

Handbook of Indian Foods and Fibers of Arid America
Wild Plants and Native Peoples of the Four Corners
Ethnobotany of the Navajo
Nanise'

Ethnobotany of the Ramah Navaho, pg. 46-47

370. *Cucurbita maxima* Duch.

Squash (cultivated)

nayíí -- squash (28), yellow squash (10), red squash (18), gray squash (6), táʔi•cóhi• -- squash blossoms (5)

Squash, one of the native American food plants, has been known to the Navaho for a long time. Most families in the Ramah area grow only enough for their own use, from a few hills to half an acre. The patch may be at one end of the cornfield or the squash may be planted among the corn or in a strip in the middle of the cornfield. Squash is planted around the first of May, about the same time as corn, and is harvested with the corn late in October and stored in cellars or holes in the ground for winter use. Cultivation of squash is usually carried out by the women (see No. 368 for details). In the middle of September some of the squash, sometimes a third or a half of the crop, is peeled and the meat is cut spirally into strips, sun-dried on poles, and stored for winter use. Squash blossoms are used as seasoning for soup. Several varieties are grown. The most popular is a fairly large orange-red pumpkin with a pointed green-striped tip at the floral end, called "red squash" by the Navaho, and resembling the variety "Arikara" of seed catalogues. Another is a large gray mottled squash with prominent ridges and a pointed floral end, like the type called "Delicious." Two yellow forms, one larger than the other and both slightly wart and pointed at both ends, and a large white to gray variety are of the "Hubbard" type.

371. *Cucurbita pepo* L.

Pumpkin (cultivated)

nayíí ha•łcoi -- yellow squash (10)

Several plantings of a green oblong pumpkin having deeply lobed, white-splotched leaves, and a decidedly pentagonal fruit stock were observed. It resembles a variety called "Goden Oblong." Its culture and uses are the same as for No. 370.

Plains Apache Ethnobotany

Contemporary Ethnobotany among the Apache of the Clarksdale, Arizona Area, pg. 71, 80

**Cucurbita* spp. (squash, pumpkin).

Apache name: /beilkan/. It appears that /beilkan/, which means "good taste," is a covering term for all squash, both winter (*C. maxima*, *C. moschata*) and summer (*C. pepo*), and also pumpkin (*C. pepo*). The varieties of squashes are then named according to "how they look" by adding a descriptive modifier to the basic term. Thus, /beilkan bielgochógii/ refers to "banana squash," while /beilkan mik'osine izii/ is the name for a large yellow crookneck variety. There are apparently several varieties named in this manner. The term /beilkan/ used alone can refer to any type of squash or to pumpkin, depending on context.

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Cucurbita foetidissima (buffalo gourd, calabazilla, wild gourd): This rank ill-smelling vine with its gourdlike fruits is a common weed throughout the State between the elevations of 1,000 and 7,000 feet.

One friend said that she was told by an old woman that the root of this plant could be used for medicine. The large root should be sliced, heated over a fire and then placed on boils or infections to draw out the pus. She went on to say that she had tried this and that it seemed to work satisfactorily.

The same friend said that she knew this same root also made a very strong laxative, although she had not tried it and preferred other plants which could be used for the same purpose.

Apache name: /nat dil kaali/.

Only one Western Apache source mentions a medicinal use for Cucurbita foetidissima. Buskirk (1949:345) says that the whole plant was mashed and mixed with water and the resulting soapy liquid applied to sores on a horse's back. The mixture was said to "sting like turpentine and was never used on humans."

Other groups in the Southwest, however, have been reported to use the root of C. foetidissima for human medicinal purposes. The Pima (Russell 1908:79) boiled and pounded the root and put the extracted juice in the ear or a hollow tooth to relieve pain, and on open sores to "kill maggots." The Isleta (Jones 1931:27) used the root extract to treat chest pains. According to Robbins, Harrington and Freire-Marreco (1916:63), the Tewa ground the root and mixed it with water to make a laxative. In a footnote to this usage the authors cite the U.S. Dispensatory as saying that the root pulp of C. dagenaria, a gourd, yields a "powerful and even drastic purgative."

Ethnobotany of the Hopi, pg. 93

Cucurbita foetidissima H.B.K.

Wild Gourd

m3si'ftanga

Foul smelling vine growing occasionally in the Hopi country.

Use: The rind is unsuitable for use as utensils.

***Cucurbita maxima** Duchesne

Turban Squash

momo'nvatnga

Commonly cultivated. Said to have been introduced by the Mormons. Not found archaeologically in the Southwest.

Use: Food.

Name: *momon*, Mormon; *-vatnga* (*patnga*), *Cucurbita moschata*.

***Cucurbita moschata** Duchesne

Squash, Pumpkin

pa'tnga

Commonly cultivated. A type commonly found in archaeological sites throughout this area is the Striped Cushaw.

Use: Planted in late May or June and harvested after frost. The flowers are used in preparation of special foods and "are often brought to the villages to be used in contests and wrangles in connection with ceremonies" (Voth, 1905a, p. 75). The meat is boiled, or with modern stoves, baked. The rind may be removed and the meat cut spirally, wound into long bundles, which are tied in pairs and dried for winter use. The meat may be carefully removed

and the shell dried and used as a sounding board for the musical rasp carried by the female Jemez kachina. The lower portion of the fruit may be cleaned out and the dried shell used by the children to carry parched corn, the Hopi equivalent of our "bag of popcorn."

The seeds may be roasted and eaten, or like watermelon seed used to oil the *piki* stones. Name of a clan of the Snake-Lizard phratry.