



## SEEDHEADS TRANSCRIPT

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### Episode 1: BOB WILDFONG English

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#### **Steph Benoit**

Hey, welcome to SeedHeads, the cross-pollinating podcast where our Canadian seed heroes, tell their stories, share their how-to tips, and talk about the seeds they love. I'm your host, Steph Benoit, coming to you from Vancouver, BC, on the unceded and ancestral territories of the  $x^w m \theta k^w \acute{y} \acute{a} m$  (Musqueam),  $S k \acute{w} x \acute{w} \acute{u} 7 m e s h$  (Squamish), and  $S e l \acute{i} l w i t u l h$  (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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#### **Steph Benoit**

Our guest today, and the very first guest on this podcast, is none other than Bob Wildfong. Bob has been saving seeds and teaching about food biodiversity for well over 20 years, and has been a seed hero to many during that time. Bob is Executive Director of Seeds of Diversity, Canada's foremost organization dedicated to biodiversity conservation. He's also the Horticultural Specialist at the Waterloo Regional Museum. Bob joins us today from Waterloo, Ontario, which is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee people.

In this episode, I had the pleasure of talking with Bob about seed saving from the cucurbit family or—if you find that as difficult to say as I do— the family of squashes, gourds, pumpkins, cucumbers, and their relatives. This conversation was inspired in part because, this year, Seeds of Diversity is coordinating with farmers and gardeners across Canada to do a grow-out of seven different

squash varieties that they maintain in their Canadian seed Library. We'll have more information about that in the show notes.

If you enjoyed this episode, then you're in luck. In our next episode, we'll welcome Bob back to elaborate on squash hand pollination. Bob is a really easy person to interview because he has such an incredible wealth of knowledge. As you'll hear in this conversation, Bob has a really unique way of combining science with storytelling when he's talking about seeds, plants, and pollinators.

I think the result is engaging for everyone. No matter your level of seed saving Savvy. I hope you enjoy listening to this episode as much as I did recording it.

### **Steph Benoit**

Hi Bob, thank you so much for joining me today.

### **Bob Wildfong**

Well, thank you very much for having me. This is a fun topic and I'm really excited to be here.

### **Steph Benoit**

So, Bob, you've been involved with seeds and biodiversity preservation for over 20 years. Can you tell us a little bit about your relationship to seeds and why you're so passionate about this work?

### **Bob Wildfong**

I've been interested in seeds and heritage varieties and a little bit about plant breeding for such a long time. But I got involved with this whole world through an interest in plant history. Going back to the 90s sometime, I was helping to create a historic garden at a museum as a volunteer and they asked me could I help to find some seed varieties that would be appropriate for the history of this garden we were creating. It wasn't too difficult to find old catalogues that showed me which kinds of seeds should be in those old gardens, but it was very difficult to find those varieties in modern seed catalogues. I discovered that there were people who saved seeds; they seemed very passionate and I didn't really expect that I would get into it as much as I did, but that was my entry point.

I found out there's this whole community of people who don't just grow plants, they also save the seeds of those plants because they might be varieties that are difficult to find, they might be family heirlooms that are impossible to find anywhere except for those people's backyards. Some people – and this has been going on for thousands of years – are breeding their own varieties of their garden plants. Just right there in their backyards. I found that fascinating from the very start. It is a much more than 20 years later that I am still learning things and still finding out, still meeting new people who are doing these things discovering just the most mind-blowing things happening in ordinary people's backyards and I feel like I've only just begun to dip into this ocean of amazing people.

### **Steph Benoit**

Today we're going to focus our conversation on the cucurbitaceae family, but before we get into the specifics of the family, can you talk about some of the ingredients, so to speak, that go into good seeds?

### **Bob Wildfong**

Yes, I think everything has to come back to a few basic principles about what makes a good seed good. And my recipe for that, a good seed, is one that germinates because, obviously, if it doesn't sprout, it's not good. Secondly, it should grow into the plant that you want. It should look the way you want it to look and it should taste the way you want it to taste.

