



# Columbia Nursery

## Growing & Caring for Squash in Northwest Montana

### Types of Squash

Squash comes in two main categories: Summer Squash and Winter Squash. Both are rewarding to grow, but each has specific needs.

Type	Examples	Notes
Summer Squash	Zucchini, Yellow Crookneck	Quick to mature, harvest when small
Winter Squash	Butternut, Acorn, Hubbard	Large vines, longer to mature, stores well

### Summer Squash Care

#### Planting:

- Direct sow after danger of frost, when soil warms to 65°F+.
- Raised beds or large containers work well for bush types.
- Start indoors: For a head start, plant seeds 2–3 weeks early in peat pots and transplant them pot and all.

#### Growing Conditions:

- Sun: Full sun (6+ hours daily).
- Soil: Well-drained, pH 6.0–6.5.

#### Pollination:

- Plants produce both male and female flowers.
- Female flowers have a tiny squash at the base.
- Leave some male flowers for pollination.

#### Harvesting:

- Pick squash when small for best flavor.
- Use a sharp knife to cut fruit from the plant (do not twist or tear).
- Harvest regularly to encourage continued production.



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2–3 plants will provide plenty for a family of four.

## Cold Weather Tips:

- If early summer is cold and wet, delay planting or replant later for a late-season crop.
- Summer squash matures in 50–60 days, so you still have time for harvests.

## Winter Squash Care

### Planting:

- Start seeds 4–6 weeks before the last frost indoors.
- Use peat pots to minimize root disturbance when transplanting.

### Growing Conditions:

- Space: Vines can grow 15 feet or more—allow plenty of room.
- Pollination: Do not harvest blossoms early in the season; wait until several fruits set before removing any new flowers to focus plant energy on maturing squash.

### Mulching & Support:

- Use straw mulch or place wood/plastic under developing squash to prevent soft spots and rot.

### Harvesting:

- Know your variety's expected mature size.
- Squash do not ripen off the vine, so harvest when fully mature.
- Harvest before frost.
- Store in a cool, dry place for long-term keeping (many varieties store for months).

## Need Help?

Visit Columbia Nursery for squash plants, seeds, soil amendments, and expert advice. We'll help you grow a successful squash crop for fresh eating and winter storage!