



International Union of Soil Sciences

Mexican squash (*Cucurbita pepo*)

Autor: **Rosalía Castelán Vega**

Benemérita Universidad de Puebla, México.

Translation: Evelia Juárez Villegas.
Latin American Soil Science Society



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Hi, I'm Roco!

I live in the city of Puebla in Mexico.

I very much like nature and country life. Last spring, I traveled to the Sierra Norte of Puebla, which it is an interesting ecosystem, full of mountains, but it is also a region where many native towns of Mexico still live.

There lives my friend Tonantzín, an intelligent girl. She knows many things because her grandfather has transmitted to her all his knowledge and love for the countryside.

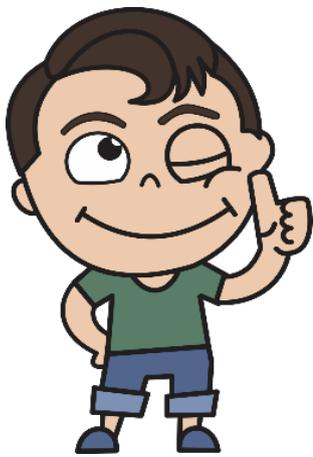


On this occasion, she told me about the importance of a vegetable that, if I'm honest, I didn't like it very much, but now I love it! The Mexican squash!!!!

The scientific name of the Mexican squash is *Cucurbita pepo*; surely you know what vegetable I am talking about, right?



It is green on the outside and white on the inside, is very nutritious and tasty.



The squash grows from a climbing or creeping plant, which belongs to the Cucurbit family, a cousin of the melon, watermelon, and cucumber, can you believe it?

Tonantzin told me that prehispanic towns called it *ayoxochitl*, which comes from the Nahuatl words "ayotli", squash, and "xochitl", flower.



The flower of the squash is very Mexican. It is my country's favorite edible flower; it is bright yellow, very nutritious, and delicious.

How excited I was by everything Tonantzin told me, she explained how to grow it in my small urban garden, and I will share the information with you so that you can grow it too.



1. Use a container 40 cm deep and 50 cm wide. Place a mixture of soil and organic compost in it.

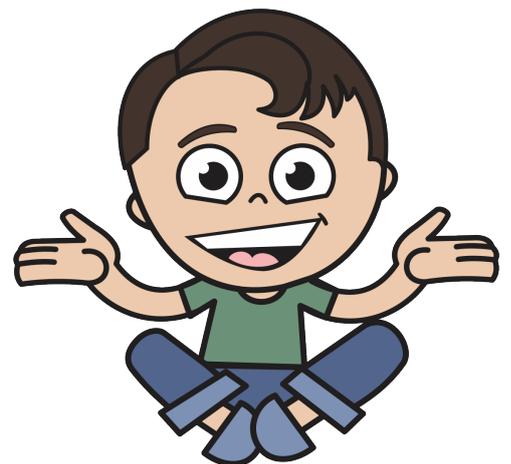
2. Place 2 to 3 of the seeds that come inside the squash or you can buy them in a nursery.

3. Add a little more soil to the seeds and place it in a very sunny spot.

4. Place a small stick inside the pot so that the plant gets tangled and climbs on it.

5. Water to moisten the soil every third day or every time you see the soil dry.

6. In approximately 40 days, you will be able to harvest.





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