

Harvest of the Month

WINTER SQUASH



Farm to ECE

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

NEBRASKA



Download and print items from
the Harvest of the Month toolkit at:

www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/harvest-of-the-month

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NEBRASKA
**AGRICULTURE
IN THE CLASSROOM**
NEBRASKA FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION

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HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

FLEXIBILITY – FOR YOU!

Use the provided activity calendars as a guide to incorporate this resource into your classroom. Follow the calendars as written, or use them as inspiration and select the activities that work best for you, the children, and your schedule.

TRY READING THE SAME BOOK EVERY DAY FOR A WEEK.

Reading the same book every day for a week allows children to learn more about the story and dive deeper into the book's meaning. Rereading a story leads to greater reading confidence. Ask discussion questions to encourage children to retell the story. This practice will help prepare children for more complex narratives down the road.

DON'T HESITATE TO REPEAT ACTIVITIES.

Repetition provides the practice that children need to learn and master new skills. As children repeat activities, they will improve speed, increase confidence, and strengthen the connections in their brain that help them learn!

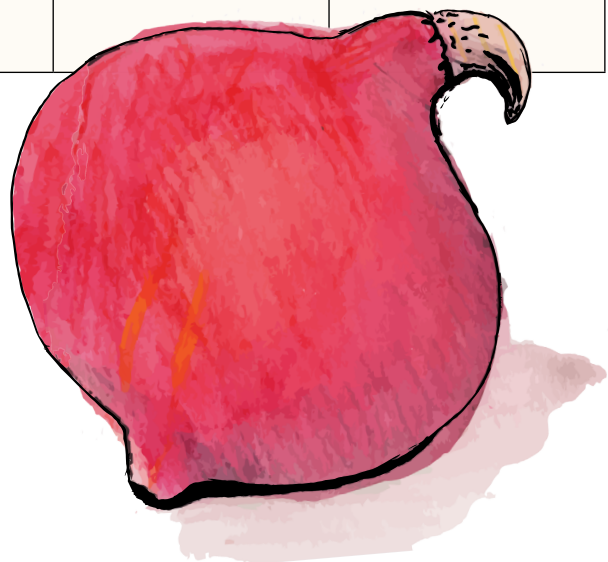


ACTIVITY CALENDAR: PLANNING FOR ONE MONTH

WEEKLY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Student Understanding: Farmers grow squash. Book of the Week: <i>Anywhere Farm</i> by Phyllis Root	Farm Story with Props Dramatic Play Activity	Story Time with Book of the Week Quick Bite Activity for Exploration	Coloring Page Recipe: <i>Harvest Delight</i>	Farm Story with Props Dramatic Play Activity	Story Time with Book of the Week Video: <i>Groundwork Harvest of the Month</i>
Student Understanding: There are many types of squash. Book of the Week: <i>Sophie's Squash</i> by Pat Zietlow Miller	Story Time with Book of the Week Matching Activity	Video: <i>Pumpkins & Squash Vocabulary Cards</i> Recipe: <i>Baked Apples & Butternut Squash</i>	Video & Activity: <i>Tracing Winter Squash</i>	Story Time with Book of the Week	Quick Bite One Farm Story with Props
Student Understanding: Squash have many different textures. Book of the Week: <i>Growing Vegetable Soup</i> by Lois Ehlert	Story Time with Book of the Week Sensory Activity	Quick Bite Two	Art Activity	Recipe: <i>Squish Squash Lasagna</i>	Story Time with Book of the Week Dramatic Play Activity
Student Understanding: Squash have many uses. Book of the Week: <i>We Are the Gardeners</i> by Joanna Gaines	Story Time with Book of the Week Dramatic Play Activity	Story Time with Book of the Week	Story Time with Book of the Week Exploratory Activity	Recipe: <i>Acorn Squash Bowls</i>	Farm Story with Props Video: <i>Groundwork Harvest of the Month</i>

