

December  
2004

# NEOHOMA

*The NEw Oregon HOmeMAker*

**The Quarterly Newsletter for  
Coos County Family Food Education Program  
Oregon State University Extension Service**

## WINTER SQUASH

Squash are fruits of various members of the gourd family, which fall into two classifications, summer squash and winter squash. The terms *summer* and *winter* for squash are based on usage. This terminology dates back to a time when the seasons were more crucial to human survival than they are now. "Good keepers" became known as winter vegetables if they would "keep" until December. Winter squash come in round, elongated, turban, pancake, scalloped and pear shapes with flesh that ranges from pale yellow through brilliant orange. Though their texture and taste are a bit different than most folks are accustomed to, it's easy to become a fan of this hearty vegetable. In addition to being downright tasty, they're nutritious, have a high fiber content and many, if not most, have glycemic indexes and caloric content similar to sweet potatoes and yams (Please refer to calorie and glycemic index charts published by USDA or health professionals, before consumption, for specific values.). Their taste, texture and color complement most other vegetables and are a nice accompaniment to most meats.

Most winter squash are vine-type plants whose fruits are harvested when fully mature and are best harvested once the cool weather of fall sets in. They take longer to mature than summer squash (3 months or more) and most can be stored for months in a cool basement. Summer squash are sometimes harvested before maturity for use in fresh salads and stir-fries. Even under refrigeration summer squash don't keep well for more than a week. *Halloween* pumpkins, whether they're the classic field type or the original French variety, are rather bland and fibrous. Carve them for your kiddies then compost them.

*Storing:* Place squash on top of thick pads of newspapers in a cool, dry, well-ventilated location. Check for rot on a regular basis and use within three to six months.

*Preparation:* Winter squash must be allowed to mature on the vine before harvesting. They develop an inedible, thick, hard rind and tough seeds and are difficult to cut – *Be Careful.* Be-

cause this rind makes the squash difficult to peel, it's easier to cook the unpeeled squash, and then scoop out the cooked flesh. Wash the exterior of the squash just before cutting. To cook them, cut in halves or pieces, remove fibers and seeds (It's OK to leave the fibers and seeds in the squash before cooking, but more care is needed to remove the fibers and seeds after cooking to avoid scooping away the pulp.). Then bake, steam, or boil the squash – refer to your favorite cook book for times and directions. Yes! They can be microwaved. Place pieces, up to about ½ a softball in size, pulp side down in a shallow flat bottom dish. Add about ¼ inch of water to the dish and cook on the "hi" setting. Tent with plastic wrap if desired. Cooking time varies depending on the microwave's power and pulp thickness of course, but is about the same as for a large baking potato. For 2-6 pieces it's faster than a conventional oven and the results are excellent. When water is used in cooking, the quantity of water should be kept small to avoid losing flavor and nutrients. Allow

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# Family Food Education Program Coos County

*JoAnn Mast, Staff Chair, Program Administrator*

**OSU Extension Service  
Mission Statement**  
The Oregon State University Extension Service engages the people Of Oregon with research-based knowledge and education that focus on strengthening communities and economics, sustaining natural resources, and promoting healthy families and individuals.

The holiday season is upon us, whether we are ready or not. Many of you have harvested gardens, preserved foods for future use, and may even have gifts prepared for others. These efforts are always appreciated, although during the work phase, that level of appreciation is sometimes hard to realize.

Our staff has been busy attending professional development conferences, working on annual reports and making plans with cooperator groups to turn 2005 into an even stronger year for Extension. We are fortunate to have the support of Coos County citizens to keep our programs and faculty in place. We are moving forward to hire a Family and Community Development agent and a Commercial Horticulture agent to fill the space created when Art Poole retires.

I appreciate having this publication in circulation. Miller devotes many hours of his time to locate information and create an easy to read format for us to follow. If you have any doubts about how to cure or use squash, please keep reading. I knew there were many ways to disguise a zucchini, now I know about methods for other varieties as well.

Food safety continues to be a concern, and your help in answering questions and providing information to the public is important. Each time a new trend or discovery is made, our information needs to be edited and brought up to date. That is also true for many people who enjoy processing, preserving and cooking with produce they have grown or items they have purchased in bulk.

Personal safety is in the news, with an emphasis on hand washing and common practices used to reduce the spread of disease. The limited supply of influenza vaccine has allowed some very practical information to reach the headlines this fall. This may be a great reminder for people of all ages, and the timing could not be better. Stay safe and healthy, and have a wonderful holiday season.

