green zucchini and yellow summer squash for colorful noodles. Encourage children to use their five senses to observe, smell, feel, listen, and taste summer squash.



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FUN



Supplies:

- Zucchini or Crookneck squash seed packets
- 5- to 6-ounce paper cups, one per child
- Potting soil
- Water for soil in a small spray bottle
- Plastic spoons or scoops, one per child
- Unsharpened pencils, with a line marking ½-inch
- Waterproof pens or markers
- Sunny location and/or fluorescent lights if planning to grow plants indoors

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

activity: Plant a Squash Seed in a Cup

Help the children

- Write their name on their cup.
- Fill their cups about three-quarters full with potting soil using spoons or scoops.
- Gently tap the sides and bottom of their cup with their index finger to settle but not pack the soil.
- Press three holes in the soil spaced inside the cup. Use the marked unsharpened pencil to make holes ½ inch deep.
- Place a seed in each hole and gently cover the seeds with soil.
- Lightly spray water over the top of the soil.

Tell the children

- The seeds will grow in the potting soil the same way plants grow in the earth's soil outside.
- The seeds need soil, water, sun, and time to grow into plants.
- Inside, we can use lights to give plants warmth and light, just as the sun helps outside plants grow.
- The seeds will grow first into very small plants (seedlings), then into larger plants. These larger plants, if planted outside in a garden, will continue to grow with sunlight and water. The squash vegetable will grow from the larger plants.

Have the children set their cups in a sunny spot near a window or under lights. Have the children follow the care instructions on the seed packet and check their cups weekly to see the progress of the seeds growing into plants. Water with a spray bottle as needed.

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



READ



books

- *The Ugly Vegetables* by Grace Lin
- *The Giant Zucchini* by Catherine Siracusa
- *I Heart it from Alice Zucchini* by Juanita Havill
- *Up, Down, and Around* by Katherine Ayers
- *Too Many Zucchini for Zachary Beany* by Tina Dozauer-Ray
- *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!