



OUTSTANDING QUALITIES

- ◆ THICK BRIGHT YELLOW FLESH
- ◆ DEEP GREEN SKIN COLOUR
- ◆ EXCELLENT FRUIT SETTING ABILITY
- ◆ VERY VIGOROUS GROWER

Chiaro is a large Kabocha type pumpkin with a thick, bright yellow flesh and excellent taste. It has a very strong, vigorous growing plant with very good fruit setting ability to produce high yields of attractive, dark green fruit. **Chiaro** is very popular for the export market to Europe, but locally the market for this type of pumpkin is also growing.

SPECIAL VARIETAL REQUIREMENTS

- Contact area representative for more information

| CHARACTERISTIC* | CHIARO |
|-------------------------------|--|
| KIND | F1 hybrid pumpkin (<i>Cucurbita maxima</i>) |
| TYPE | Kabocha |
| MATURITY | 70 - 80 days after transplant |
| SEASON | Widely adapted for production after danger of frost has passed |
| PLANT TYPE | Vining |
| FRUIT SHAPE | Oblate |
| RIND COLOUR | Dark green |
| YIELD POTENTIAL | Very good |
| MATURE HARVEST MASS | 1.5 to 2.2 kg |
| SHELF LIFE (MATURE FRUIT) | Good |
| UNIFORMITY | Good |
| POPULATION GUIDE | 6 000 - 8 000 plants per ha |
| DISEASE REACTION (SCIENTIFIC) | N/a |
| MARKETS / END USE | Export |
| SPECIAL FEATURES | Dark green skin colour. High brix. |

* Characteristics given are affected by production methods such as soil type, nutrition, planting population, planting date and climatic conditions. Please read disclaimer.

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* Experimental: This variety does not appear on the current South African Variety list, but has been submitted for registration.

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GENERAL TIPS FOR SQUASH PRODUCTION

Seedling production

The majority of pumpkins are direct seeded, however with the more expensive F1 hybrid seed, trends are towards a portion of the crop being established by seedlings, especially at the beginning of the season.

In summer 2 - 3 week old seedlings are ideal but in winter this may have to stretch to 5 - 6 weeks. A good norm to use is to transplant after the development of the first true leaf. Very quick varieties are especially prejudiced by seedlings being too old. The result of old seedlings is a reduction in yield, as plants mature quickly after transplanting. The faster a variety matures, the more the setback if the seedlings are too old when transplanted. It is further critical that seedlings do not become root bound as this seriously influences yield potential, general disease tolerance, maturity, etc.

Hardening off

Hardening off is necessary especially when the seedlings are to be planted out during warm conditions. The seedlings should be kept fairly dry but not allowed to wilt and should be moved to an area with about 15% shade, or in the open for 2 - 5 days. Seedlings must be drenched immediately before planting.

Seedling inspection prior to planting

Check that the terminal bud is not damaged. Terminal bud damage results in a blind plant that should be thrown away. Check for pests and diseases like Pythium, Fusarium and Rhizoctonia.

Transplanting

Seedlings should be wetted prior to planting and should be transplanted into a pre-wetted soil, preferably deep wetted. Transplanting should occur once one can get into the lands without puddling. Roots should be straight and seedlings should be planted up to their cotyledons. A planting stick should be used.

Watering should occur directly after transplanting. This should eliminate air pockets around the roots and facilitate contact with the pre-moistened subsoil. Capillary action will keep the seedling moist and encourage downward root growth. Cutworm bait is essential.

Fruit disorders

Fruit disorders and other physiological problems can cause severe losses during some years. A few of the most common disorders are discussed briefly.

Fruit cracking

All squash fruit have the potential to crack. Some varieties are more susceptible to cracking than others. Thin rind and high sugar content both predispose squash to cracking. Cold air temperatures and warm soil temperatures increase the tendency of cracking. Cracking under these conditions is as a result of the equilibrium of water in the plant being governed by root uptake of water and leaf transpiration of excess water. Warm soil enhances water uptake and cool air retards transpiration. Under these conditions water builds up in the plant. Fruit with a high sugar level have a higher osmotic potential than fruit with lower sugar levels. Since water travels through the plant from a low to a high osmotic potential and fruit usually has a relatively high osmotic potential, the water is forced into the fruit. If the fruit has an even higher osmotic potential than usual, the water will move with an even greater force. The amount of water that gathers in the fruit cells causes them to swell to such an extent that the fruit may crack; this pressure may be as high as 50 bars.

Plant spacing guide: Distance between plants in the row:

| Between row spacing | Plant population (plants/ha) | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| | 5000 | 6000 |
| 1.6 m | 125 cm | 104 cm |
| 2.00 m | 100 cm | 80 cm |
| 2.50 m | 80 cm | 65 cm |

Susceptibility definition:

Susceptibility (S) is the inability of a plant variety to restrict the growth and development of a specified pest or pathogen.

Tolerance definition:

Tolerance (T) is the ability of a plant variety to endure abiotic stress without serious consequences to growth, appearance and yield. Vegetable companies will continue to use tolerance for abiotic stress.

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