



Photos courtesy of pixabay.com

## **Eat Well, Age Well** Growing Winter Squash

The arrival of fall brings a beautiful variety of winter squash. Though they all are prepared similarly, they are all unique. Growing winter squash requires some patience, but this vibrant garden vegetable is worth the wait.

Since winter squash requires a long growing season (about 75 to 100 frost-free days), the seeds are typically planted by late May in the Midwest. Winter squash is harvested in the fall after its fruits reach full maturity. Squash has a long shelf life, and some of them will last through winter, thus the name winter squash. Varieties of squash include acorn, butternut, Hubbard, pumpkin, and spaghetti.

This crop is not planted in the ground until the frost has passed, and the air and soil are at least 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Squash is very sensitive to the cold. When planting, pick a site with full sun and lots of space for spreading vines. Most full-size winter squash varieties need 50 to 100 square feet to spread. If you plan to grow a few plants, use 2 – 3 tablespoons of fertilizer for each hill. Scatter the fertilizer evenly over a 2- foot by 2 – foot area. Plant the seeds in level ground about 1 inch deep with seeds 2 – 3 feet apart. Otherwise, plant 3 – 4 seeds close together in small mounds in rows 3 – 6 feet apart.

Source adapted from: <https://www.almanac.com/plant/winter-squash>

## **Weekly Challenges**

**Incorporate a winter squash into a dish this week!**

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**Try a new way to prepare winter squash**

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**Use canned pumpkin instead of butter or oil when cooking or baking**

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**Increase familiarity with various winter squash.**

## Note to Nutrition Directors and Site Managers:

Thank you for helping to promote Eat Well, Age Well. Please encourage folks to form weekly action plans to help them incorporate healthy foods into their eating habits. You can help create excitement to try GWAAR Nutrition Team in Collaboration with UW Stout Dietetic Students by Emma Jones 10-22 energized.

If they ask how, they should record their weekly action plan, let them know they can write short words like, "Nailed it" or a note like took a walk in the park, or talked with a friend, etc. on the *Monthly Tracking Calendar*.

### **Week 1:** Give out/Post

- The 1-page overview handout "*Eat Well, Age Well. Growing Winter Squash.*"
- Placemat/handout- *Squash and Chicken Sausage*
- Table Tent- *health benefits*
- Monthly Tracking Calendar

### **Week 2:** Give out/Post

- Placemat/handout- *Roasted Honey and Pecan Acorn Squash*
- Table Tent- *Winter Squash Various Varieties*

### **Week 3:** Give out/Post

- Placemat/handout- *Parmesan Roasted Acorn Squash*
- Table Tent- *Storage and Health Benefits*

### **Week 4:** Give out/Post

- Placemat/handout- *Winter Squash Soup*
- Table Tent- *Winter Squash Wisdom*

**To print** the placemats on legal size paper, just hit print, they should be set up for that size of paper. To make them into a handout, go to Print and then go down to the last item that should say, 1 page per sheet and click on the drop-down menu to select "Scale to Paper Size" and select "letter" size paper.

The table tents are available in a full-size version that you can post on a bulletin board, give as a handout, or place in a full-size table tent holder or print the 4 x 6-inch version and place in a 4 x 6 or 5 x 7-inch holder.

I appreciate your input and feedback so please feel free to call me at 608-228-8095 or email me with any comments at [pam.vankampen@gwaar.org](mailto:pam.vankampen@gwaar.org)