



GTCG WEEKLY

Recipes, Garden Pests and TidBits

Newsletter

Issue #12

Squash

[Scientific name: Cucurbita]

GROWTH

If you've grown a garden, you've most likely grown cucurbits. You may not know them by this name, but squashes, pumpkins, melons and cucumbers are cucurbits.

Below are several common types of squash and pumpkins.

- *C. pepo*: acorn, delicata, patty pan, spaghetti, zucchini and summer squash. This species typically does not store as long as other types.
- *C. maxima*: buttercup, hubbard, kabocha, red kuri and turban squash, and big max, Jarrahdale, and white boer pumpkins. These varieties typically store well over winter.
- *C. moschata*: butternut and honeynut squash, and Long Island cheese, musquee de provence and seminole pumpkins. These store well but are unfortunately more susceptible to vine borer bugs. Some gardeners use them as decoy plants for bugs.

NUTRITION

Squash is an excellent source of fiber and is high in beta-carotene, which our bodies use to make vitamin A.



In addition to squash and pumpkins, there are several other plants that are related. These species are lesser known but are still cultivated by many in the southern U.S. and Mesoamerica. In total there are five edible species and several more wild species that haven't been domesticated yet.

- *C. ficifolia*: There is only one variety of this species, the fig-leaf gourd.
 - The leaves and fruit are eaten as greens and a dessert. It's also used as animal fodder.
- *C. argyrosperma*: Like ficifolia, there is only one variety of this species that is grown, the cushaw squash/silver-seed gourd.

Recipe of the Week

Taco Summer Squash Boats

INGREDIENTS

6 medium summer squash, cut in half lengthwise
½ cup salsa
1 pound ground turkey
1 packet taco seasoning
½ small onion, chopped fine
½ cup bell pepper, chopped fine
1 (4-ounce) can tomato sauce
¼ cup water
½ cup shredded cheese
¼ cup cilantro

Preheat oven to 350 F. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Place the squash in the boiling water for two minutes, then place on a paper towel to drain. Using a spoon, remove the seeds and discard. Scrape out the flesh of the squash, reserving 1 cup for this recipe and using the rest in other recipes or freezing it as described. Spoon ¼ cup salsa into the bottom of a large baking dish and arrange squash face up. Set aside. Brown turkey in a large skillet until no longer pink. Add taco seasoning, onion, pepper, cilantro, reserved squash, tomato sauce and water, and stir to combine. Cover and simmer 20 minutes. Fill each squash boat with the turkey mixture, then top with cheese. Cover with foil and bake 25 to 30 minutes or until squash is fork tender and cheese is melted. Garnish and serve with salsa.

Makes 12 servings. Each serving has 100 calories, 4.5 g fat, 10 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 230 mg sodium.

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More information:

www.ag.ndsu.edu/fieldtofork

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PRESERVATION

For information about preserving vegetables, see NDSU Extension's materials at www.ag.ndsu.edu/food. Mashed pumpkin cannot be safely canned at home, but chunks of pumpkin can be canned in a pressure canner.

If you are a seed saver, you may have noticed that if you grew multiple varieties last year, your seeds were not true to their parent. If you do seed save, grow one variety of each species if you want the same product each year. You can grow several varieties of one species and save the seeds. From there you can try and select certain traits to create your own variety of melon/squash/pumpkin. Some fun traits you can select are hull-less seeds that are found in several pepo squashes, size, flavor and storage capabilities.

Compiled by Clair Frydenland and Anna Seefeldt, NDSU dietetic interns and Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D., Food and Nutrition Specialist