

October Produce Spotlight: Pumpkin



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Planting window

Harvest window



Recommended Pumpkin Varieties for North Carolina

- Mini:** 'Jack Sprat,' 'Mystic Plus,' and 'Field Trip F1.'
- Medium:** 'Orange Sunrise,' 'Gladiator,' 'Howden's Field.'
- Large:** 'Dynasty,' 'Kratos,' and 'Olympus Farmore F1.'

Top Growing Tips

1. Pumpkins grow best in warm weather because they are very sensitive to frost.
2. The plant needs a consistent water supply while it's growing, preferably a drip irrigation system.
3. Pumpkins are heavy feeders, so make sure to provide ample nutrition throughout the season.

General Pumpkin Care

- Light:** Given how much pumpkins love warm weather, they need full sunlight during their growing season.
- Soil:** Pumpkins thrive in soil with good water filtration and water holding capacity. The soil pH should ideally be between 5.8-6.6.
- Spacing:** Space plants 48" apart in open field or cleared area. They WILL fill in any given space.

Disease & Pests

- Pest:** Cucumber beetle, squash bugs, pickle worms, and aphids.
- Disease:** Powdery mildew, downy mildew, and bacterial wilt.
- Management:** Develop a preventative spray plan to ensure your plants are protected from pest and disease. Regular crop rotation and soil with good drainage can also help prevent disease.



70-120 DAYS TO HARVEST

Warm or Cool Season Crop?



Warm



Cool

Does this plant grow well in a container?



Yes!



Fair



Not Well

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Master Gardener | Lee County

October Pollinator Pairings: Squash Bees



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Active Season

Jan Feb Mar Apr **May** Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec



What do I look like?

Squash bees are only about half an inch in size, which is slightly bigger than a honeybee. They are black with off-white and yellow stripes on their abdomen. You will find yellow hairs on their thorax and hind legs. Squash bees also have a long antenna!



Where do I live?

Squash bees are usually found in the morning when squash flowers first open. Male bees and unmated females can be seen sleeping in squash flowers in the evening, after the flowers have closed. Mated female bees are not typically sleeping but are close by making their nests!

What are my favorite flowers?

Flowers that members of the genus *Cucurbita*. Squash bees can get nectar from other plants, but never pollen!

How well does this pollinator pollinate other fruit and vegetable crops?



Well



Fair



Not Well



How can you help me?

You can provide patches of bare soil for bees to use as nesting sites. Bee nests tend to be close to the surface of the soil, so tilling can accidentally harm bees. Planting pumpkins, squash, cucumbers, melons, and related plants near bare patches is also helpful. Try to limit the use of insecticides and fungicides, especially when the host plants are blooming.



How do I pair with the produce in the spotlight?

As their name suggests, squash bees pollinate squash and squash relatives, specifically members of the genus *Cucurbita*. Unlike most solitary bee species, both males and females contribute to the pollination process. Since males emerge first from the nests, they establish territories around squash flowers to find female squash bees and pollinate them in the process.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SQUASH BEES HERE!

