








GROWING TIMES

Growing Places Garden Project, Inc.

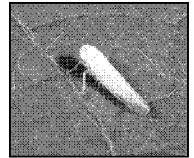
THE WEATHER:

FROM WWW.WEATHER.COM

Monday	77° high/ 57° low	
Tuesday	71° high/ 60° low	
Wednesday	75° high/ 65° low	
Thursday	85° high/ 63° low	
Friday	86° high/ 64° low	
Saturday	84° high/ 65° low	
Sunday	84° high/ 63° low	

HELLO GARDENERS,

We enjoyed visiting your gardens these last few weeks. I don't think that we'll ever get over the joy of seeing the abundance of summer that emerges from the tiny seeds and seedlings of spring. This spring and summer have been cool, so many of the plants in our gardens are a bit "behind schedule." We did notice that many of you are already seeing zucchini and beans. We suspect that tomatoes may have finally arrived also. Please see the crop report below on the summer squashes: zucchini, yellow and pattypan. Many people also eat their squash blossoms – but not the ones with the baby squashes attached.



To Do: Get rid of these leaf hoppers!

For those of you with tomatoes, it's important to keep track of your watering patterns. If tomato plants get too little water, they wilt. If they get too much, the ripe tomatoes will split. Also, slugs (yes, slugs again) love to eat tomatoes. If you notice ragged holes or tunnels in your ripening or ripe tomatoes, be sure to check your slug traps.

The days of late July and August are just wonderful times to be in your gardens and snacking. The ripe cherry tomatoes, freshly picked green beans, the last of the sugar snap peas, lettuce leaves, and broccoli florets are so delicious. We usually eat them before we can bring them inside.

TO DO THIS WEEK:

Cindy and Kate

- ✓ Soak broccoli, cabbage and kale in salt water before chopping; this usually removes caterpillars.
- ✓ Plant more beans, broccoli, lettuce, spinach, carrots for late summer and early fall crops.
- ✓ Harvest beans, cucumbers, peas and squashes frequently – it signals the plant to continue production.
- ✓ Keep eyes open for squash bugs, Japanese and cucumber beetles – hand pick and destroy.
- ✓ Use hard water spray or insecticidal soap on leaf hoppers – they suck the plant juices and spread disease.

NEW CROPS: SUMMER SQUASH

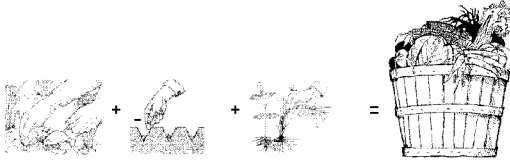
Zucchini and summer squash (straight yellow, crookneck and pattypan) are wonderful vegetables that have many uses. It's important to make sure to check the plants regularly; Kate has had zucchini grow into baseball bats seemingly overnight.

You can harvest zucchini and other summer squash pretty much at any time. For the very smallest squashes, it's easiest to cut the stem with a knife. For larger vegetables just twist the squash or zucchini gently, the stem should break easily.

Several insects like to eat squash and plants, including slugs (yes, they're everywhere), squash bugs and squash vine borers. There are descriptions of these pests in your previous newsletters, but here is a quick review.

Adult squash bugs are usually gray brown and have shield-shaped bodies. *Young squash bugs* are gray and teardrop-shaped. The adults lay clusters of shiny yellow-orange eggs on the undersides of the leaves. If you see these eggs, remove and crush them. The *squash vine borer* is a moth caterpillar. It often leaves damp sawdust-like material at the base of the squash stem and can cause most of the plant to wilt. If you see this, slit the stem lengthwise as gently as you can and look for plump white grub-like caterpillars inside the stem. Scoop them out and "squash" them. The stem will often heal itself if you gently cover it with soil and keep the soil moist.





Growing Places Garden Project, Inc.

P.O. Box 237
Harvard, MA 01451-0237

Cindy Buhner: 978-501-4964
Kate Deyst: 978-771-2377
E-mail: staff@growingplaces.org

We're on the Web!

www.growingplaces.org

"Growing Times" is produced by Anna Barker of WordWay in Groton, MA.
(waybarker@charter.net)

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What To Do with All That Squash

What you do with your squash depends most on its size. The smaller they are, the more tender they will be. Tiny ones can be sliced and put into salads raw, or roasted or grilled whole. There are many ways to use medium-sized squash: cut into long slices and grilled, grated for quick breads, cut in chunks and steamed, pureed for soup...

Now, if you do end up with a "baseball bat," don't panic. Just remove it from the plant (cutting the stem with a serrated knife would be best), cut it in half long-way and remove the seeds. You now have a shell that you can rub with oil, stuff with tomatoes, corn, and grated cheese and bake at 350° for 35-45 minutes. Or you can grate the whole thing and make zucchini bread. Grated squash can also be frozen in bags for later use. (One of our clients last year had enough to make bread every week!) Or try this "*Green and Gold Squash Casserole*."

1 medium onion, chopped	1/2 tsp dried oregano
2 TBS olive oil	1/2 tsp ground black pepper
2 medium zucchini, grated	1/2 tsp salt
2 medium yellow summer squash, grated	3 eggs, beaten (or egg substitute)
2 TBS fresh parsley, chopped	1 C cracker (or bread) crumbs

In a large skillet, sauté the onion in oil until soft. Add the squash and sauté until much of the moisture disappears, about 15 min. Remove from heat and stir in seasonings, eggs, and cracker crumbs. Blend well and place in a greased 9" casserole. Preheat oven to 325°. Top squash with grated cheese and bake in preheated oven 45 minutes.

(From The Big Book of Preserving the Harvest, by Carol W. Costbender, 1997.)

HARVESTING HINTS

Harvesting is just what we are looking forward to when we do all this planting, but sometimes it's hard to tell when something is ripe. Each fruit/vegetable is unique, but there are some basic guidelines that you can follow for telling when and how to pick:

- ◆ Try to harvest from the plants when they are dry – it reduces the spread of disease.
- ◆ For most vegetables, it is better to cut the vegetable from the plant with a sharp knife instead of pulling it off the plant – pulling can cause damage to other parts of the plant and possibly reduce production.
- ◆ Beets, radishes and carrots: check size with finger by gently digging around the top of the vegetable. Harvest when carrots and radishes are about 3/4-1" around and beets when 1 1/2 - 2 1/2" around.
- ◆ Lettuce, swiss chard, kale, collards, spinach: harvest outer or lower leaves when they are a size you like to eat (smaller will be more tender).
- ◆ Beans should be about the thickness of a pencil and 4-6" in length.
- ◆ Broccoli: cut off head at the stalk when it is the size of your fist or bigger, harvest immediately if yellow flowers appear; side shoots will continue to grow but will be smaller.
- ◆ Cucumbers should be about 4-6" long. They grow quickly so check vines often.
- ◆ Peppers can be used green when they are the size you like, or you can wait until they are fully ripe and are red (or purple or yellow).
- ◆ Eggplant: harvest any time after they reach about half their mature size.
- ◆ Tomatoes: harvest when skin yields slightly to finger pressure and tomato twists off vine easily.
- ◆ Enjoy the bounty!!!

