

**On Being a  
Farm Wife  
(and other  
hazards)**  
**Joyce Bupp**



minutes in a microwave. But how much media interest have you ever seen in squash? Except maybe a blurb in the food section. They're rarely even mentioned in food store sale ads. Tomatoes fare better, too. (Which are not a veggie, but a fruit.) Though it's beyond the realm of my imagination, there are actually folks who don't like tomatoes. Go figure.

Seed catalogs devote large sections to the myriad of tomato varieties available, from the itty-bitty, bite-size ones our grandson likes to snitch from the stalk to the giant beefsteaks so large they may give you a backache to pick. Well, if you believe catalog hype.

Even beans are in vogue. One catalog firm, the Vermont Bean Seed Company, devotes 13 pages to a fascinating array of beans. Many of them are heirloom varieties, like the Vermont

Cranberry Bean, the Jacob's Cattle Bean, and the Black Turtle Soup Bean. One could easily devote an entire garden to beans.

Our garden this year sports a ten-foot-long row of pole-type Roma beans, the broad, flat green bean I prefer for its meatiness, yields, and taste.

The pole version is a new experiment with this old favorite. While the beans are now just beginning to bear, the long, vining foliage has already yanked its support netting downward and should probably be growing instead on metal hog fence.

The once mostly-ignored broccoli has risen to new popularity in recent years on the vegetable charts. Research findings that the tasty, green flower-stalk and its cruciferous cousins are rich in nutrients with anti-cancerous properties will likely only enhance its desirability.

But how many people go out of their way for squash? Huh? Squash are the Rodney Dangerfield of the produce patch, often generating jokes, jeers, and groans.

Is it because of their unappetizing name?

Is it their overeagerness to grow into baseball bats and bowling pins?

Squash, as a kid, meant sandwiches of them, sliced and prepared by what has now become a nutritional f-word. Fried.

We still enjoy them that way occasionally, but consume far more tender young squash thinly sliced in circles, with a little sliced onion, slivers of red bell pepper, garlic powder, and Italian seasoning, sauteed together gently until tender in a few tablespoons of mild salsa. Practically no calories.

With that in mind, I planted three hills of hybrid yellow crooknecks and green zucchini. Mother Nature threw in her own two hills of yellow squash volunteers, one of gigantic proportions thriving in the compost pile.

We are literally being squashed this summer.

Maybe squash just need better P.R. or their own spin doctor.

A four-year-old friend of our has the right idea. Unable to pronounce "zucchini," he instead calls them "bikinis."

That name change might not get squash any more respect. But it would surely generate more interest.

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