

# ZUCCHINIS ARE Easy to GROW

Zucchini can be grown from seed. The large seeds can be poked into soft, well-prepared garden soil with your finger to a depth of 1cm or so. Three or four plants are sufficient to feed a family. They are semi-running plants and will spread one metre across. The plants have big leaves and require consistent soil moisture. Vegetables do well planted in soil rich in compost and animal manure, this will help to retain moisture and provide nutrients. Like most vegies zucchinis are sun lovers and flourish in a good hot spot.

Zucchini, like pumpkins and cucumbers, produce male and female flowers. The thin stalked ones are male and the swollen ones are female. The bees will pollinate them and the fertilised female flower quickly develops into a zucchini. Once fruiting begins inspect the plants daily. Pick zucchinis when about 10 cms long. They grow very quickly and are best eaten small and young. To harvest the fruit carefully cut them off at the base with a small, sharp vegie knife. The flowers are edible too and can be stuffed with a soft curd, quark or ricotta, dipped in batter and deep-fried.

Zucchini are susceptible to the fungal disease powdery mildew. Humid weather conditions can bring on this condition. It looks like small powdery white spots on the leaves of the zucchini bushes. Control powdery mildew spore by regularly spraying with a mixture of one part milk to nine parts water. This spray is effective on grapevines, melons, peas, pumpkins and cucumbers too!

When you grow your own vegies, fruit and herbs they always taste better!

## stuffed ZUCCHINI FLOWERS

serves 6-8

### Ingredients

150g quark, ricotta or goat curd  
½ cup parmesan cheese, finely grated  
¼ cup semi-dried tomatoes, finely chopped  
1 tablespoon chopped chives  
24 small female zucchini flowers with baby zucchini attached  
pinch of nutmeg, salt & pepper to taste

### For batter

1 cup (150g) self raising flour  
1 cup (250ml) water  
olive oil, to shallow fry

### Method

1. In a large bowl mix the cheeses, semi-dried tomatoes and chives. Add salt, pepper and nutmeg to taste.
2. Using your fingers carefully open a zucchini flower and spoon in some cheese mixture.
3. Twist the end of the flower to seal. Repeat until all the zucchini flowers have been filled.
4. In a medium size bowl gently whisk together the flour and water.
5. Ask an adult to heat 2cm of oil in a frying pan. Drop a little batter into the oil, if it bubbles immediately the oil is ready. If the oil starts to smoke it is too hot.
6. Cook in batches of four to six depending on the size of the pot. Do not overcrowd.
7. Whilst holding the baby zucchini by the end dip the flower into the batter.
8. Ask an adult to carefully place it into the hot oil and cook until crisp and golden, about 1-2 minutes.
9. Drain on paper towel and serve immediately.

## HAPPY GARDENING AND COOKING