ACTIVITY CALENDAR: PLANNING FOR TWO WEEKS

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
WEEK ONE	<p>Story Time with Suggested Books for Reading</p> <p>Matching Activity</p>	<p>Video: <i>Pumpkins & Squash Vocabulary Cards</i></p> <p>Recipe: <i>Baked Apples & Butternut Squash</i></p>	<p>Video & Activity: <i>Tracing Winter Squash</i></p> <p>Sensory Play Activity</p>	<p>Story Time with Suggested Books for Reading</p> <p>Art Activity</p>	<p>Quick Bite One</p> <p>Farm Story with Props</p>
WEEK TWO	<p>Farm Story with Props</p> <p>Video: <i>Groundwork Harvest of the Month</i></p> <p>Dramatic Play Activity</p>	<p>Story Time with Suggested Books for Reading</p> <p>Quick Bite Activity for Exploration</p>	<p>Coloring Page</p> <p>Recipe: <i>Harvest Delight</i></p>	<p>Farm Story with Props</p> <p>Dramatic Play Activity</p>	<p>Story Time with Suggested Books for Reading</p> <p>Quick Bite Two</p>



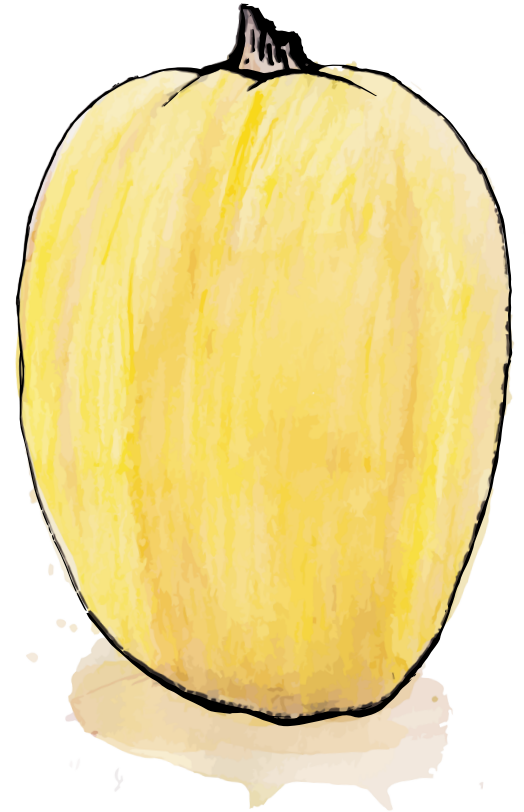
ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR READING

- *Anywhere Farm* by Phyllis Root
- *Growing Vegetable Soup* by Lois Ehlert
- *The Life of a Potato* by Vicki Hutchings
- *Sophie's Squash* by Pat Zietlow Miller
- *We Are the Gardeners* by Joanna Gaines

SONGS, POEMS, AND VIDEOS

- Groundwork Harvest of the Month: Wally the Winter Squash
» www.youtube.com/watch?v=TB6kWDepluw
- How to prepare butternut squash – Cooking with kids
» www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmQqRfQcE1w
- Pumpkins and Squash Vocabulary Flash Cards
» www.youtube.com/watch?v=cE6jnra2kbM
- Tracing winter squash for fun food play!
» www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxOBFDoge5o



INVOLVING FAMILIES

Involve families in the winter squash unit by sharing the Winter Squash Fun Facts document. Add the information to a newsletter, incorporate the fun facts into a bulletin board, or send the sheet home so families can read through it and learn more together. Additional ways to involve families using the resources in this lesson could also include sharing the recipes and suggested books or inviting them to participate in one of the activities.

QUICK BITES

Harvest of the Month Quick Bites encourage children to participate in taste testing and provide activities for exploration. Children have the opportunity to learn more about the food on their plate and give feedback on food samples.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

These activities are aligned with the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for children ages 4-5. Use the lessons to engage children in hands-on activities to practice fine and gross motor skills, explore crafts and music, engage the senses, and more! All activities are “center” or “play station” based for small groups of children to complete at a time. Reference the Activity Calendars for scheduling inspiration.

WINTER SQUASH FUN FACTS

Children are learning about winter squash! Extend learning outside of the classroom by creating a positive experience for children with a conversation. Help them learn more about food and farming in Nebraska!



WINTER SQUASH HAVE HARD, THICK SKIN
and will keep for up to a month if stored in a cool, dark, well-ventilated space.



**WINTER SQUASH CONTAIN BETA CAROTENE
WHICH OUR BODY USES TO MAKE VITAMIN A.**
Vitamin A helps our vision, our growth,
and our immune system.



**WINTER SQUASH CAN BE USED AS A
SUBSTITUTE FOR PUMPKIN IN PUMPKIN PIE.**
Butternut is the most common winter squash
found in grocery stores.



