

SQUASH-YELLOW SUMMER CROOKNECK
COACHELLA VALLEY-RIVERSIDE COUNTY-1976

SOILS: Sandy loam-to sand or the preferred soils for yellow summer crookneck. Soils with a greater percent clay results in lower quality.

BRUSHING: For early December plantings, frost protection shelters of 16-inch kraft paper are used. They are constructed on the north side of the row in order to admit the maximum amount of sunlight during the day and placed at an angle to intercept and reflect radiated heat at night.

PLANTING: Fall Crop: Plant in late August through September 20th.
Harvest in September, October, November, and December.

Spring Crop: Plant in late January through March. Harvest in April through June. If brushing is used, plantings can be made in December. Harvest in late March- April.

Seed is planted on sloping beds facing south in rows 30 to 38" apart. If brushing is used rows will be 50 to 60" apart. The stand is thinned to 12 to 16" in the row. The fall row spacing is 30 to 38" apart planted on flat beds. The seed may be either irrigated up or planted in moisture.

FERTILIZER: The actual amount of nitrogen will be determined by the sand percent of the soil. The higher percent sand the more nitrogen. From 50 to 100 pounds of nitrogen with $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total applied pre-plant and side dress at the 2nd to 3rd true leaf stage. Nitrogen is very critical in the production of a top quality fruit. Excessive amounts produce excessive foliage, an unwanted greening tinge and a rough unsightly appearance to the fruit. In sandy soils 70 to 100 pounds of phosphate and 50 to 70 pounds of potash are advised. Chicken manure can be used but should be applied at $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons per acre and incorporated well into the soil and pre-irrigated well in advance of planting.

IRRIGATION: The first irrigation following planting should wet the entire bed. Irrigations should be applied as needed until harvest, during harvest irrigations every other day have proved beneficial. If soils have a tendency to "hold water"- every other row irrigations will help to prevent "water logging".

BEES: In squash, the male and female organs are born in separate flowers on the same plant. The flowers are almost entirely pollinated by bees. Use one to three hives of honey bees per acre to ensure good fruit setting. Have the bees in the field when the blooms begin to open. If pollination and fertilization are incomplete, the small fruits turn yellow, wilt and fall off.

PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL: Rabbits and ground squirrels can damage a stand severely. Root knot nematodes and mosaic virus can be a serious problem. Aphids in the fall and leafhoppers in the spring are troublesome pests that need controlling. Several sources of information are available for recommendations on pest and disease control.

HARVESTING:- Picking is done by hand. The stage of maturity is critical for top quality and production. The interval of picking ranges from every other day to every three to four days depending on temperature and weather conditions. Grading and packing is usually done in the growers sheds. These grades are packed extra fancy and fancy.

MARKETING: The crop is usually consigned to produce houses in the Coachella Valley and/or Los Angeles or San Francisco area.

SQUASH-YELLOW SUMMER CROOKNECK
Coachella Valley - Riverside County
SAMPLE COST OF PRODUCTION 1976

Tractor labor at \$4.50 per hour, other hourly labor at \$4.00 per hour.
 (Hourly rate includes social security, workmen's compensation, union dues, and fringe benefits).

OPERATION	CUSTOM RATE	SPRING	FALL
Disc 2 x	\$ 4.00	\$ 8.00	\$ 8.00
List 1 x	4.00	4.00	4.00
Pre-Irrigate		8.00	8.00
Plow	12.00	12.00	12.00
Landplane 2 x	4.00	8.00	8.00
List & Shape Beds	4.00-8.00	8.00	4.00
Plants (5 lbs @ \$5.00)	8.00	33.00	33.00
Fertilize 2 x		31.00	28.00
Irrigate 20 x		58.00	58.00
Chemical Weed Control	6.00	16.00	16.00
Hand Weed & Thin		75.00	75.00
Cultivate & Knock Down Side-Hill		13.00	9.00
Pest Control	6.00	6.00	17.00
Brushing 1/		(200.00)	
TOTAL COST PER ACRE		\$280.00	\$280.00
Rent		\$ 75.00	
Overhead-Management 10% of pre-harvest cost and land rent		36.00	
TOTAL PRE-HARVEST PER ACRE		\$391.00	

HARVEST: Harvest based on 18 pound pack-out at \$4.50 per crate.

Cost per 18 pound lug

Pick & Haul	\$.60
Dump, Sort & Pack	.42
Lug	.60
Freight	.30
Sell 15% FOB	.68

TOTAL HARVEST COST **\$2.60**

YIELD: Gross Per Box	\$4.50
Harvest Cost	-2.60
Net	1.90
2/ Yield	350
	665.00
Growing Cost	391.00
	<u>\$374.00</u>

1/ Not included in cost total

2/ Yields range from 200 to 500 crates per acre.