

Squash | #10



Botanical name:	Cucurbita maxima
Common name:	Squash
Tongan name:	Hina
Other names:	

DESCRIPTION & USES

Scientific name - *Cucurbita maxima* (var. *Delica*), Tongan Name - *Hina*

Buttercup squash (*Cucurbita maxima* D.) is a hybrid member of the pumpkin family. It has become an attractive vegetable in Japan and a standard staple. Squash is the most important export commercial crop from Tonga. Production of squash for export to Japanese market started in 1987 and during the last ten years squash export industry has developed to become the mainstay of the Tongan economy.



Squash

PRODUCTION NOTES

Soil: Further research is required into the soil nutrient requirements of pumpkin in Tonga. Favorable results have been found using chicken manure 0.60kg per planting point at planting), and NPK (one third of requirements applied at planting and the remainder side banded after planting).

for other crops.



Propagation: Planting material is seeds, which are planted 3 to each planting point, at a depth of 3 cm (about 1.1kg/ac). Seeds should be soaked for 12 hours in water prior to planting.

Planting Density: Sowing rate is about 1800 planting points per acre (spacing of 1.5, x 1.5m). No effect of production under widely spaced coconuts has been observed.

Planting Time: So far pumpkin has been planted in Tonga around July - August.

Growth period: Fruits are harvested about 3 months after planting.

Management: A windbreak will help protect plants from wind damage and will reduce evaporation. It is expected that mulching will help maintain soil moisture and will reduce the need for weeding. It is important to keep the plots weed free, particularly 2-3 weeks after planting, to attain good yields. Weeding should be carried out no later than 3 weeks after sowing.

Pests and Diseases control: Powdery mildew causes a reduction in the foliage, which results in sunburn of the fruits. Insect pests include the leaf roller, leaf miner and cucumber beetle. Fusarium rot has also been observed.

Packing and storage: Improper handling of squash at the packing place has cause bruising and defects of the fruits during post harvest.

Marketing notes:

Trade figures showed in 2019-2025, about 11,252.99 tonnes are exported annually with an average price of T\$0.48 per kg.

For more information

Address: Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests (MAFF)