It shouldn't accidentally be a weed seed that you planted by mistake. Many of the rules and, you know, all these sorts of rules of thumb and also charts of tables of numbers and things that we have to look at when we're saving seeds. That's all very confusing for people, especially when they're starting out. And I like to bring it back down to say, okay, it's all about those two principles: you want your seeds to germinate and you want them to grow into the seeds or grow into the plants that you expect.

All those rules and all those charts of numbers are just basically to bring it to those two things. The third thing that I talk about too is you want your seeds to grow into healthy plants, which means we look out for things like diseases. We don't save seeds from plants that look sick because the germs can carry on the seeds and then you have a sick plant next year because you carry the germ on the seed.

That's probably not something we'll talk about too much today. The first two, you want your seeds to germinate and you want them to grow into the plants you expect. That's what it all comes down to, those two things.

### **Steph Benoit**

So, maybe you could give us a few examples of the more well-known cucurbits and then talk about some of the specific benefits and challenges of saving seeds from them.

### **Bob Wildfong**

Yeah, the cucurbits, it's a hard word to say, so I'm probably just going to call it the squash family. The squash family has a whole bunch of family members, but they all sort of look-alike from a distance. They're plants that grow long vines and then they have some kind of fruit on those vines. So, you think of squash, you think of pumpkins, you think of acorn squash, butternut squash, hubbard squash, you think of zucchini which don't have really long vines, they're more compact bushes. But they're in the family, they just have shorter vines. And then you have other plants that kind of have that look like cucumbers, like melons, and watermelons, and gourds.

### **Steph Benoit**

And so what are some of the ways that they're particularly challenging, the squash family?

### **Bob Wildfong**

The one thing that makes them different, as far as seed saving is concerned, is many plants will pollinate themselves. So if you're growing tomatoes, for example, beans, peas, these are really easy for beginners because they pollinate themselves. Insects will carry pollen back and forth from one flower to another and that causes the plants to cross and become hybrids of each other.

Tomatoes, they don't do that. Their flowers are all closed up, so insects can't get in and carry pollen back and forth. And beans, the flowers are all closed up so bees can't get in and carry pollen back and forth. If you save seeds from a tomato, you save seeds from a bean, you'll find that they will grow into the same plant that you expect, same plant that they came from and that makes it really easy. Not so for the squash family. Unfortunately, the flowers... well, I mean, it's good for the flower... unfortunately for seed savers, the flowers are wide open, like great big trumpets. And these, they will get up much earlier in

the morning than I do; they can get up even a couple hours before dawn and start flying around. They find the very first flowers that open in the morning and they go from flower to flower to flower because that's how they get their food.

And as they do that, they carry pollen from one flower to the next. And if you have two different kinds of squash anywhere nearby, if you have, say, a pumpkin and a zucchini growing someplace nearby, the pollen in the pumpkin flowers and the zucchini flowers will get all mixed up and that means your pumpkins, with the seeds inside, will contain some pumpkin seeds but some that are a cross of pumpkin and zucchini. And if you look at the seeds in your zucchinis, there will be some zucchini seeds in there, but some that are crosses of zucchini and pumpkin. This makes the fundamental challenge. It's about the cross-pollination that our friends, the bees, are causing.

### **Steph Benoit**

Yeah, that can have a lot of implications. So we're going to put a pin in the topic of cross-pollination and what the implications are for hand pollination.

### **Bob Wildfong**

Right.

### **Steph Benoit**

But coming back to the very beginning, where would you want to get seeds to start a seed saving project?

### **Bob Wildfong**

Well, we have a lot of options, there are lots of seeds out there. Some of them are what we call open-pollinated varieties, which means that they're, sort of, purebred; each generation is the same as the previous generation. And then we have some kinds of seeds that are hybrids which means they're actually a cross between two different kinds.

So, if you take seeds from an open-pollinated variety, then because they're the same variety from one generation to the next, you can expect that the next year's generation will be the same as this one and you can just keep on getting the same variety year after year if you save the seeds correctly. The trick about taking a seed from a hybrid is that you won't get the same thing.

