



Squash: Quick Tips

Article

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**Growing healthy squash can be a little tricky. A few simple tips will help.**

Did you know that squash have both male and female flowers on each plant?

Bees are needed to transfer pollen from the male flowers to the female flowers in order to initiate the full development of the fruit. If you have shriveled, undeveloped fruits that drop off the plants, it is because the fruit did not get pollinated. Make sure you see bees around the garden and have both male and female flowers on the plants.

Temperatures above 95°F can kill pollen before it fertilizes the fruit, even if you have plenty of flowers and bees. Plant your crops early enough in the season to get flowers and fruit set before the excessive heat arrives. Keep your plants healthy during heat waves and fruit production may resume when the temperatures cool down again.

Sometimes, you may have so many fruits set on the plant that they all stay small. Harvest about half of the fruits at this super gourmet baby size (yummy!) to allow the rest to size up.

White spots on the leaves may indicate the early stages of Powdery Mildew. If this occurs early in the season, spray leaf surfaces with an organic fungicide—make your own by combining: 1 tbsp. baking soda; 2 tbsps. vegetable oil; 1 tsp. liquid soap (not detergent) per gallon of water.

As the season winds to a close, mildew often sets in to start the natural decomposition process. Harvest any remaining fruit and compost the worn out plants.

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