

## WINTER SQUASH FOR DIRECT MARKETING

Resources: UC Vegetable Research & info Center -  
<http://vric.ucdavis.edu/selectnewcrop.pump.htm>

**Varieties:** Medium & small varieties sell better for eating; Larger varieties for display; grow a combo that looks good in market display; focus on good taste for edibles

Acorn—grow a few -sales are not great; 90 days; 5-7ft/plant; semi bush varieties avail.

Banana—flavor is good, too large for most customers

Buttercup types – sm-medium rounded fruit with bottom button; dry orange flesh – sweeter after storage; 95 days; 3-5 lb ea; 3-4 ft/plant

Butternut—sales are steady, this is only for the cooking market, not ornamental. 100-105 days; 2.5-5lb ea.; 4-5 ft/plant; Bush & PM rest varieties @ Johnnys

Carnival—(C. pepo) Multicolor Swt Dumpling – larger than SD, attractive, good flavor, probably purchased most often as an ornamental. 95 days. Semi bush.

Delicata—Thin skin very susceptible to rabbit damage; 100 days; Bush & PM rest. varieties Johnnys

Hubbard—too large for most people.

Jarradale—(C. maxima) blue “pumpkin”; more temperamental, thick hull seems to lead to more erratic germination; 100 days, 6-10lb ea.; good display & eating; 2 ft/plant

Kabocha types: (C maxima) Orange, blue, green – round – 3-6lb ea; 3-5 ft/plant; 95 days; very good flavor as a rule; Sunshine (orange) – AAS winner, short-vine

Kakai—hull-less seed, attractive striped fruit

Long Island Cheese—(C. moschata) tan “pumpkin”, deep orange flesh, germinates easily, grows and yields well- 2 ft/plant, 6-10 lb ea.; Best flavor! 108 days; long storage;

Red Kuri—(C. maxima) bright orange, teardrop shaped fruit; excellent flavor – wins taste tests, small 3-4 lb ea., a personal favorite; 90-95 days, long keeper . Sm. Hubbard-type

Rouge Vif d'Estampes — (C maxima) bright orange, flat “pumpkin”; germinates easily with good yield – 2 ft/plant. Small 10-15 lb fruit, good color, sells well (AKA Cinderella)

Spaghetti—Not much demand

Sugar Pie—Perhaps the best pie pumpkin, sweet flavor, small size

Sweet Dumpling—(C pepo) Small size – 4” frt., excellent flavor (better than Carnival); 8-10 ft/plant; med sized vines

Turban squash—bears fairly well, good for cooking, but 90% of sales are for decoration only

Plant: Direct seed after soils reach 70F T. in damp soil; mid May for mid Aug-Sept harvest; transplants will give larger fruit sooner in season.

Spacing: 60” on center, can vary from 3-6’ depending on variety. Bush varieties closer; large vines farther away & on outside of plot

- Soils:** Bush types do better on heavier soils than do the trailing varieties
- Irrigation:** Flood irrigation: Water deeply prior to bloom. If irrigated after set, young fruit will abort. Water deeply again after fruit has reached softball size. Can use drip irrigation. No overhead.
- Fertilization:** For organic - before planting – dig in compost/manure. Should be OK with little additional fertilizer on clay & loam soils.
- Harvest:** See variety notes above – 90-110 days. Harvest when fruit has reached full size and full color. Note any varietal need for storage before eating & long storage capability.
- Yields:** Highly variable depending on weather. See variety notes above – 2 frt/plant on large vined & fruited varieties; 3-7 frt/plant on smaller fruited varieties.
- Pests:** Powdery mildew may be a problem – so preventative sprays (organic available) or resistant varieties. Cucumber beetle or squash bug may be occasional problems. Field should be rotated every year or two to reduce the incidence of soil born pathogens. Alternate with plants in a different family (not cucumbers, melons, summer squash) – annual artichokes, annual flower, tomatoes, peppers ....  
Weeds: may want to mulch with hay or fabric – to reduce weeds and keep fruit off heavy soil (not as much a concern with drip irrigation).