CHINA, JAPAN, ROMANIA, TURKEY, ITALY, EGYPT, & ARGENTINA
are the largest commercial producers of squash.

QUICK BITES

Did you know? Children may need to try a new food 10-15 times before they determine whether or not they enjoy it. Taste tests are a great opportunity for children to try new, healthy foods in a low risk environment. Refer to the Taste Test Guide for food allergy information, precautions, and safety ideas before completing these activities with children.

QUICK BITE ONE

Try winter squash varieties!

- Example: For each variety of squash, cut the squash in half and clean out the seeds. Then, cut the squash into chunks. Next, brush the squash with olive oil and sprinkle with salt. Finally, place the squash on a baking sheet and bake at 375°F for 30-45 minutes. Try this with these varieties of squash: Acorn, Butternut, Delicata, Spaghetti, and/or Sugar Pumpkins.

QUICK BITE TWO

Explore your five senses with butternut squash!

- Example: Put the squash on your plate and mirror eating it. Talk about your experience or describe what it tastes like when you eat it. Explore with your five senses.
 - » What shape is it?
 - » What does the texture feel like on the inside?
 - » What does squash smell like?
 - » When you chew, does the sound you make sound like another food you eat?
 - » How does squash taste to you?

ACTIVITY FOR EXPLORATION

Play with your food!

1. In small groups of 3-5 children, invite the children to make comparisons between a squash and a pumpkin.
2. Lead children to think about how the squash and pumpkin grew. "What did they need to grow to the size they are?"
3. Ask the children: "Why are they different sizes? Why are they different colors?"
4. Invite the children to make predictions about what might be inside of the squash and pumpkin.
5. Using a knife, have an adult cut open the squash and pumpkin.
6. Let the children scoop out the seeds and discuss what they find.
7. Discuss how the squash and pumpkin started as a seed and grew into the squash and pumpkin you have in front of them!

Note: Soups are a great way to cook with these vegetables.



HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

PAGE 10

MATCHING ACTIVITY - ALL KINDS OF SQUASH!

Children will match real squash to squash in photos to learn the names of different varieties of squash.

PAGE 13

ART ACTIVITY - SQUASH ART

Children create visual art by fingerpainting on a winter squash shape and then add designs with lentils.

PAGE 14

SENSORY ACTIVITY - SQUASH SENSORY BIN

Children explore squash through sensory play using a bin full of squash and potato mashers.

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SCIENCE ACTIVITY - SQUASH BIRDFEEDER

Children discover the uses of squash by creating their own bird feeder out of squash.

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DRAMATIC PLAY ACTIVITY - SQUASH STORY

Children will act out how a seed grows by following directions.

PAGE 18

FARM STORY WITH PROPS

Read the story and have children follow along with the photos. Use the circle time activity props to enhance the experience!

MATCHING ACTIVITY

ALL KINDS OF SQUASH

Standard (M.03): Demonstrates awareness of routines, predictable patterns, and attributes that can be measured.

Sorting and grouping things together are an important cognitive skill. It teaches children to notice similarities and differences, learn to categorize, and develops early literacy and numeracy skills.

THE GOAL

Children will match photos of varieties of winter squash to real examples of winter squash to understand the different varieties available to eat.

INSTRUCTIONS

This activity is best implemented as a small to medium center with 2-4 children.

1. Introduce the kinds of squash in this game by using the pictures on the Squash Cards.
2. Next, hand each student either a card or a real example of the squash.
3. Have the children find their match.
4. When all matches are found, use the information on the squash cards to discuss the differences of each squash.

Note: If you are unable to find real varieties of the squash, print two copies of the photos and have children find the matching photos.

ENGAGE THE CHILDREN

Engage children to help develop language, socialization, fine motor, and touch sensory skills.

1. Ask children about what they are doing.
2. Ask children to provide explanations.
3. Ask children the following questions to help them make the connection from their lives to the farm.
 - » Where are squash grown? (on a farm)
 - » Who grows the squash? (a farmer)
 - » Have you ever eaten squash?



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Squash cards
- Real varieties of winter squash



BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Butternut squash are yellow or tan. They have a bell-shape or a pear-shape.



CARNIVAL SQUASH

Carnival squash are a white or cream color with green and orange stripes. They are short and round.



RED KABOCHA SQUASH

Red kabocha squash are red or orange. They are short and round. They taste sweeter than green kabocha squash.



