

Cucurbita maxima

[Synonyms : *Cucurbita maxima* var. *turbaniformis*]

SQUASH is a creeping vine. Native to tropical and warm South America it has yellow flowers. It is also known as *Abóbora menina* (Portuguese), *Abóbora moranga* (Portuguese), American winter squash, *Apala* (Yoruba), *Arra-stambuli* (Arabic), Autumn squash, *Bei gua* (Chinese), *Bí đở* (Vietnamese), *Calabaza amarilla* (Spanish), *Calabaza confitera* (Spanish), *Calabaza de cidra* (Spanish), *Calabaza gigante* (Spanish), *Calabaza grande* (Spanish), *Calabaza redonda* (Spanish), *Calabaza tamalayota* (Mexican, Spanish), *Calabaza tonanera* (Spanish), *Centnergræskar* (Danish), *Cocuzza* (Italian), *Courge* (French), *Courge giraumon* (French), *Courge d'hiver* (French), *Courge potiron* (French), *Delaat gedola* (Hebrew), *Duchesne pumpkin*, *Dyně obrovská* (Czech), *Dynia duza* (Polish), *Dynia olbrzymia* (Polish), *Fan nan gua* (Chinese), *Giant pumpkin*, *Giramonte* (Italian), *Giraumon* (French), *Gourd*, *Grosse courge* (French), *Gummadi* (Telugu), *Halva kaddu* (Urdu), *Japanese squash*, *Jättepumpa* (Swedish), *Jättikurpitsa* (Finnish), *Jättiläiskurpitsa* (Finnish), *Kadduu* (Hindi), *Kadoo* (Urdu), *Kadu* (Nepalese), *Kalabasa* (Tagalog), *Kashi phal* (Nepalese), *Kjempegraskar* (Norwegian), *Kolu* (Gujarati), *Kukurbo maksimuma* (Esperanto), *Kürbis* (German), *Kuri kabocha* (Japanese), *Mathan* (Malayalam), *Mithakaddu* (Hindi, Urdu), *Pompoen* (Afrikaans), *Parangikayi* (Tamil), *Pharsi* (Nepalese), *Pompoen* (Dutch), *Potiron* (French), *Potirono* (Esperanto), *Pumpa* (Swedish), *Pumpkin*, *Qar'islambuli* (Arabic), *Qar'maghrabi* (Arabic), *Qar'malti* (Arabic), *Rata-labu* (Singhalese), *Red gourd pumpkin*, *Riesenkuerbis* (German), *Riesenkürbis* (German), *Risen-Kürbis* (German), *Ronde pompoen* (Dutch), *Reuzenkalebas* (Dutch), *Reuzenpompoen* (Dutch), *Saphuri komra* (Bengali), *Seiyu kabocha* (Japanese), *Sitaa phal* (Nepalese), *Sitaphal* (Hindi), *Sun gua* (Chinese), *Sütö tök* (Hungarian), *Suureviljaline kõrvits* (Estonian), *Sweet fleshed pumpkin*, *Sweet fleshed squash*, *Tekvica najväčšia* (Slovak), *Turban squash*, *Tykev největší* (Czech), *Tykev obrovská* (Czech), *Tykev velkoplodá* (Czech), *Tykva gigantskaia* (Russian), *Wattaka* (Singhalese), *Winter squash*, *Yang gua* (Chinese), *Zucca* (Italian), and *Zucca gigante* (Italian).

Maxima is derived from Latin *magnus* (great, large) meaning 'largest' with reference to the fruit.

There are many varieties of squash (of different shapes, sizes and colours) but they generally bear large brownish-yellow fruit or gourds. These fruit, some of which are understood to be the largest in the plant kingdom, can reach several hundred pounds in weight (although commonly up to 40-60 lb.) with a circumference of about 6 ft.

Some authorities believe that it was the Mormons who introduced the North American Hopi Indians to squash as a food. It was also eaten by Tohono O'odham Indians and some of the Chippewa and Keresan tribes, and apart from eating it as a boiled or fried vegetable, using it as an ingredient in corn bread or drying it for future food, the Iroquois also ate it during ceremonial feasts.

For some of the Chippewa Indians an infusion of the vine's seeds offered a remedy for fluid retention. On the other hand records show that Hawaiians ate the fruit to help reduce blotches on the skin and as a laxative. They also used the vine for treating some female problems.

Medicinally, the fruit pulp has been used in India in poultices applied to burns, boils and inflammation. The seeds have been used in remedies for tapeworm.