**FAMILY FOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM GOAL**  
The goal of the Family Food Education Program is to assist the general public in the safe preparation and preservation of fruits, vegetables, meats and fish, through scientifically tested methods and recipes for canning, freezing, drying and smoking. These methods and recipes are disseminated via classes, workshops, telephone and Email service.  
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Staff Chair, JoAnn Mast  
Publisher  
Miller Chappell  
Editor

# A SHORT LIST OF WINTER SQUASH VARIETIES

**Acorn** - This eponymously named variety is easily found in supermarkets. A popular baking squash that's fairly easy to slice. Acorn squash weigh from 1 to 3 pounds, and have sweet, slightly fibrous flesh. Distinctive ribs run the length of its hard, blackish-green or golden-yellow skin. In addition to the dark green acorn, there are now golden and multi-colored varieties.

**Banana** - Another eponymously named variety. It grows up to two feet in length and about six inches in diameter. Its bright orange, finely-textured flesh is sweet.

**Buttercup** - Has a sweet and creamy orange flesh and resembles a small pumpkin.

**Butternut** - Beige colored and shaped like a vase. This squash tastes somewhat like sweet potatoes. The flesh is very moist. The pulp is fine-textured, deep-orange with a sweet, nutty flavor. It weighs from 2 to 5 pounds.

**Carnival Squash** - Cream colored with orange spots or pale green with dark green spots in vertical stripes. Both color variations may appear on the same fruit. The flesh is golden and tasty.

**Delicata** - A real winner. They may be labeled Sweet Potato squash or Bohemian squash. The creamy pulp is reminiscent of sweet potatoes. Size may range from 5 to 10 inches in length. The skin is striped from stem to blossom end with alternating cream and green, and is edible. This heirloom variety was recently reintroduced into the culinary world. Originally introduced by the Peter Henderson Company of New York City in 1894, it was popular through the 1920s. It fell in disfavor for about seventy-five years, probably because of its thinner, more tender skin, which isn't suited to long distance transportation and storage over months.

**Gold Nugget** - This variety has the appearance of a small pumpkin in shape and color and is sometimes referred to as Oriental pumpkin.

Golden nugget squash are small, weighing on average about 1 pound, but may weigh as much as 3 pounds. The flesh is orange.

**Hubbard (Grey & Green)** - Their extra-hard skins make them one of the best keeping winter squash. These are very large and irregularly shaped, with a skin that is quite "warted". Hubbard squash is often sold in pieces because it can grow to cumbersome sizes. The yellow flesh tends to be very moist and longer cooking times in the oven are needed. It's perfect for pies.

**Kabocha** - Kabocha is the Japanese word for squash, but most commonly refers to a squash of the buttercup type. Also known as Hokkaido or Japanese Pumpkin. The flesh is rich and sweet, and may be a little dry and flaky when cooked.

**Spaghetti** - A small, watermelon-shaped variety, ranges in size from 2 to 5 pounds or more. It has a golden-yellow rind and a mild, nutlike flavor. When cooked, the flesh separates in strands that resemble spaghetti pasta (If it's not over cooked.). As with most yellow/orange squashes, the deeper the rind color the richer the flesh color and taste. Those that are nearly white are not very ripe.

**Sweet Dumpling** - This small, mildly sweet-tasting squash resembles a miniature pumpkin with its top pushed in. Weighing only about 7 ounces, it has sweet and tender orange flesh and is a great size for stuffing and baking as individual servings. Sweet dumplings are most often presented whole.

**Turban** - A larger variety of the buttercup squash, turban squash has colors that vary from bright orange, to green or white. It has golden-yellow flesh and its taste is reminiscent of hazelnuts. A bulb-like cap swells from the blossom end, giving the squash a rather unusual shape. Coloration can be very bizarre. They are popular as harvest ornamentals and for centerpieces. Its flesh and storage ability is comparable to other buttercup squash.

## Storing Pumpkin and Winter Squash at Home FS 230 - Reprinted July 1993

Prepared by N.S. Mansour,  
Extension vegetable crops specialist, Oregon State University.

All pumpkins and hard-shelled winter squash may be stored at the end of the growing season for use well into the new year. For best results, store sound, well-cured fruit at 50 to 55°F in a 50 to 70% relative humidity. Length of storage life varies according to variety and type of squash or pumpkin.

<i>Hard-shelled winter squash</i>	<i>Storage life</i>
Table Queen (acorn type)	1 to 2 months
Butternut	2 to 3 months
Hubbard types	3 to 6 months
Banana	3 to 6 months
Buttercup (turban type)	3 to 6 months
Sweet Meat	4 to 6 months
<i>Pumpkin</i>	
Jack O'Lantern	2 to 3 months
Connecticut Field	2 to 3 months

Table Queen and other acorn-type squash can be stored satisfactorily for 1 to 2 months. With longer storage, the skin begins to turn yellow and the squash becomes stringy.

