

Characteristics and needs of a pumpkin plant

1. Pumpkin seed

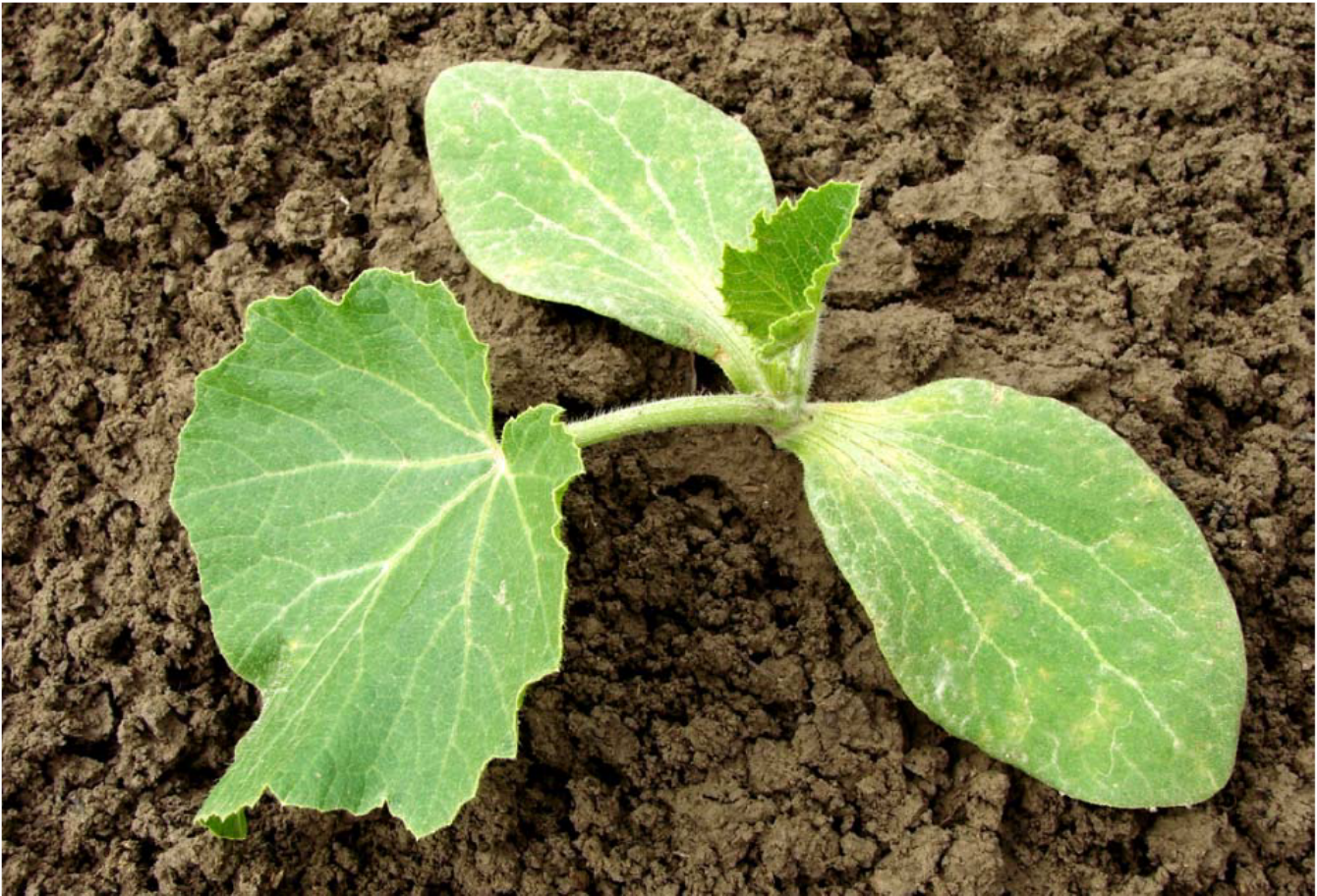
The pumpkin seed is planted in the spring, once the soil is warm. The gardener builds a small mound or hill in the garden and digs three shallow holes in the mound. The gardener places a pumpkin seed in each hole and covers it with soil.





2. Pumpkin seedling

It takes 7 to 10 days for the pumpkin seed to sprout. A young pumpkin plant is called a seedling. The seedling needs water, sun, nutrients, warmth and protection to grow well and be healthy.





3. Pumpkin plant

Quickly, the pumpkin seedling grows into a large plant. Its long vines are covered with leaves, flowers, tendrils and small pumpkins. A pumpkin garden is called a pumpkin patch.





