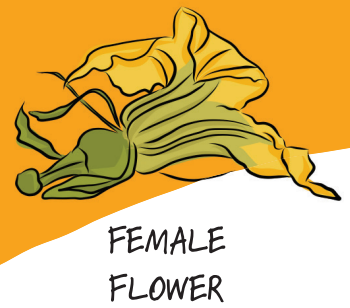
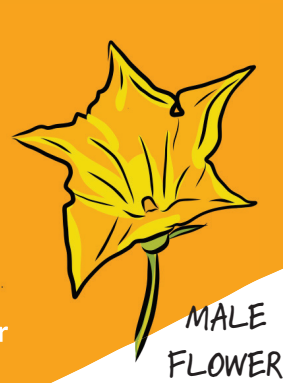


HOW TO POLLINATE INDOOR SQUASH (AND CUCUMBERS)

Squash, like pumpkins or zucchini, and cucumbers have male and female flowers. The reproductive organs of the squash blossoms are nestled inside the petals. Without the help of bees, we must transfer male pollen to female flowers by hand. Some varieties of greenhouse cucumbers have flowers with male and female part, meaning they are 'self-pollinating' (like the kind used in Little Green Thumbs gardens), so pollination is performed similar to tomato flowers.



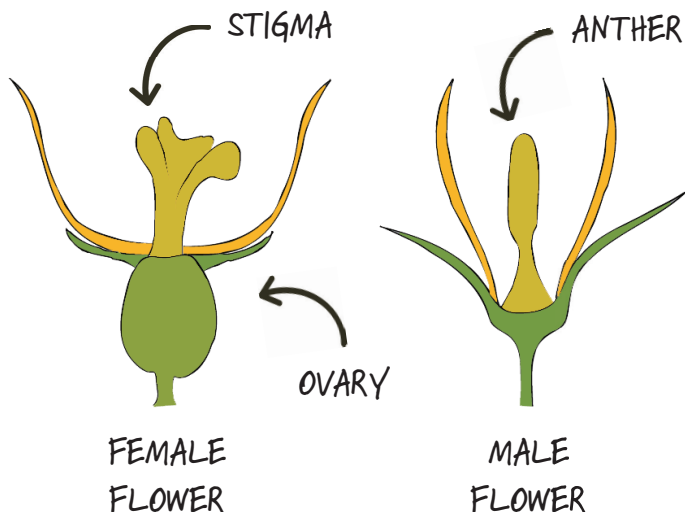
THE FIRST FLOWERS TO DEVELOP AND OPEN ON A SQUASH PLANT ARE USUALLY MALE. FEMALE FLOWERS BLOOM DAYS, OR EVEN WEEKS, AFTERWARDS. SQUASH BLOSSOMS ARE EDIBLE! HARVEST A FEW EXTRA MALE FLOWERS AS SOON AS THEY OPEN AND PREPARE. YOU CAN EAT THEM FRIED, RAW, BAKED AND MORE!

Tools of the trade



STEP 1: KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MALE & FEMALE FLOWERS

The stem directly behind the blossom provides the most obvious clue to the flower's gender. Male squash flowers have a straight, narrow stem that's usually 2 or more inches long. Female blossoms have a swollen stem that resembles a miniature version of the fruit. The swollen area will develop before the flowers open, so determining gender is possible.



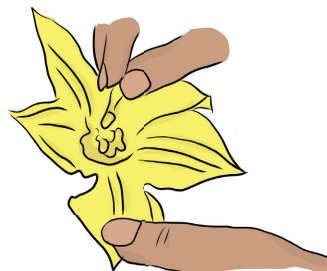
TIP: Usually there is more male flowers than female. This is good because it is best to pollinate each female flower with more than one male flower.

POLLINATION OPTION 1: TRANSFER POLLEN FROM MALE ANTHER TO FEMALE FLOWER USING A Q-TIP OR PAINTBRUSH



Use the Q-tip or paintbrush and rub it onto the male flower anther to pick up pollen. Now rub the same Q-tip onto the stigma of the female flower to transfer the pollen.

POLLINATION OPTION 2: REMOVE MALE ANTHER AND BRUSH ANTHER INSIDE FEMALE FLOWER



Cut the male flower from the plant, and remove petals. Use the male anther and brush it onto the stigma inside the female flower to transfer pollen.