

MID SUMMER III

August marks the mid point of the growing season. Beans and peas are largely spent, but tomatoes, eggplants, peppers and the squash family come into their own. Harvest every day, lifting the leaves to check for veg. Eggplant, especially, likes to play hide and seek. If rain is forecast, pick almost-ripe tomatoes to prevent them becoming waterlogged and tasteless.

If you would like to save peas and beans for next year, let one of your plants set seed. When the pods are visibly bulging, are dry and pale tan, cut them from the plant and shell the seeds. Store them in an envelope in a dry place until next spring. Cut the other bean and pea plants at soil level rather than digging up the whole plant. The roots of these plants actually feed the soil, putting back nitrogen as they decay.

The Squash family—zucchini, summer squash and winter squash—like to live large, and can quickly overwhelm your garden and your kitchen. If you are awash with squash, pick off some blossoms to reduce your harvest. The blossoms are edible and are delicious stuffed with cheese and lightly pan fried.

It's ok to prune Squashzilla vines! Wear gloves to do this because the vines have prickly hairs. Take a good look at your plants and make sure that you have several squash developing before you prune. Find a bud that is swelling with a new squash, and count along three sets of leaves on the same vine. Using clippers, cut the vine just after that third set of leaves. You can also cut off several leaves from each vine to let the sun reach the developing squash and neighboring plants. Just remember to leave several big healthy leaves so that the vine can produce enough food to sustain itself.

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The New Seed Starters Handbook |
Nancy Bubel

SEED SAVING | EXPERIENCED

[International Seed Saving Institute:
Squash/Pumpkin](#)