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Zucchini is a rather prolific plant, meaning you could have a large harvest off a single plant. Once harvested, store unwashed zucchini in a perforated or open plastic bag for up to a week or freeze the fruit for use later down the road.



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Question: Why should we grow zucchini?
Answer: Zucchini is one of those things that when you have just a little too much of it (i.e., one plant), your friends will run and hide when they see you coming with a paper bag.
You will find it in boxes labeled, “Free, Take Some” along sidewalks.
The produce markets are full of all types of summer squash, of which zucchini is one. It is highly likely you don’t really need to grow your own – your friends who grow it will be delighted to provide for you. But I am a purist when it comes to gardening, I guess.
When I was a child, it seems like the only way we served zucchini was boiled into a mushy mass. Now we know there are so many other ways to enjoy this summer fruit (yes, it’s technically a fruit).
There are also many varieties of summer squash. Why not try something different in your garden next summer alongside your one zucchini? Check out seed rack displays or webpages/



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To grill zucchini, cut them into half inch slices, brush with a little olive oil and grill!

catalogues from a seed company and you will see a great variety of colors and shapes of summer squash. They are all easy to grow and prolific, so be forewarned!
Squash belong to the cucurbit family (cucumbers, melons, gourds, pumpkins, etc.). They are quite easy to start from seed directly in the garden. The biggest problem gardeners have is waiting until the soil is sufficiently warm for these varieties – around here that wouldn’t be before May 1-15.
The large, easy-to-handle seeds will germinate in about

a week. Zucchini (and most of the cucurbit family) are considered monoecious, which means there are male and female flowers on the same plant. You can see the baby fruits at the base of female flowers.
If your plants look good but you aren’t getting many fruits, you may have a pollination problem. Other signs of poor pollination include fruit that is malformed or stubby on the blossom end. Pollinators like bees are needed to spread the pollen from the male to the female blossoms.
If you think you don’t have

enough pollinators, you can try hand pollinating with a paintbrush or swab when the flowers are open, usually best done in the morning. Collect a little pollen from the male blossoms and spread it to the female blossoms. Memo for next year: it is a good idea to plant some flowers or flowering herbs among your vegetable garden to attract pollinators.
The reason I grow zucchini is that it is handy to run out into the garden to pick something for dinner. Sure, some of them get away from me and

resemble baseball bats instead of the tender specimens they were just a couple days before.
My favorite way to enjoy it is, of course, zucchini chocolate cake! But other than that, I love to slice the smaller squash lengthwise into approximately ½” slices, brush with a little olive oil and put them on the grill. They are good grilled, chilled and used on sandwiches or in salads.
I’m sure there are some creative uses for overgrown zucchini that I haven’t tried. Tire blocks for trailers? Chicken food? (Although my own chickens had as much interest in eating overgrown zucchini as my kids did when I once cooked an entire squash-themed meal).
All kidding aside, this is one summer vegetable that is healthy for you, low in calories (before you put it in that chocolate cake...), and delicious. Enjoy your summer squash!
Full disclosure: this week’s garden question was submitted by my husband.

Do you have a gardening or insect question? Contact the Douglas County Master Gardeners via email at douglasmg@oregonstate.edu, by phone at 541- 672-4461 or visit 1134 SE Douglas Ave., Roseburg. Douglas County Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who help the OSU Extension Service serve the people of Douglas County.