Squash, Spaghetti—*Cucurbita pepo* L.[1]

James M. Stephens[2]

Spaghetti squash is also known as vegetable spaghetti, spaghetti gourd, Manchurian squash, and squaghetti. It has erroneously been called cucuzzi, which is a related long, edible gourd.

Figure 1. Spaghetti squash
Credits: James M. Stephens

Use

The interesting thing about spaghetti squash is its resemblance to a bowl of spaghetti when properly prepared. If the yellowish orange mature fruit is cooked whole for about 20 minutes and then cut open, the flesh is in loose shreds, resembling spaghetti in appearance. The taste is squash-like, and rather bland. Proper seasoning with salt, pepper, and butter is required for the best tasting dish.

Description

The fruit is about 10 inches long and 5 inches in diameter, weighing about 2 pounds. The fruit stem is five-sided and grooved, and is not conspicuously flared where it attaches to the fruit. The smooth skinned fruits are produced on a long trailing vine.

Culture

Culture of spaghetti squash should be the same as for winter or summer squash. Since the plant is tender and can be damaged or killed by cold weather, seeds should be sown in the fall or early in the spring as soon as danger of frost is passed. In South Florida, it may be seeded from September through March. Space the plants 3 feet apart in rows spaced 48 inches apart.

Major plant pests include mildews, pickleworms, and fruit rot. Both male and female flowers are produced on the same plant, so bees are necessary for pollination purposes. Fruits develop to harvest stage about 70 to 80 days after seeding. Home storage for several weeks before use is possible if fruits are kept in a dry, airy, cool room.