



# Seasonal Gardening: Winter Squash

Part 1

## Health Standards Addressed

**Kindergarten: 1.1.N** Name a variety of healthy foods and explain why they are necessary for good health.

**1.2.N** Identify a variety of healthy snacks.

**7.1.N** Select nutritious snacks.

**First Grade: 1.3.G** Identify a variety of behaviors that promote healthy growth and development.

**Second Grade: 1.1.N** Name a variety of healthy foods and explain why they are necessary for good health.

**1.2.N** Identify a variety of healthy snacks.

**7.4.N** Examine the criteria for choosing a nutritious snack.

**Third Grade: 5.1.G** Examine why a variety of behaviors promote healthy growth and development.

**Fourth Grade: 1.1.N** Identify and define key nutrients and their functions.

**7.1.N** Practice how to take personal responsibility for eating healthy foods.

**Fifth Grade: 1.6.N** Differentiate between more-nutritious and less-nutritious beverages and snacks.

**5.1.N** Use a decision-making process to identify healthy foods for meals and snacks.

**7.1.N** Identify ways to choose healthy snacks based on current research-based guidelines.

**8.1.N** Encourage and promote healthy eating and increased physical activity opportunities at school and in the community.



## Materials

Winter Squash from Harvest of the Month (uncut), Winter Squash nutritional information, copies of types of squash information, one for each table group or each pair of students (2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade).

## Success Skills

- **Collaboration** with their peers during their discussion of food and food choices.
- **Communication** of ideas with peers as students discuss the topic.
- **Creativity** as students illustrate and write about what they have learned about food and food choices.



## Challenging Question

How can healthy choices make a difference in how I feel and grow up?

## (K-5) Access Prior Knowledge

Review the seed to table cycle. Remind students that food (vegetables and fruits) are grown and harvested.



## Explore

### Kindergarten and First Grade Explore

In this activity, students understand that by choosing foods that are healthy, they can build healthy diets and start to see food choices as a part of how we can keep our bodies healthy.

**Explain:** A vegetable is considered any part of herbaceous plants eaten as food by humans. Given this general rule of thumb, vegetables can include leaves (lettuce), stems (asparagus), roots (carrots), flowers (broccoli), bulbs (garlic), seeds (peas and beans) and of course the botanical fruits like cucumbers, squash, and pumpkins.

**Ask:** Are there different kinds of winter squash? Show students the pictures of different types of winter squash.

- Review the information sheet with students.
- Students can also describe the shape and colors of winter squash.

**Ask:** What texture would you feel touching winter squash?

### Second and Third Grade Explore

In this activity, students understand that by choosing foods that are healthy, they can build healthy diets and start to see food choices as a part of how we can keep our bodies healthy.

**Explain:** A vegetable is considered any part of herbaceous plants eaten as food by humans. Given this general rule of thumb, vegetables can include leaves (lettuce), stems (asparagus), roots (carrots), flowers (broccoli), bulbs (garlic), seeds (peas and beans) and of course the botanical fruits like cucumbers, *squash*, and pumpkins.

**Ask:** Are there different kinds of winter squash? Show students the pictures of different types of winter squash.

- Review the information sheet with students.
- Students can also describe the shape and colors of winter squash.

**Ask:** What texture would you feel touching winter squash?

### Fourth and Fifth Grade Explore

In this activity, students understand that by choosing foods that are healthy, they can build healthy diets and start to see food choices as a part of how we can keep our bodies healthy.

**Explain:** A vegetable is considered any part of herbaceous plants eaten as food by humans. Given this general rule of thumb, vegetables can include leaves (lettuce), stems (asparagus), roots (carrots), flowers (broccoli), bulbs (garlic), seeds (peas and beans) and of course the botanical fruits like cucumbers, *squash*, and pumpkins.

**Ask:** Are there different kinds of winter squash? Show students the pictures of different types of winter squash.

- Review the information sheet with students.
- Students can also describe the shape and colors of winter squash.