### Harvesting

Harvest all types of squash and pumpkin before frost begins. Squash are ready for harvest when the rind is hard enough to resist fingernail scratches. Cut the stem 2 to 4 inches from the fruit. Pumpkins without stems do not store well. Hubbard-type squash stores best with the stems completely removed. Handle fruit carefully to keep them in good condition. Slightly immature squash and pumpkin can be used if they are cured properly. Curing helps toughen the skins of immature fruit and helps heal cuts and scratches.

### Curing

All squash undergo a slow curing process during proper storage. Artificial curing is not necessary for well-matured squash under good storage conditions. Nearly mature squash, except acorn types, may benefit from a short period of curing. Curing is holding squash and pumpkin at a temperature favorable for healing cuts and scratches and for forming a protective corky layer over injuries and cut surfaces of the stem.

Cure squash and pumpkin for 10 days at temperatures of 80 to 85°F and a relative humidity of 80 to 85 degrees. Use a small cabinet heated by a thermostatically controlled electric heater or a corner of the garage partitioned off with plastic for a curing chamber. A small fan will maintain good circulation and uniform distribution of heat.

### Storing

Squash and pumpkin deteriorate rapidly if stored at temperatures below 50°F. The best storage temperature is between 50 and 55°F. Fruit that has been exposed to freezing before harvest also will deteriorate rapidly. A relative humidity of 75%, about normal for garages or other suitable storage areas in western Oregon, is satisfactory. Keep the temperature at 50 to 55°F. Keep the

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### STORING SQUASH AT HOME (Continued from page 4)

surface of the fruit dry to prevent or retard growth of decay fungi and bacteria. Air circulation helps to prevent moisture from forming on the surface of the fruit. Provide shelves for storage of pumpkin and squash. Do not store fruit on cold concrete floors. Promptly discard any fruit that shows signs of decay. Some of the more durable squash may be stacked on top of each other if adequate room is provided for air circulation. Do not store pumpkin or squash near apples, pears, or other ripening fruit. Ripening fruits release ethylene gas, which causes yellowing of the squash and shortens storage life.

### For more information:

Copies of this and other publications and videos are available on-line from OSU Extension Service (Go to <http://osu.orst.edu/> and follow the links to:

Extension Service or Extension & Experiment Station Communications.).

PH 1-800-561-6719, for prices and ordering information

FAX (541-737-0817)

E\_MAIL <[puborders@oregonstate.edu](mailto:puborders@oregonstate.edu)>

### WINTER SQUASH (Continued from page 1)

about 1/3 pound per person. One pound of winter squash equals about 2 cups of cooked, mashed squash. Refrigerate tightly wrapped cut pieces of winter squash and use within five days.

*Uses:* All varieties are great for puréeing, roasting and baking. Once squash is cooked

and mashed, it can be used in soups, main dishes, vegetable side dishes, breads, muffins,

custards, casseroles, soufflés, pancakes, ice cream, dessert sauces and pies (They make a superb “pumpkin” pie.). Boil or mash winter squash just as you would potatoes. Alternatively,

add peeled squash cubes to your favorite soups, stews, beans, gratins and vegetable ragouts. Dress any cooked winter squash with butter and herbs, a cream sauce, cheese sauce, maple syrup and nuts, marinara sauce or

stewed fruit. They make excellent pickles and do well in relish and chutney mixtures.



## INSTANT CLEAR-JEL IS BACK IN STOCK™

We've been unable to obtain *Instant Clear-Jel*™ for almost a year. We've recently established an account with a wholesaler in Eugene who delivers in Coos County. **Two cup, \$2.00, and four cup, \$4.00, packages are in stock at the Extension Service Office in Myrtle Point.** For those not familiar with the instant variety of this modified corn starch, free recipes are available with your purchase. Regular *Clear-Jel*™ continues to be available in four cup, \$3.00, packages. Free recipes are also available for the regular variety.

Modified food starches, including corn starch, are the food industry standard for cooked and instant puddings, pie fillings and a host of other products whose palatability improves with thickening. Current research indicates that the modified starch is metabolized in a manner similar to unmodified food starches. Be like Mikey—Try it, you'll like it!

For more information contact the Extension Office at 572-5263.

## WINTER SQUASH WITH CRANBERRIES

4 Cups mashed, cooked Hubbard squash	2 eggs, beaten
1/3 cup melted butter or margarine	1/4 cup granulated sugar
1 1/2 cups raw cranberries	1/2 tsp. Salt
1/8 tsp. Pepper	Dash nutmeg

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. With egg beater, beat squash with eggs and 3 Tbl. melted butter. Stir in sugar, cranberries, salt, pepper (taste and season more if needed). Spoon into 2 qt. casserole. Drizzle on rest of melted butter; sprinkle with nutmeg. Bake, uncovered, 30 min. Makes 8 servings.