BUTTERCUP SQUASH

Buttercup squash have dark green skin. They are short and round.



DELICATA SQUASH

Delicata squash have yellow and green stripes. They are long and have an oval shape.



ACORN SQUASH

Acorn squash are green and shaped like an acorn from a tree.



GREEN KABOCHA SQUASH

Green kabocha squash are dark green with light green or white stripes. They are short and round.



HUBBARD SQUASH

Hubbard squash can be a lot of colors like orange, red, green, yellow, and even blue. They are big and round.

ART ACTIVITY

SQUASH ART

Standard (CA.02): Develops foundational skills that support creative expression through the process, production, and appreciation of visual art forms.

Creating art helps children develop observation and interpretation skills. They learn important concepts like symbolism and abstraction while also strengthening pattern recognition and visual-spatial skills to understand relationships between parts of a whole.

THE GOAL

Children create visual art by fingerpainting on a winter squash shape and then add designs with lentils.

INSTRUCTIONS

This activity is best implemented as a medium center with 3-4 children.

1. Cut various medium winter squash shapes out of yellow, orange, and green construction paper
2. Have children dip their fingers in yellow, orange, and green fingerpaint and paint lines on their squash with their fingers.
3. Once the paint has dried, give children various colors of lentils and allow them to glue the lentils into patterns on the squash.
4. Create a vine to attach the children's artwork together.

ENGAGE THE CHILDREN

Engage children to help develop language, socialization, fine motor, and touch sensory skills.

1. Ask children about what they are doing.
2. Ask children to provide explanations.
3. Ask children the following questions to help them make the connection from their lives to the farm.
 - » What does squash feel like? (smooth, bumpy, rough, etc.)
 - » Is squash colorful? (Yes, squash are a variety of colors: yellow, orange, green, and even grayish-blue.)



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Yellow, orange, and green construction paper
- Yellow, orange, and green fingerpaint
- Lentils (yellow, orange, white)
- Glue
- Scissors

SENSORY ACTIVITY

SQUASH SENSORY BIN

Standard (AL.01): Develops foundational skills that support initiative, self-direction, and curiosity as a learner.

Sensory play has multiple benefits for children such as sensory exploration, improving motor skills, increased socialization, promotion of life skills, language development, and calming techniques. With this simple activity, you will be promoting multiple growth opportunities for your student.

THE GOAL

Children explore squash through sensory play using a bin full of squash and potato mashers.

INSTRUCTIONS

This activity is best implemented as a small center with 1-2 children (done best during outdoor play if weather permits).

1. Fill a sensory bin half full of the pulp and seeds of a large squash.
2. Provide 1-2 potato mashers for this activity.
3. Have children take off shoes and encourage exploration through squashing with their hands and feet.

ENGAGE THE CHILDREN

Engage children to help develop language, socialization, fine motor, and touch sensory skills.

1. Ask children about what they are doing.
2. Ask children to provide explanations.
3. Ask children the following questions to help them make the connection from their lives to the farm.
 - » What is on the inside of a squash? (pulp and seeds)
 - » What part of this does a farmer plant to make more squash? (seed)



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Sensory bin
- Large squash (pulp and seeds)
- 1-2 Potato mashers
- Baby wipes
- Towel

SCIENCE ACTIVITY

SQUASH BIRDFEEDER

Standard (S.02): Develops foundational skills in learning and understanding about the world through exploration and investigation.

Science helps children develop key life skills, including an ability to communicate, remain organized and focused, and even form their own opinions based on observation. Science also helps children develop their senses and overall awareness.

