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Newsletter

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## Bountiful Squash

*Our garden was prolific in 2001. We love to grow squash, and we harvested a lot that year! We enjoyed watching the vines inching across the garden in a slow-motion race to claim every space in their quest for sunlight. Their upturned leaves, like sun-tracking solar panels, pressed and jostled their neighbors for supremacy. But growing squash in Paradise Valley, Montana—with its unpredictable frosts, hurricane force gales, and hungry wildlife—is a challenge. Thanks to fabric row covers that protected the young plants from a six-inch snowdrift in July, we gathered the bountiful harvest pictured below. All those squash got me thinking . . . what could you do with the seeds? And what could you do with the seeds from a Halloween pumpkin? Here are a few ideas that use squash seeds to inspire fun learning activities.*

### **What You Need:**

Squash or pumpkin seeds (washed and air-dried overnight), construction paper, glue, writing paper, pencil

### **Activity Ideas for a Younger Child:**

Demonstrate, and then invite your child to do these projects:

1. Count the seeds into piles of 10, and then “skip count” ( 10, 20, 30, etc.) the total.

2. Glue the seeds at random on construction paper to make an Autumn Collage.
3. Draw a large letter or number onto construction paper. Say the letter's sound or count the number with your child. Show him how to trace over the shape with his fingers in the same pattern as if he were writing. Invite him to glue the seeds onto the letter or number. Let dry, and then display.
4. Write the numbers *1–10* onto quartered sheets of paper. Place the papers into a basket and mix them up. Invite your child to choose a paper, say the number, and then count the corresponding number of seeds and glue them onto the paper. When the papers are dry, show him how to arrange the numbers in order from *1–10*.

☆ **Activity Ideas for an Older Child:**

1. Use the seeds as counters for addition and subtraction problems.
2. With permanent marker, write the letter *e* on seeds. Invite your child to write a short story that includes a pumpkin or squash. Have him glue the *e* seeds onto the page in place of all the letter *e*'s.
3. Together, discuss events that make the autumn season special. Invite him to draw an autumn-themed picture, and then decorate the border with glued-on pumpkin or squash seeds.
4. Find a library book that shows how plants grow and develop seeds. Invite your child to sprout a few of the pumpkin or squash seeds between damp paper towels, and then dissect the seeds and identify the parts. Have him draw a poster of a sprouted seed, labeling the various parts.

