



Growing with MO

Harvest of the Season

A Missouri Farm to Preschool Newsletter

June

Summer Squash



Did You Know?

We eat different parts of plants. Lettuce and spinach are leaves. Carrots and radishes are roots. Summer squash is the fruit of a plant because it grows out of a flower.



Read Together

Zora's Zucchini by Katherine Pryor

Tops and Bottoms by Janet Stevens

Fast Growing Zucchini

If you planted zucchini in May, you might have more zucchini than you know what to do with by late June. This is one of the fastest growing vegetables. When the plant starts producing, gardeners may need to pick some every day. For the best flavor and texture, pick them when they are about 6 to 8 inches long. They can grow to be bigger than a baseball bat, but try not to let them. These huge zucchinis are tough, bitter and have lots of seeds. Have children check the plants every day to see how fast they grow. Zucchini is the green summer squash and it can easily hide under the big plant leaves. Finding the small ones when they're ready to be picked can be a fun challenge.

Cook Together

Sauteed Summer Squash Smiles

Makes 6 (½ cup) servings

- 1 medium zucchini
- 1 medium yellow summer squash
- 1 teaspoon canola oil
- ½ teaspoon salt-free seasoning blend
- 2 Tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

Directions:

- 1. Wash hands with soap and water.
- 2. Wash zucchini and yellow squash under running water.
- 3. Cut squash in half lengthwise, and cut each half into slices (they look like smiles).
- 4. Heat oil in skillet over medium heat. Add squash and cook until tender.

When you see this symbol in the recipe it means it is a great opportunity for children to lend a hand in the kitchen.



Shop Together

When shopping for summer squash, look for the smallest ones you can find. Six to eight inches long is a good size. They should be smooth and firm to the touch. The big ones might seem like a bargain, but the taste and texture are not as good.

The most common varieties are zucchini and yellow straightneck squash. Some of the yellow ones have a curved neck and are bigger at one end. These are called crookneck squash. Another fun variety is patty pan. This is sometimes called “UFO squash” because of its shape.



Patty pan

Take your child to a farmers market in the summer and see how many different shapes and colors of squash they can find.

Explore Summer Squash

Summer squash is a vegetable that many children and teachers had never tried or didn't think they liked before they participated in *Growing with MO Harvest of the Season* at their child care. After they had a chance to do learning activities and taste summer squash, there was a significant increase in how many liked it!

Here's an easy activity to do at home. Slice a summer squash and ask your child to describe what they see. They might talk about a dark green or yellow skin or peel, a lighter color flesh inside and lots of seeds in the middle. Then tell them that they can eat all of these parts!



From the Field

Stories from Missouri Child Care

M&M's Kids Kampus in Perryville grew an abundance of zucchini so the children had many chances to try it. They served it diced & steamed, sliced & baked,



made zucchini bread and zucchini noodles (Zoodles). They even made Pizza Zucchini Boats. Yum! Director, Jane Moldenhauer said the children seemed to like it best just steamed with a

little Nature's Seasoning Blend.

M&M's did not have as much success growing green beans. The leaves kept disappearing off the plants. The children became detectives to figure out why the leaves were missing!

Look through this newsletter to find who might have hopped into the garden to munch on the leaves. Maybe next year he won't be so hungry and the bean plants will look like this!



Tips for Using Summer Squash

- Wash gently. The skin is very thin and bruises easily.
- Dip raw strips in Ranch dressing.
- Summer squash has little flavor, so spice it up with your favorite seasoning.
- Don't over cook or the squash will get too soft and mushy.

Growing with MO Harvest of the Season is a project of the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services Team Nutrition Program. Young children learn about Missouri grown fruits and vegetables through preschool classroom experiences, gardening, field trips and through eating these foods in meals and snacks when they are in season.

www.health.mo.gov/growingwithmo



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