

If you planted zucchini this summer, you probably are still harvesting the vegetable. This summer we planted only four plants and have had an abundance of zucchini. Zucchini can be eaten raw, gilled or baked in a variety of dishes.

When picking zucchini, I have missed one or two because they are the same color as the stalks and leaves. If left for a few days they can become bat size. If they become over mature, the skin is tough, the seeds large, and the flesh pithy, which makes them undesirable for eating. Zucchini can be light green to very light green. Glossy skin is a clue that the skin is not over mature. The vegetable is tender and easily scratched, which can spoil the quality. Careful handling is crucial in maintaining the quality when harvesting and packing to avoid scratches and abrasions.

One large zucchini provides Vitamin C, Vitamin A, magnesium, and potassium. One cup of zucchini has only 20 calories so it is good for your health.

Proper storage will help keep quality and length of the vegetable. Zucchini should not be washed until ready for use. It should be stored in a plastic bag with a few holes to allow air flow and place in the refrigerator in the bottom of the crisper drawer. Zucchini will last for a week stored this way.

If you are harvesting more zucchini than you can use, you can freeze them. Slice the zucchini, blanch it by immersing them in boiling water for two minutes, drain them, and put them in a freezer container or freezer bag. The zucchini will last six to eight months. When thawing them, they will be runny so drain the water off before cooking.

Last week the LSU AgCenter and volunteers, Beth Liberatos, Laurie Greer, and Helen Boersma taught cooking classes. One day the class prepared this delicious chocolate zucchini bread and the youth enjoyed this recipe; I hope you will, too.

### **Chocolate Zucchini Bread**

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

2 (1 ounce) squares unsweetened chocolate	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 eggs	2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups white sugar	1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup vegetable oil	1 teaspoon salt
2 cups grated zucchini	1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
	3/4 cup semisweet chocolate chips

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Lightly grease two 9x5 inch loaf pans. In a microwave-safe bowl, microwave chocolate until melted. Stir occasionally until chocolate is smooth.
2. In a large bowl, combine eggs, sugar, oil, grated zucchini, vanilla and chocolate; beat well. Stir in the flour baking soda, salt and cinnamon. Fold in the chocolate chips. Pour batter into prepared loaf pans.
3. Bake in preheated oven for 60 to 70 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of a loaf comes out clean.

This recipe from comes from [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com)

For more resources on planting, harvesting, or cooking summer squash call the LSU AgCenter in Lincoln Parish at 318/251-5134.