

# Delicata Squash

*Cucurbita pepo*



## General Information

- Edible plant
- Sun Exposure: Full sun
- Water needs: High
- Temperature: Does best in warmer temperatures, and cannot tolerate cold. Daytime temperatures should be consistently at least 70 °F before planting.
- When to harvest: Harvest between 80 to 100 days after planting.
- Harvest season: Late spring to summer

## Planting Guide

- Planting Season: Mid-spring. The delicata does not do well at all in cold temperatures, so wait to plant until it warms up. To be safe you should plant 1 week after the last frost date (you can look up the frost date online for the specific year).
- Location: Somewhere with full sun. Make sure soil is well-draining and rich.
- Spacing: Plant the squash at least 2 feet apart from each other.
- Soil and Fertilizer: Mix compost into the soil at least 3 inches deep, and ideally add a layer of mulch to the top of the soil to conserve moisture.
- How to plant: If sowing seeds directly, plant seeds in holes 1 inch deep. Plant 2 seeds in each hole and gently cover with soil before watering. If transplanting, you will want to dig a hole twice the width of the pot. Make sure the base of the stem is level with the soil, and gently fill in the hole before watering.

## Care Guide

- Irrigation: Delicata need a good amount of water to thrive. You will know to water the plants when the leaves begin to wilt. The plants should get between 1-2 inches of water per week, with additional watering as needed (especially during dry spells).

- Pruning: Remove dead and wilted stems and weeds surrounding the plant to keep things tidy and healthy.
- Additional Fertilizer: You can continue to add a top layer of mulch to soil to keep it moist. Once you notice the plant's first bloom, you can also apply some fertilizer to boost growth. Once the plant begins fruiting, you can continue to occasionally apply fertilizer for increased production.
- Pests: Squash bugs are the most common pest in California. Squash bugs dig into the stem and feed on the sap, which weakens the plant and decreases production rates. You can protect the plants using row covers or fleece, but you should continue to check for eggs on the stems and scrape off any you find. These bugs are most active in the early summer, so keep a look out during this time.
- Disease: Most problems can be avoided with appropriate spacing, soil drainage, and fertilization. Common diseases are blossom-end rot or powdery mildew, so watch out for those.