

Harvesting Winter Squash

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Spaghetti squash, butternut and acorn are all examples of winter squash. Contrary to their summer squash relatives, such as zucchini, winter squash varieties should not be harvested until they have fully matured. Harvesting too soon will result in produce that shrivels up and lacks flavor. Mature winter squash can be stored longer as well.

Mature winter squash will have a hard rind that cannot be easily sliced with your fingernail and the color will be deeper. To harvest, cut the squash away from the vine leaving about two inches of stem attached to the fruit. Handle the squash with care to avoid damaging the rind. Any winter squash that has a damaged rind or is harvested without a stem attached will not store well and should be used soon after harvest.

Winter squash should be stored in a cool, dry area. For the best air flow and to prevent rot, store in a single layer and avoid allowing the fruit to touch.

For more information, please contact the local K-State Research and Extension Office. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.