Planning ahead: Make early in the day; refrigerate. Bake at 400 degrees for 45 min.

## STUFFED WINTER SQUASH

Small acorn or butternut squash are ideal for individual service. You may fill the raw shell, or bake it first and fill it with the following hot creamed foods: Creamed oysters, chicken, chipped beef, crab, fish or mushrooms; spinach, hash, hash and vegetables, hot applesauce or crushed pineapple or your favorite fruit; cooked sausage meat or ham. Reheat in an ovenproof dish 10 to 15 minutes in a 350 degree oven.

## FRANK-STUFFED SQUASH

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Scrub 2 medium acorn squash; halve lengthwise; scrape out seeds and stringy portion. Arrange in baking pan, with cut sides down. Bake 30 min. Turn cuts up; brush with melted butter or margarine; sprinkle with salt, pepper and brown sugar. Into each squash shell, slice 1 frank, on angle; spread lightly with prepared mustard. Bake 15 min. longer, or until squash is tender. Makes 4 servings.

## TWICE BAKED SQUASH (Nice to fix with an oven meal)

3 medium-size acorn squash	1 1/2 cups soft bread crumbs
1 cup grated sharp cheese	1/4 cup softened butter or margarine
3 tabbsp. Chopped green pepper	3 tabbsp. chopped onion
1 tsp. Salt	1/8 tsp. Pepper

Split squash; remove and discard seeds. Place cut side down in baking pan. Bake in hot oven (400 degrees) 45 minutes until tender. Remove from oven. When cool enough to handle, scoop out pulp, leaving shells about 1/4" thick. Mash pulp; add remaining ingredients. Pile lightly into shells and bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) until lightly browned, about 30 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

## GOLDEN SQUASH GRIDDLECAKES

3/4 Cup Whole wheat flour	1/4 Cup Cornmeal
1 tsp. Baking soda	1/4 tsp. Cinnamon
1/4 tsp. Ground ginger	2 Eggs, beaten
1/2 Cup Buttermilk	1 Cup well-cooked, smoothly mashed, butternut squash

Combine the first 5 ingredients in a mixing bowl. In another bowl, combine the egg, buttermilk, and squash and stir together until smooth. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and pour in the wet mixture. Stir together until just combined—do not over-beat. Heat a nonstick griddle. Melt just enough butter or margarine to coat it lightly. Pour the batter onto the griddle in scant 1/4 cupfuls. Cook on both sides until golden. Keep the griddlecakes warm in a covered casserole dish in a 200 deg. oven until all are done. Serve with butter or margarine, maple syrup, applesauce or fruit butter.

Servings: 4 to 6

## SWEET 'N' SOUR SQUASH MEDLEY

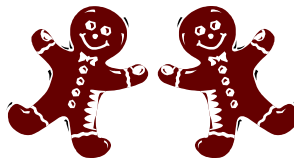
1 Cup firmly packed brown sugar	1 tsp. Mustard seeds
1 Stick cinnamon	4 Whole cloves
1 Cup white wine vinegar	3 Lemon slices
1 Tomato, cut into wedges (Romas are a good choice)	1 med. Patty Pan Squash, sliced horizontally & cut into wedges
1/4 lb. Green beans, cut into 1 in. Pieces	1 small Zucchini, sliced & 1 small yellow squash, halved lengthwise & sliced
1 Green onion, chopped	

Combine brown sugar, mustard seeds, cinnamon, cloves, vinegar & lemon slices in medium non-aluminum saucepan. Bring to a boil; Reduce heat & simmer 5 Min. Add remaining Ingredients & simmer an additional 2 Min. Remove from heat; cover & let cool to room temperature. Remove whole spices & lemon. Drain. Serve hot.

Serving Size : 6

## CANDIED WINTER SQUASH

Slice your favorite squash lengthwise. Clean. Slice crosswise into 1 inch thick pieces. Arrange flat on a greased baking sheet. Mix enough softened butter with brown sugar to make it spreadable. Add cinnamon, nutmeg and salt to taste to the brown sugar mixture - be careful not to "hide" the flavor of the squash. Spread a thin layer over the squash, cover with aluminum foil and bake at 375 degrees until almost fork tender—about 20 minutes. Drizzle with maple syrup and bake uncovered until tender.





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**Your Extension Office Staff  
Wishes You  
A Safe and Happy Holiday Season**

