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Summer Squash

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Summer squash is a soft-shelled vegetable with a whiter meat inside. It is fairly common and easy to grow about anywhere as long as there is a warm season. There are over twenty varieties of summer squash. This year on the farm we have crookneck squash (the light yellow squash with a curved neck), magna squash (the wide green one with light green stripes), yellow zucchini, and green zucchini. Summer squash is actually picked when it is still immature. Because of this the outer skin can be eaten unlike some other types of squash. It is best when smaller as it has a better flavor and smaller seeds. Summer squash varieties are mild and take on the flavor of whatever you have with them, so they can be hidden or eaten with about anything.

To store summer squash place unwashed in plastic bags in the crisper drawer in your refrigerator. As with most other vegetables, washing before storing will promote decay, so try not to wash your squash and it will last longer. Wash it just before preparing for the best results.

Since it usually comes fast and furious, preserving summer squash for later is a great option in order to enjoy it the whole year long. Blanch and freeze slices or cubes for later to use in stir-fries and other recipes. To have for zucchini bread or muffins grate squash and store in freezer bags without blanching. Canning summer squash is not recommended since it usually creates a mushy mixture unless pickled like cucumbers.

More ideas for using all of your summer squash in everything! For simple side dishes summer squash can be steamed, boiled, sautéed, stir-fried, braised, breaded and fried, roasted, and grilled. Summer squash can also be added to omelets, frittatas and quiches, stuffed with cheese, included in fajitas, tacos, quesadillas and wraps. Squash is great in pasta salads, soups, stews, chili, sauces, and on sandwiches. Try pickling zucchini – it is similar to cucumbers and tastes great pickled.

Grilled Veggie Burgers with Zucchini
This tasty recipe freezes well for later use so grill up a double or triple batch and keep them in the freezer for a quick and easy future meal.

2 cloves garlic, grated 1 ½ C rolled oats
2 onions, grated 1/4 C shredded cheddar cheese
2 carrots, shredded 2 eggs, beaten
1 small zucchini, shredded 1 T soy sauce
1 small yellow squash, shredded 1 ½ C flour
2 tsp. olive oil

Heat garlic and onions in olive oil over low heat for 5 minutes. Add squash, zucchini, and carrots and heat for 2 more minutes. Remove from heat and add oats, cheese, and eggs. Add tamari or soy sauce. Form into four patties. Refrigerate for 1 hour.

Dredge patties in flour. Grill for 5 minutes or as desired, until golden brown and hot all the way through. If desired, serve in hamburger buns with all the “fixings”.

Article by: Elisabeth Inman

Conquering the Bounty
Summer squash is abundant this time of year. Here are a few simple ideas for using up every bit of it:

- For an alternative to French fries try deep-frying or grilling zucchini sticks.
- Cut up squash in large cubes and add to kabobs by alternating meat and vegetables then grilling.
- Try summer squash in muffins, bread, cake, and even cookies.
- Wash and grate yellow squash and zucchini. Add to a large skillet with a little butter or olive oil. Cook until tender, add cheese, and cover with lid until cheese is melted.
- Try a squash-covered grilled pizza. Sauté squash with garlic and onion. Add to already prepared pizza crust and top with some mozzarella. Also great with sausage.
- Stir-fry squash. Serve with boiled whole grain rice for a tasty meal.
- For a healthier alternative to meatballs combine grated zucchini and yellow squash, bread crumbs, egg whites, parmesan and ground pepper. Shape into balls and bake or grill.

Article by: Elisabeth Inman

Amanda by our newly made squash sign. We made about 20 other veggie signs for our farm too.
**Organic Techniques: Mulching and Other Ways to Beat the Heat**

At this time of year, the heat can get scorching by the middle of the day and soil moisture can be a problem with so much evaporation, especially with newly seeded beds. Row cover is one option, but there are a few others to think about.

“Mulch is your best friend,” according to Edward Smith, author of, *The Vegetable Gardener’s Bible*. He says that mulch slows evaporation down so moisture can stay in the soil longer. It also keeps the soil cool for those plants that prefer a cooler soil temperature, like chard, kale, spinach, lettuce, etc. allowing them to germinate and grow faster. Mulch can consist of grass clippings, straw, or seed-free hay. Build up the mulch higher as the plants grow taller.

Compost can be used as a mulch as well, especially over a plant that is a heavy feeder like broccoli. Another option is what’s called a “living mulch.” Plant close together (but not too close) so the mature plants can provide their own shade over the soil.

Shade cloth is another option to keep moisture in and heat out. We have some on our green hoophouse right now so we can continue to grow cool weather plants. At home, planting in shady areas is another simple way to keep plants cool without any extra work.

**Fabulous Flavors: Tips & Techniques**

*Looking for that perfect recipe to show off all of your vegetables whenever they come into season? Well, here it is.* This simple recipe is an adapted version from [simplyrecipes.com](http://simplyrecipes.com). I have condensed and simplified the instructions, and I think you will like the results. For the full article, including pictures to follow along, as well as many other great summer squash recipes to try, check it out on the internet. The recipe is titled “Mom’s Pasta Primavera by Elise.”

**Pasta Primavera**

“The word *primavera* refers to being served with fresh vegetables. *Pasta primavera* is almost always a simple-to-prepare dish using the fresh vegetables of the season. In spring you might make it with asparagus and peas, later in the summer with tomatoes and zucchini. Sometimes it uses a cream sauce, sometimes a marinara sauce, and sometimes, just with some olive oil and shaved Parmesan.”  

- 4 cups mixed vegetables (whatever you have on hand works great)  
- Olive oil for sautéing  
- Seasonings (If you are using a prepared sauce you probably won’t need extra seasoning, but if not use some Italian Seasoning)  
- 1/2 lb. pasta of choice  
- 1/4 cup sauce (can be a tomato-based sauce such as spaghetti sauce or a creamy sauce such as Alfredo or whatever you feel like at the time)  
- 1/4 cup water

Prepare pasta as the package indicates; meanwhile sauté vegetables in olive oil. Add sauce and 1/4 cup water to thin the sauce. Add pasta and adjust seasonings if necessary. Top with some grated Parmesan cheese, fresh basil and cherry tomatoes if desired and voila, pasta primavera!