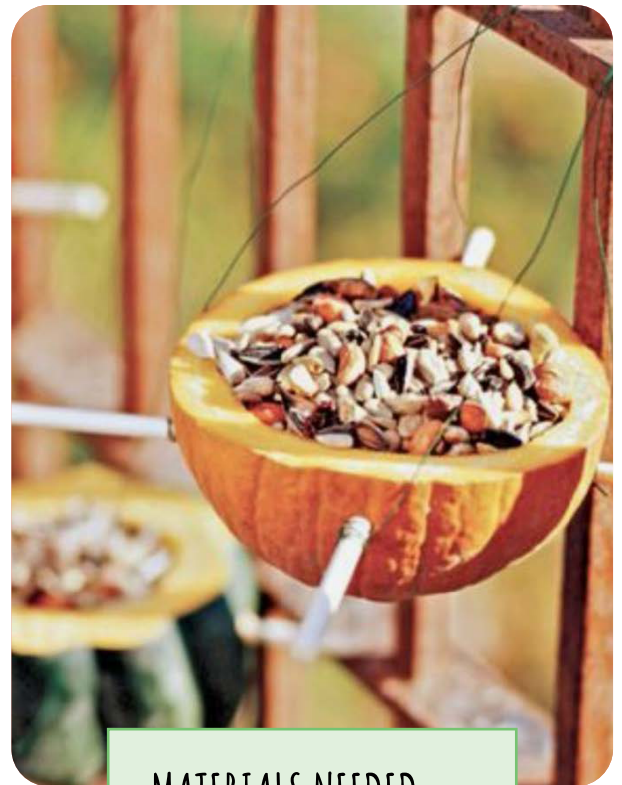
THE GOAL

Children discover the uses of squash by creating their own bird feeder out of squash.

INSTRUCTIONS

This activity is best implemented as a small to medium center with 2-4 children.

1. You can make one as a class, one for a small group of children, or one per student.
2. Provide each group or student with a medium winter squash.
3. Cut the top off the squash about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way down.
4. Allow children to scrape the inside of the squash with a metal spoon.
5. Once cleaned out, hammer sticks or kabob sticks into the sides of the squash with a mallet.
6. Allow children to fill the squash with bird seed or even the seeds they took out of the squash.
7. Tie string, yarn, or wire to each stick and meet the string at the top and tie it to create the hanger.
8. Place in a tree outside on the playground or near classroom window for children to enjoy.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Medium winter squash
- Metal spoons
- Mallet
- Sticks or kabob sticks
- String, yarn, or wire
- Bird seed
- Knife

ENGAGE THE CHILDREN

Engage children to help develop language, socialization, fine motor, and touch sensory skills.

1. Ask children about what they are doing.
2. Ask children to provide explanations.
3. Ask children the following questions to help them make the connection from their lives to the farm.
 - » What kinds of things can we do with squash? (humans eat it and animals eat it)
 - » Is squash something we can eat? (yes)
 - » Where does squash grow? (squash grow on vines along the ground)

DRAMATIC PLAY ACTIVITY

SQUASH STORY

Standard (CA.04): Expresses creativity using puppetry, storytelling, dance, plays, and theater.

Dramatic play has many benefits for children. It allows children to explore self-empowerment while allowing them to make choices and act out their feelings. It helps them to find new connection to themselves while they learn conflict resolution and problem-solving skills while playing with their peers.

THE GOAL

Children will act out how a seed grows using directions and actions.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Tell children they are tiny seeds in the ground. (Action: Have them curl up in a ball.)
2. Tell them it's starting to rain. (Action: Have children move a little bit, but remain curled up in a ball.)
3. Tell them they are a seed starting to grow. (Action: Have children lift their head and upper body.)
4. Tell them the sun is shining and the seed is growing, growing... (Action: The children slowly stand up.)
5. Tell them the seed is becoming a large squash. (Action: They stretch their arms and squat to look like a squash.)

ENGAGE THE CHILDREN

Engage children to help develop language, socialization, fine motor, and touch sensory skills.

1. Ask children about what they are doing.
2. Ask children to provide explanations.
3. Ask children the following questions to help them make the connection from their lives to the farm.
 - » What do squash need to grow? (sunlight, soil, and water)
 - » Where do squash grow? (squash grow on vines along the ground)



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Squash photos (optional)



TEACHER SCRIPT FOR FARM STORY WITH PROPS

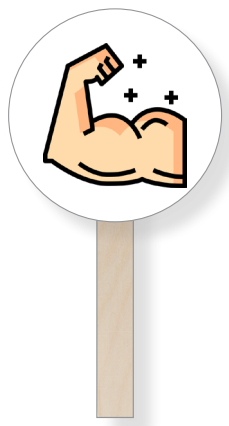
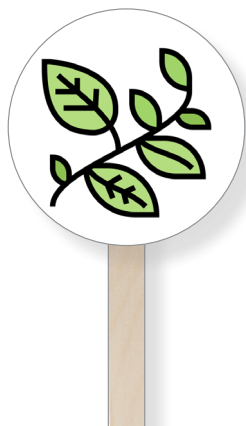
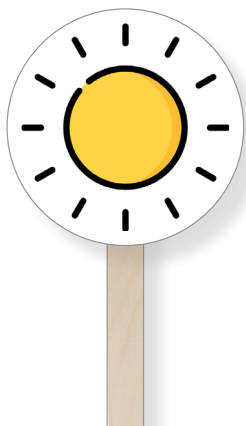
INSTRUCTIONS

Read the story and have children follow along with the photos on the front of this page. Use the circle time activity props to enhance the experience.

