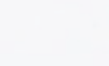
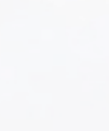
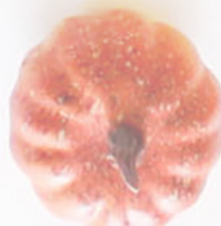
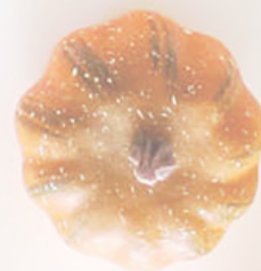
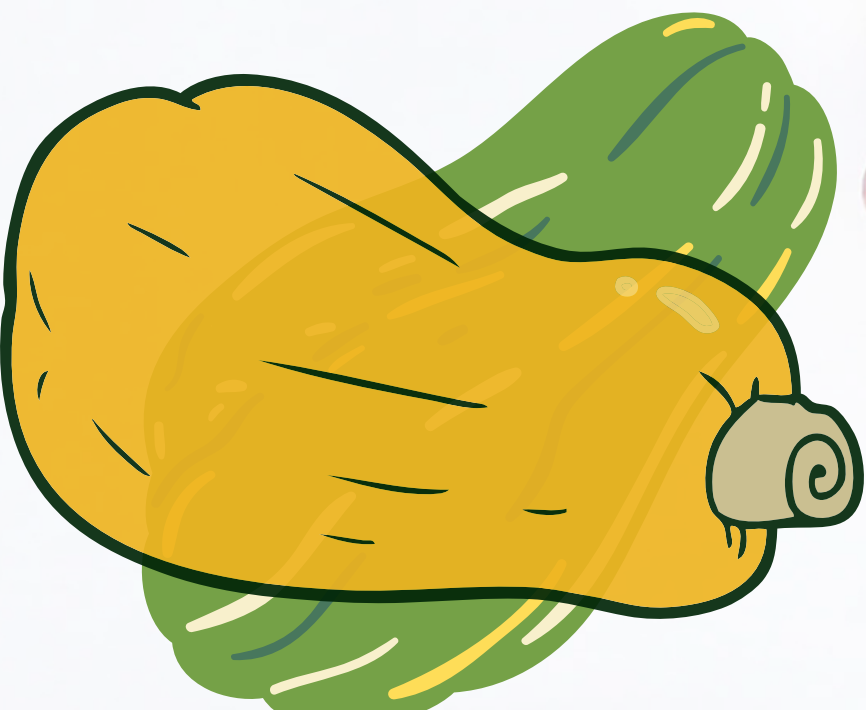


A watercolor illustration of winter squash and autumn leaves. The background is a soft, muted blue-grey. In the foreground, there are several pieces of squash. One large, elongated squash is on the left, showing a mix of yellow, orange, and green. To its right is a rounder squash with a prominent reddish-orange stripe. The leaves are in various shades of brown, orange, and yellow, some with dark veins. The overall style is soft and painterly.

HARVESTING
WINTER
SQUASH

**MOST WINTER
SQUASH GIVE YOU
SOME CUES TO
KNOW WHEN THE
FRUIT ARE FULLY
RIPE OR MATURE.**



COMMON TRAITS OF RIPE WINTER SQUASH

- Hardness of shell: should be difficult to leave a thumbnail dent.
- Look for full colour development, matching that of the seed packet photo.
- A ground spot often develops on the fruit where it has been sitting on the ground, often yellow.
- The stem starts to dry out and gives a good indication for butternut and some other varieties.



HARVEST & CURE

To harvest, it's best to use clippers so as not to create a wound on the fruit. Treat the fruit with care, so as not to bruise them either. All this is for optimum storage for winter.

Then you must cure your harvest, Cure in the field to dry and toughen skins by exposing fruits to sun for 5–7 days or so, covering in the evening if frost is likely. An indoor method of curing is to expose squash to 80–90°F (27–32°C) with ventilation for 3–5 days.