

Increasing Gourd Fruit Yield

The main vine runner should have the end pinched off when it is 8 to 10' long. This will cause the production of side runners. These side runners produce mostly female flowers which produce the gourd fruits. The main runner produces mostly male flowers. The 1st side runners can have the tips pinched off when 5 to 8 leaves are present. This, in turn, will produce more side runners [female] flowers.

To produce larger gourds hand-pollinate the 1st female flowers [use male flowers from the same plant for pure seed]. This causes a larger seed set which causes a larger fruit to contain the increased number of seeds. The use of 2 male blossoms per-female flower -is recommended for-plenty- of pollen. To produce smaller gourds, crowd the gourds into smaller space or do not thin the gourds as one normally would.

Remember, larger type hardshell gourd fruits not present till after the 1st of August, [central Indiana or north] may have thin shells or may not fully mature. Smaller varieties or ornamental gourds require shorter growing seasons than the larger types. Those types can be planted and often mature with only 80 to 100 days of growing season. The number of growing degree days will determine the results. 70 degree soil temperature is generally needed for good growth.

FUNGUS PROBLEMS?? I am no expert but what they have taught in Master Gardening is to clean up the area very well. Pick up all the leaves and vines from last year before tilling the area. You can buy fungicide sprays to spray the ground before you till. This will help but I do not think that it is a complete cure. Ray Nixon

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