And probably later on we'll talk about how that can be really interesting. You can get new varieties that way, but if you're trying to get the same variety, then... going back to my point about you want the seed to grow into the plant you want it to grow into... you have to take the seeds from an open-pollinated variety. So, first thing, look for the word "hybrid" on the seed package and if it says that, you're not going to get what you expect when you save the seeds.

Further, seeds come from all over the place. We grow lots of squash, melons, cucumbers in Canada and save the seeds. And if those plants, those particular varieties grow well in Canada, enough that we can get seeds from them, then you know those are varieties that you will be successful growing. If you buy seeds that come from a warmer part of the world, then maybe it's a longer season variety that might not ripen here.

So, buying local seeds is actually a really good, easy way to make sure that you're getting a variety that you'll be successful with in the first place. And remember that when you save seeds, sometimes you have to let the plant grow a little bit longer than when you'd pick the fruit. Think about a zucchini, for example. Okay, when you pick a zucchini and you eat it, slice it up on the barbecue, there are no seeds in there. That's because it's underripe; it takes an extra month or two for zucchini to grow up really big and have proper big seeds in there. They're like squash seeds, they're like pumpkin seeds. And that means you need a zucchini that can ripen that long in your climate. And you might not think about that looking for a zucchini, for example, that was produced by a seed vendor who lives in your province that tells you that you too can get seeds from that variety.

So, local seeds. Local seeds are good for lots of reasons.

### **Steph Benoit**

So then when you grow out your plants, how many squash or melons, or whatever else from this family do you need to plant out to get good seed?

### **Bob Wildfong**

That's a really neat question and people who are familiar with this concept will think of it as the size of the population, that's what we talk about. And if you read up on this, that you have to have a certain number of plants from which you've taken the seeds in order to get the whole complete diversity of the variety, the reason is, every plant is a little different from every other plant. And we look at a row of, let's say, zucchini; zucchini is always a good

example. Plant a nice row of zucchini. The plants all look the same, they all ripen at the same time. They have the same colour of zucchinis on them, the same size, same shape. And so we say, hey, your plants are all the same. They're not. Some of those plants are better in drought than others and some of those plants are better with, say, mildew than others. Some of those plants are going to have a little bit of extra resistance to squash borer, an insect, than others. And, we've basically made all those zucchini plants look-alike by selecting them to look alike, but we haven't been smart enough yet to figure out how to figure out which of them are the really good drought-tolerant ones and which of them are the disease tolerant ones.

Those genes are still all mixed up in the population. So, if you only took seeds from one plant, you might be lucky and get the drought-resistant genes, but you might not. And, if you took seeds from just one plant, you might be lucky and get the mildew resistance genes, but you might not. But if you took seeds from the whole row, then you know that you have those good genes in the seeds you've saved.

So, this is a principle that applies to zucchini, but also to lettuce and corn and wheat, everything. Save seeds from as many plants as you can. But how many do you need? And, ordinarily, with self-pollinating plants, like tomatoes and beans – I said they were self-pollinating – usually, even 10 is often all you need. With cross-pollinating plants, it's often a lot more. It could be 60 or 80, is what we say. So, that seems like a lot, oh my gosh, 60 or 80 zucchinis you have to save seeds from?

### **Steph Benoit**

Your whole backyard will be zucchinis.

### **Bob Wildfong**

Yeah, but the good news is, at some point in the history of farming, all of our squash wound up being kind of genetically bottlenecked. So we can actually get all the genes that are available by only saving seeds from about 15 or 20 plants.

So, still seems like a lot, but it's something that's pretty manageable. If you can take seeds from 15 or 20 of the same plants, of the same variety, then you'll collect a really good representative sample of all the genetics that are in that variety and that will go forward as a really healthy sample of seeds.



### **Steph Benoit**

So, if you have that number of plants, how far away from other members of the family do they need to be to avoid cross-pollination?

### **Bob Wildfong**

Well, that's where we come back to that challenge, the main challenge I mentioned about growing or saving seeds from squash is the fact that bees will cross-pollinate different kinds. So, we're talking about, here, how far away do you have to keep different varieties of pumpkins and zucchini? Bees will carry pollen from a pumpkin flower to a zucchini flower and vice versa.