4. Pumpkin stems and tendrils

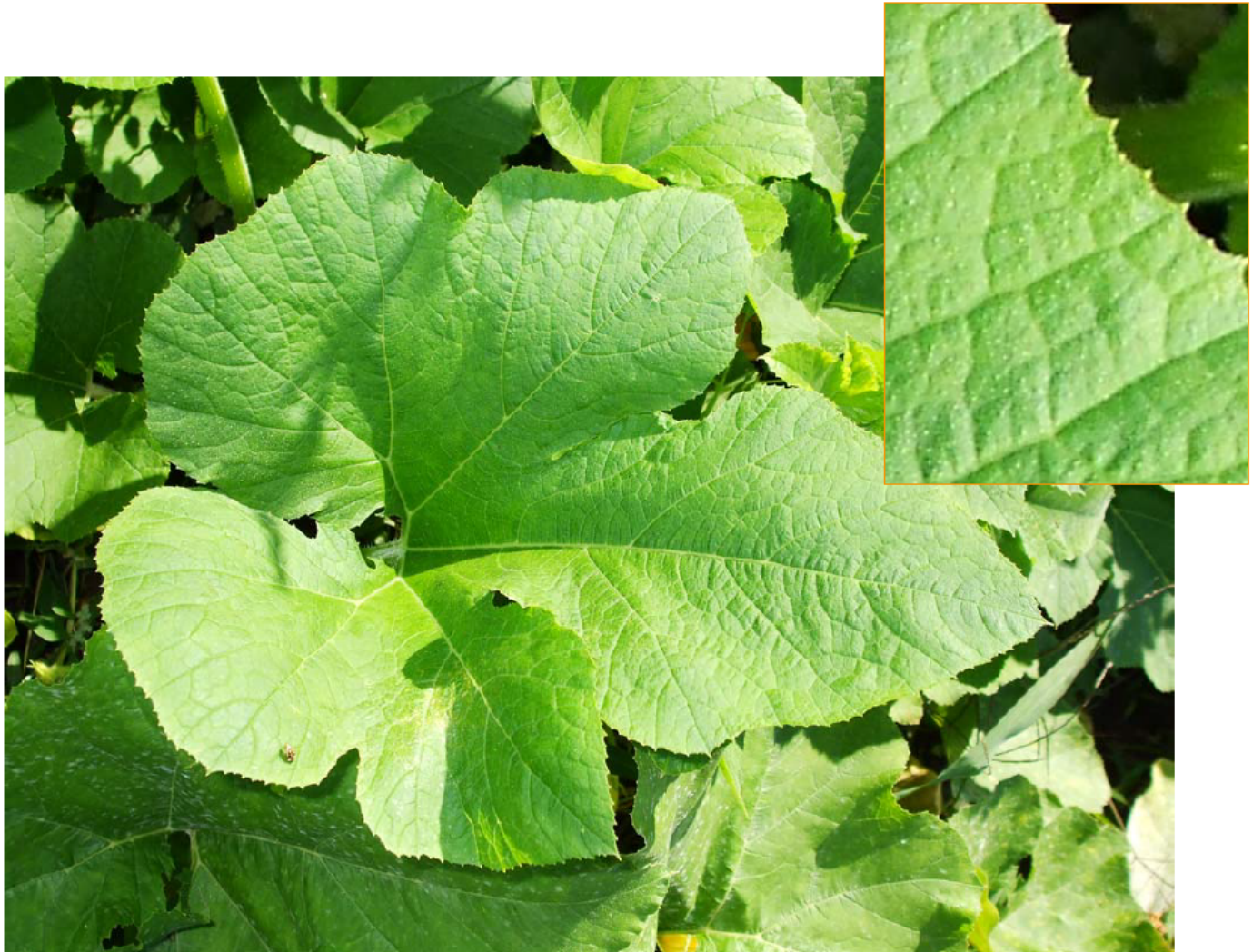
Pumpkin stems or vines are covered with prickly hair. The hair protects the plant from animals that want to eat it. The tendrils are attached to the vines. They look like long, curly hairs. The tendrils twist around fences and other plants to anchor the vines and protect them from the wind.





5. Pumpkin leaf

Pumpkin leaves are very big. They are covered with tiny, prickly hairs that protect the plant from racoons and other animals that may try to eat it. The leaves also act like a blanket. They shade the soil from the sun and stop weeds from growing up around the plant.





6. Male flower

The pumpkin plant makes two kinds of flowers: male flowers and female flowers. Male flowers produce pollen. Pollen is the yellow powder you see on flowers. Pumpkin plants make a lot of male flowers, and very few female flowers.