- Do you know what a winter squash seed needs to grow? Seeds need water, sunlight, and soil to grow!
- Winter squash are plants that start as seeds. There are many types of winter squash to grow! Squash can come in all shapes, colors, sizes, textures, and flavors. Some of the most common squash are butternut squash, acorn squash, and spaghetti squash.
- Farmers must watch the weather to find just the right time to plant squash in Nebraska. Many seeds are planted by late May. The squash need a lot of space, good soil, and time to grow.
- Squash grow on long vines. They grow over the summer and are usually harvested in the early fall. Farmers need to make sure they have enough space on their land as the squash vines can get pretty long!
- After planting the seed, a farmer will need to wait 75 to 100 days. Then, the squash will be ready to harvest.
- Once a farmer picks the squash, you can eat it in many different ways. You can roast it, boil it, and even mash it! Squash are a great source of vitamins to help you stay healthy and strong!

CIRCLE TIME PROPS

Ahead of the activity, cut out the shapes and glue each one to a popsicle stick. Distribute the props before you read the story and have children act out the story with the props. Practice sequencing: when children hear their item called, they would stand in order at the front of the room with the teacher.



FARM STORY



WINTER SQUASH

Learn more about how winter squash start on the farm and get to you!



1

Winter squash start as seeds.



2

The seeds are planted in the ground.



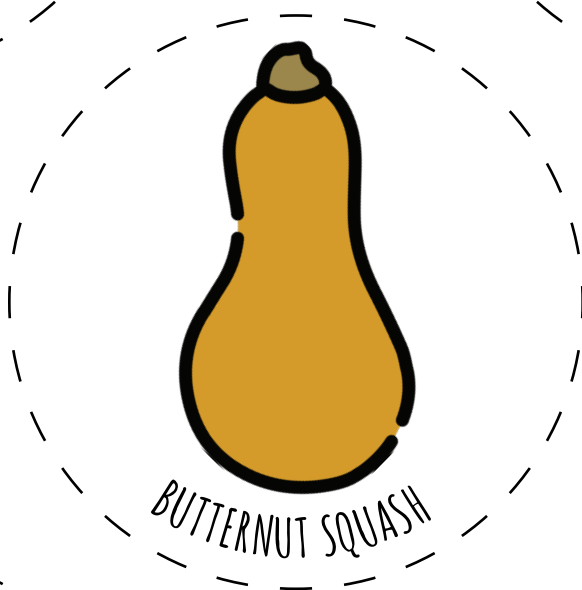
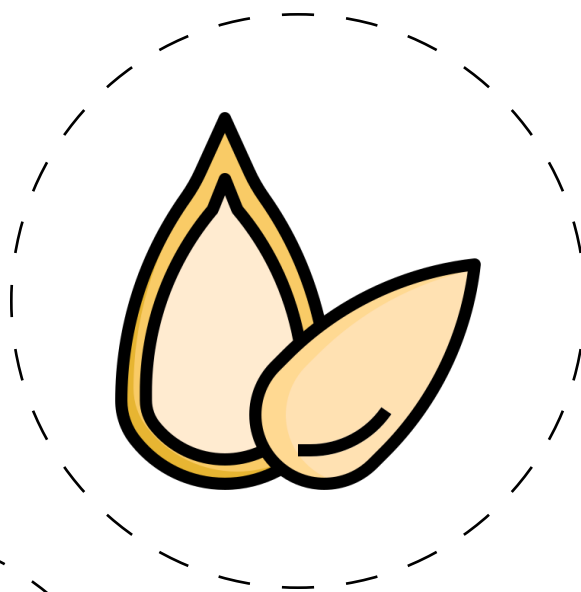
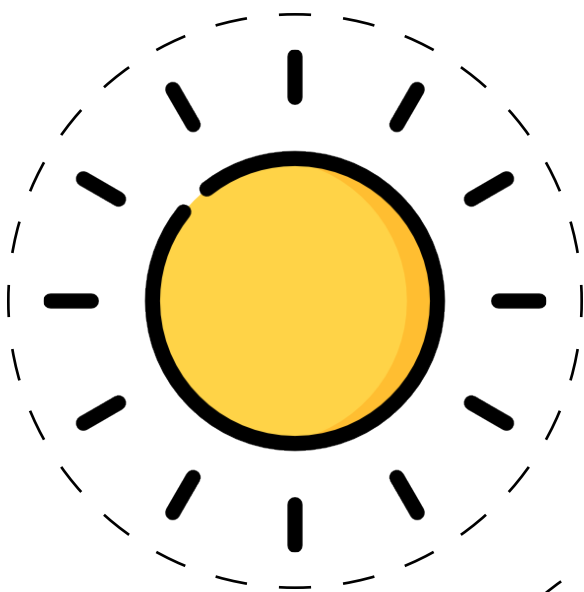
3

