

Post-Harvest Handling of *Winter Squash*

1

Winter squash is ready to be harvested when the outer skin has hardened and the color is appropriate for the cultivar.

Immature squash does not store well and will be more susceptible to decay.



2

At harvest time, the stem-like structure (known as the peduncle) that connects the fruit to the vine will have hardened and be a dark green or woody brown compared to the vine.

3

After harvest, cure indoors for 5-7 days at 80-85°F. Winter squash can be sun-cured in the field if there is no chance of precipitation.



4

Store winter squash between 55-60°F with 60% relative humidity.

To avoid chilling injury, do not store below 50°F.



5

Squash that has been properly cured, cooled, and stored can maintain quality for 2 to 6 months, depending on the cultivar.



This document is intended as a guide.

Always follow local, state, and federal food safety standards of produce for human consumption.

Authors: Dani Zwischenberger, KHC and Rachel Rudolph, UK Extension Vegetable Specialist

Reviewers: Jessica Bessin, UK Extension Agent and Faye Kuosman, UK Value Chain Coordinator