7. Female flower

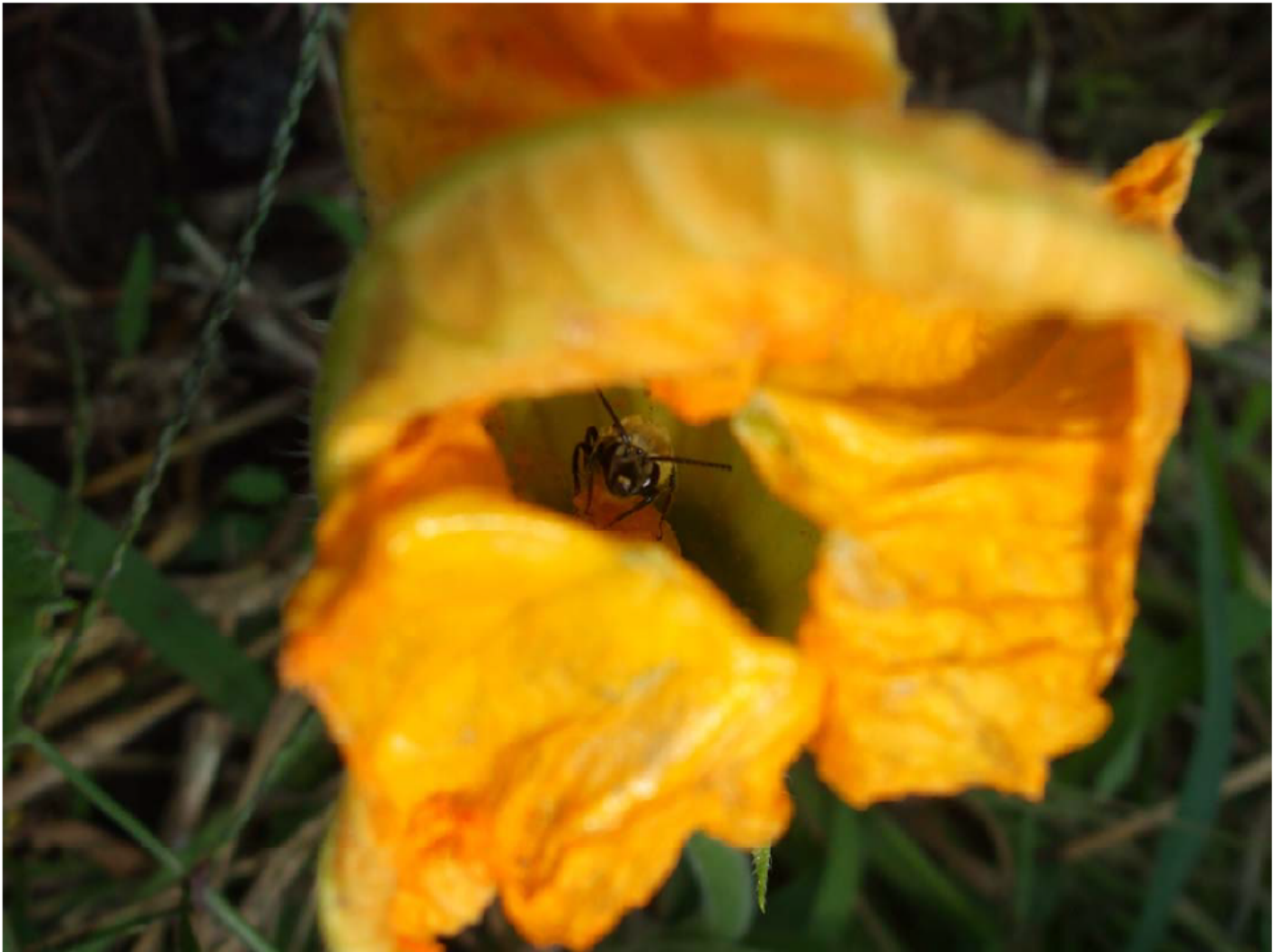
The female flower is easy to find. There is a tiny pumpkin underneath it. The tiny pumpkin will only grow if the female flower is pollinated—the pollen from the male flower has to land in the female flower.





8. Squash bee

This squash bee is taking a nap inside a pumpkin flower. Squash bees are very important: they carry pollen from male flowers to female flowers. Without them, there would be fewer pumpkins.





9. Pumpkin fruit

The pumpkin's fruit is called a pumpkin. The pumpkin is very small at first. It grows and grows and grows over many weeks. Pumpkins are ready to harvest in the fall, after they have turned orange and the plant has died.



This lesson plan was produced by the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum.

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