The seeds grow into long vines.



4

The winter squash grow on the vines and are harvested in the fall!



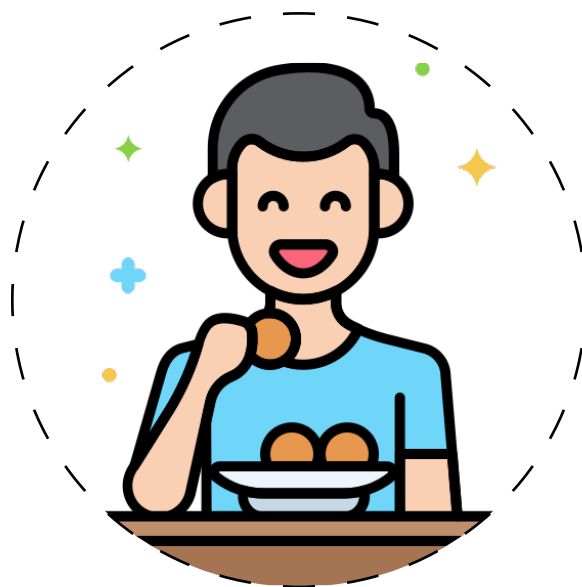
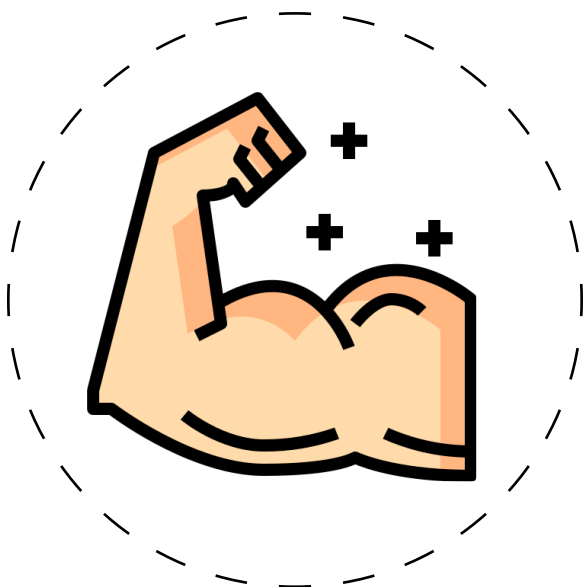
BUTTERNUT SQUASH



ACORN SQUASH

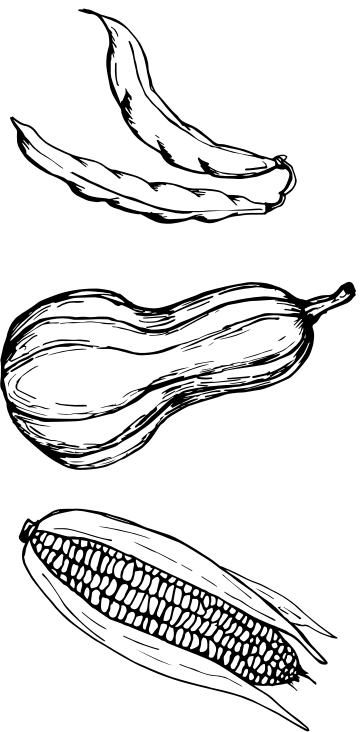


SPAGHETTI SQUASH



Harvest of the Month

WINTER SQUASH



DID YOU KNOW -

To some Native American tribes, corn, beans, and winter squash are known as the, "Three Sisters." These plants were grown together and were staples of many tribes in North America.

