

HOW TO... GROW SQUASH & COURGETTES



A large squash at the front of your house is fun to grow and a great way to make a statement.

Container size

All squash and courgettes need big pots to grow. The minimum for most is 20 litres, and the larger varieties do better in 50 litres. The bigger the pot, the bigger the squash you can grow - and the easier it will be to look after.

Sun

Squash and courgettes need lots of sun to be worth growing, at least half a day.

Feeding

They are greedy beasts! Feed with tomato feed once a week once the plant starts flowering. If you have access to home made compost, worm compost or well rotted manure, add a layer to the top of the container two or three weeks after the plant starts fruiting.

Watering

Squash are also greedy for water. Full grown, fruiting plants will need watering at least once a day in warm or windy weather.

Which Variety?

Courgettes can be grown successfully in containers - just beware that they grow big and bushy and their large leaves will over shadow plants around them. There are smaller, more compact varieties like 'Patio Star', for example.

Squash take up less horizontal space because most are excellent climbers – so great for vertical growing! Good varieties of squash for containers include Tromba or Tromboncino (can be eaten small like courgettes or large as squash) and Uchiki Kuri (ornamental orange colour and great to eat). Spaghetti squash are fun to grow with kids.

You may want to avoid the large squash / pumpkins as they need fairly huge pots to grow well.



Squash are vigorous climbers – a great choice for vertical gardening



Tromba squash will grow large if you leave them (and feed and water well!)

Tying up

Squash can be left to ramble horizontally or encouraged to climb vertically up (or trail down!). If you want your squash to climb, you'll need to provide it with a well supported cane or pole, a string, or a trellis. You'll also need to tie the stem to the cane or trellis as it grows (tie the string tightly round the cane, loosely round the squash plant). If using string, wind the string round the stem of the squash as it grows.

Edible parts

The fruit are edible, so are the flowers (a delicacy, expensive in the shops) and the seeds. In some cultures, the leaves are eaten, too (similar flavour to spinach).

Picking:

Courgettes should be picked small to encourage the plant to produce more. Squash can either be picked small or left to mature into large squash.



The flowers of courgettes and squash are edible.



A squash this size needs a big 40 – 50 litre pot if it is to grow well.