

## Gaston Grower Spotlight- June 2022



### Connecting Agriculture and Education

Gaston County Cooperative Extension has partnered with Gaston County Schools for an exciting summer project. The goal of the project is to explore the feasibility of replacing the need for purchasing frozen vegetables utilized for school lunches. In the 1800 sq ft plot there are over 100 yellow squash and zucchini plants, and about 40 cherry tomatoes (for summer use) planted. One of the added benefits of this project is that it is housed onsite at the school nutrition campus. It may be encouraging for the parents of students to know that no pesticides are being utilized on the plants within the garden. Gaston County Cooperative Extension hopes that this project opens doors for increasing the support for agricultural education opportunities inside and outside the classroom.

Summer squash is high yielding and easy to grow. By the end of summer most home gardeners have given more summer squash away than they have consumed. It is also utilized by Gaston County high schools as a vegetable option on their menu, making it a no-brainer candidate for trialing at the school nutrition site. When selecting our summer squash for the plot we selected

straight neck types that have good disease resistance and consistently high yields. [Multipik](#) and [Dunja](#) have impressed us thus far into the season as the first fruits begin to form in the garden. You can see examples of our earliest fruit formation below. We hope to harvest a minimum of 800 pounds during the summer season.



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