5 Winter Squash Varieties for the Frugal Gardener Short on Space



Wondering which types of winter squash are best for small gardens? Read on to find out about compact winter squash varieties that provide the most bang for your buck. They're

perfect for the frugal gardener!

Summer squash gets all the glory. It grows quickly and provides a high yield. My all-time favorite variety patty-pan matures in less than two months in the right conditions and keeps on giving throughout the season.

On the other hand, winter squash requires a longer growing season and, in most cases, needs more space than summer squash. Does winter squash belong in the frugal garden? Absolutely! Squash—winter or summer—is a nutritious, staple vegetable that's worth growing. Pumpkin is a winter squash variety that I covered about a week ago. The post contains information on the challenges of growing a large vining crop like pumpkins.

Difference between winter and summer squash

Winter squashes have hard flesh and thick skins, unlike their delicate summer cousins. I should point out that winter squashes aren't actually harvested in December, as the name suggests. Instead, they're picked in the fall and are easily preserved throughout the winter months because of their thick-skinned character. Winter squash keeps much longer than summer squash. To ensure your squash lasts as long as possible, be careful not to prick or damage the outer skin.

Note that some winter squashes don't keep as long. Use these up first!

Best varieties to try out

If you're tight on space, vining varieties are a no-go unless you have the patience to train and trellis your squashes vertically. Personally, while I love seeing vertically grown produce in other people's gardens, I haven't yet mastered the

technique. In the past, my handmade trellises haven't been strong enough to hold heavy squashes, and they mostly ended up taking up ground space.

Bush or semi-bush varieties are a viable option for space-starved gardeners. Bonus: they don't take as long to mature as other squash types. Most compact squashes have cute names that signal their miniature plant size.

Here's a handy list of compact winter squash varieties for those with less room:

- Sugar Dumpling
- Bush Delicata
- Burpee's Butterbush
- Red Kuri – One of the first winter squashes I ever grew in a shaded patch of garden at my parent's home. I managed to get a single beautiful bright red squash. I barely knew what I was doing, and it's insane that anything grew in that patch of dirt, but this will forever be a favorite of mine.
- Sugarbush

Tips for growing winter squash

Some folks prefer to start seeds indoors and transplant winter squash seedlings in the early summer months, while others find direct seeding is more successful. I've had some success with direct sowing, but the very variable weather is always a challenge.

Planting squash of any type, even compact winter squash varieties, gives your plants plenty of room. Crowding your squash babies is likely to stunt growth and result in a less than stellar yield.

Finally, don't be afraid to experiment. If you want to try your hand at vertically growing butternut squash or letting

those pumpkin vines flow along your garden path, go for it. No rule says you can’t.

Source:

https://extension.umn.edu/vegetables/growing-pumpkins-and-winter-squash-home-gardenshttps://extension.umn.edu/vegetables/growing-pumpkins-and-winter-squash-home-gardens