



Pumpkin Planting Guide

About Pumpkins

One of the oldest domesticated plants and a very popular winter squash, pumpkins are widely grown for commercial use and as food, aesthetics, and recreational purposes.

When to Plant

Plant your pumpkin seeds outside after all chance of frost has passed and the soil temperature is 65 degrees F.

Where to Plant

Plan on needing a minimum of 20 square feet for each plant - this can be found on the edge of the garden where the vines can trail down, or in an unconventional spot in your yard that has ample space. The warmer the soil, the faster the seeds will germinate, so mound the soil to help the sun heat it faster. Pumpkins grow best with at least 6 hours of direct, unfiltered sun each day.

How to Plant

To prepare the soil, dig down 2-3' and then back-fill with a rich compost and manure mix. After mounding the soil, plant 3-5 pumpkin seeds (pointed end facing down) about 1" deep in each mound. Mounds should be 4-8' apart.

Caring for Pumpkins

Once they germinate, thin to 2 of the healthiest sprouts. Only water as needed. If the plant looks healthy, there is no need to water daily. When the soil is dry and the plant looks limp, give it a long deep drink. Deep but infrequent watering results in a healthier plant. Most pumpkin varieties take between 85-125 days to mature. A pumpkin is ripe when its skin turns a deep, solid color. Harvest on a dry day after the plants have died back and the skins are hard with a hollow sound. Cut the fruit off the vine carefully with a sharp knife or pruners, do not tear. Be sure not to cut too close to the pumpkin; a liberal amount of stem (3-4") will increase the pumpkin's keeping time. Handle pumpkins very gently or they may bruise.