

Seed Saving Guide for Squash

- member of the *Cucurbit* Family
- ideal for beginners
- annual life cycle
- even though squash contains wet seeds, no fermentation is required
- the 4 squash species (summer, winter, pumpkin, gourd) will not cross-pollinate with each other but varieties within each species will cross-pollinate
- keep different squash varieties 800 feet to ½ mile apart or hand-pollinate several fruits
- save seed from at least 1-5 plants
- seed longevity around 4-6 years

To harvest summer squash (yellow and zucchini) seeds:

- leave fruits on the vine past when you would normally pick them to eat pick the pods and remove the seeds
- fruit is mature when it grows much larger than when you would normally pick to eat and the rind changes color & becomes so hard you can't pierce it with your fingernail; stem will be dry
- cut the fruit from the plant & bring it indoors for 20-30 days to let seeds finish maturing

To clean seeds:

- allow all squash to ripen indoors for 20-30 days to let seeds finish maturing
- cut the squash in half from top to bottom on both sides but don't cut all the way through the center; pull the 2 halves apart to avoid damaging the seeds
- scoop out the seeds & loosen them from the pulp with your hands
- place seeds and any pulp in a strainer & rinse well with water
- you can also soak the seeds & pulp for a few hours to help loosen the pulp; rinse well
- once pulp is removed, place seeds on a container, coffee filters or screen in a protected location to dry for several days

Be sure seeds are completely dry before returning them to the Seed Library or storing them at home for yourself.



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Growing & Seed Saving Guides researched & written by Master Gardeners of Cornell Cooperative Extension Warren County

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