**Ask:** What texture would you feel touching winter squash?

- Using the nutritional information, have students work in groups to create an informational poster listing the health benefits of winter squash.
- Display the posters in the cafeteria as an advertisement for the Harvest of the Month.

## Kindergarten and First Grade Revision and Reflection

Have students choose one type of winter squash that appeals to them, based on what they learned today. Students can draw that squash, then compare/contrast it to another squash. How are they the same? How are they different?

## Second and Third Grade Revision and Reflection

Using the information sheet, draw a type of squash, noting in the drawing the things that make it different than other types of squash. Summarize what you learned about the vegetable.

## Fourth and Fifth Grade Revision and Reflection

Using the information sheet, draw two to three types of squash, noting in the drawing the things that make it different than other types of squash. Compare and contrast it to another type of winter squash, using your information sheet to support your comparison.



# Types of Squash

## 1. Kabocha Squash

*Characteristics:* The squat, green kabocha—the Japanese word for squash—has a nutty, earthy flavor with just a touch of sweetness. It’s similar in shape and size to a buttercup squash, but the base points out and not in.

## 2. Butternut Squash

*Characteristics:* A slim neck and bulbous bottom give the butternut squash its distinctive bell shape. The muted yellow-tan rind hides bright orange-yellow flesh with a relatively sweet taste.

## 3. Red Kabocha Squash

*Characteristics:* The red kabocha is squat, like its green counterpart, and has faint white stripes running from top to bottom. While the green kabocha is relatively savory, the red kabocha is unmistakably sweeter.

## 4. Carnival Squash

*Characteristics:* Breed an acorn squash with a sweet dumpling squash, and you get a carnival squash. While the carnival squash’s exterior resembles both of its relatives’, its yellow flesh is mellow and sweet.

## 5. Sugar Pumpkin

*Alternate name:* Pie pumpkin

*Characteristics:* If your Halloween pumpkin was small and squat, chances are it was a sugar pumpkin. But more than just decorative, sugar pumpkins are prized for their classic pumpkin flavor, as well as for their thick and flesh-packed walls.

## 6. Sweet Dumpling Squash

*Characteristics:* This whitish-yellow and green squash is small and compact, making the whole squash the perfect-size bowl for an individual serving. The flesh tastes very much like sweet potato, and the skin is edible is as well.

## 7. Spaghetti Squash

*Characteristics:* Take a fork to the inside of a cooked spaghetti squash, and you’ll understand how this variety got its name. By scraping the flesh, you’ll get “strings” that closely resemble noodles.

## 8. Blue Hubbard Squash

*Characteristics:* Most blue Hubbard squash are huge, bumpy, and lumpy, and often sold as pre-cut wedges. Underneath the gray-blue skin is sweet-tasting orange flesh.

## 9. Delicata Squash

*Alternate name:* Sweet potato squash

*Characteristics:* This particular winter squash, with its pale yellow shading, most closely resembles its summer squash cousins. The thin skin is edible, but also more susceptible to bruises and rot. When cooked, the delicata has a consistency similar to that of a sweet potato—creamy and soft—although the flavoring is a bit more earthy.

## 10. Red Kuri Squash

*Alternate names:* Orange Hokkaido, red Hubbard, potimarron

*Characteristics:* Like all Hubbards, the red kuri has an asymmetrical, lopsided look to it. Its yellow flesh is smooth and has a chestnut-like flavor.

## 11. Buttercup Squash

*Characteristics:* Compact and green with paler green striations, the buttercup can closely resemble a kabocha squash. Its distinctive bottom with a circular ridge, though, gives it away. A freshly cut buttercup may smell like a clean, fragrant cucumber, but once cooked, its orange flesh becomes dense, a bit dry, and very mild.

## 12. Acorn Squash

*Characteristics:* This mildly flavored squash is named for its acorn-like shape. Choose one with a dull green rind; an acorn squash that’s turned orange will have tough and fibrous flesh.

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