

Squash

Resources: Keith and Bruce Book—Book Family Farm, Durham, California, Growers for over 20 years

Varieties:

- Acorn—grow a few; sales are not great
- Banana—flavor is good, too large for most customers
- Butternut—sales are steady, this is only for the cooking market, not ornamental.
- Carnival—Small, attractive, good flavor, probably purchased most often as an ornamental
- Delicata—Thin skin very susceptible to rabbit damage
- Hubbard—too Large for most people. Fed most to the pig
- Jarradale—more temperamental, thick hull seems to lead to more erratic germination
- Kakai—hull-less seed, attractive striped fruit
- Long Island Cheese—germinates easily, grows and yields well. Family likes the flavor best.
- Red Kuri—excellent flavor, small fruit—a personal favorite
- Rouge Vif d'Estampes —germinates easily with good yield. Small, good color, sells well
- Spaghetti—Not much demand
- Sugar Pie—Perhaps the best pie pumpkin, sweet flavor, small size
- Sweet dumpling—Small size, excellent flavor
- Turban squash—This bears fairly well, and is good for cooking, but 90% of sales are for decoration only

Plant: Direct seed after soils reach 70F T. —in damp soil; transplants will give larger fruit sooner in season.

Spacing: 60” on center, can vary from 3-6’ depending on variety

Soils: Bush types do better on heavier soils than do the trailing varieties

Irrigation: Flood irrigation. Water deeply prior to bloom. If irrigated after set, young fruit will abort. Water deeply again after fruit has reached softball size. Can use drip irrigation. No overhead.

Fertilization: For organic - before planting – dig in compost/manure. After planting –0.5 – 1 lb of N per tree annually – best to split application in early spring then early summer. Through the drip (fish emulsion?) or band below the drip line.

Harvest: Harvest when fruit has reached full size and full color.

Yields: Highly variable depending on weather.

Pests: In 20 years have only had to spray once for Diabrotica (Cucumber) beetle. The biggest concern has been a soil-fungus that destroys the young plants. Field MUST be rotated every two years, yearly is best. Alternate with alfalfa or corn.

Uses: Direct sales for cooking and decoration