So, how far do you have to put the pumpkins and the zucchini apart so the bees don't do that? That depends on how far the bees will fly. And bees fly really far. Bumblebees are kind of the one that you might see flying some distance. And 250 meters is about how far the typical bumblebee will fly. So, that's the problem right there, is how do you keep your pumpkins and your zucchini 250 meters apart from each other? And, more than that, I have to make sure that my neighbour down the street who likes to grow zucchini,... he's going to grow zucchini and so his zucchini will cross with my zucchini and his zucchini will cross with my pumpkin... and that's the problem in a nutshell, that 250 meters.

### **Steph Benoit**

And now, what are some things that, oh hey, that might be interesting to cross a zucchini with a pumpkin or a watermelon or a butternut squash? How well does that usually end up working?

### **Bob Wildfong**

Well, it can work out really well. All of our varieties, all those amazing varieties of squash that you see, they're all from crosses of one squash to another. What happens is bees carry pollen back and forth and they make a hybrid and the seeds get planted either on purpose or inadvertently.

And then the gardener says, "Hey, wow, that's different than what I thought it was." And remember, a good seed is one where the seed grows into the plant you want it to. Sometimes, it can be a nice surprise to find a squash that has all the best characteristics of two different kinds. You notice that it has a really nice flavour that reminds you of one variety and a really nice texture that reminds you of another variety, and it's because it's a combination. And that's a wonderful discovery.



However, it's unfortunately true that that happens less often than we'd love it to. Most of the time, you get something that's actually worse than either of the parents. And it kind of stands to reason actually, that the reason we grow zucchini, is that it happens to be a combination of squash genetics that works. And the reason we grow pumpkins is it happens to be a combination of squash genetics that works. And if you cross them, they won't necessarily recombine in the way that works.

And that's what happens when you cross zucchinis and pumpkins. I call them "zumpkins," and they basically have the flavour of a zucchini with the texture of a pumpkin and it's really unappetizing. It's, you kind of want the flavour of the pumpkin and the texture of the zucchini, right? Instead, you get sort of a stringy bland squash.

### **Steph Benoit**

Are there any members of the family that can be planted in a close proximity without a concern of them crossing?

### **Bob Wildfong**

Yes, because we haven't talked about how there are different kinds of squash within the squash family. Okay, and so we can back up a little bit and say that there are these different members of the squash family, the watermelon and the cucumber. Do watermelons and cucumbers cross?

No. No, they're like cows and horses. They're different. They kind of look the same if you're not looking too closely, but they're far enough related that they will not cross with each other. So, you can put cucumbers right beside watermelons and they're not going to cross. And you can put pumpkins right beside your watermelon and your cucumbers and none of those three will cross because they're different enough.

Okay. Well, it turns out within the squash group, these plants that we call squash, they're actually different species. So, a pumpkin is the same species as a zucchini; so pumpkins and zucchinis will cross. But what about a Hubbard squash? If you look at it really closely, it has a lot of features that are quite different from a pumpkin, the way the stem looks, the way the leaves look, it just looks different when you look at it close up. And a butternut too. Butternut, it has rounder leaves, they don't have the teeth on them, and the stem is really smooth compared to the pumpkin stem which is bumpy, and

the hubbard squash which is kind of like cork. The stem is different. And if you look at a close-up, you can see, wow, these actually are different plants. And it turns out, sure enough, you can have a pumpkin right next to a cucumber, right next to a watermelon; none of them will cross. You can also have a pumpkin, a butternut squash, and Hubbard squash, and a cucumber, and watermelon, and none of them will cross with each other. They're all different from each other. And now you need a chart. Now you get to a point where, you'll say, okay, so, what's the thing I look for? What's the rule of thumb that I can tell which squash will cross with each other and which won't? Which are in the same species and which are different species?

And nuts, you can't tell by the name. Unfortunately, they've been named in these complicated ways that really don't fit into those categories. And you can't really tell by the colour or the shape or any of those things. So, Google is your friend and you'll be able to find out because it's all there, you can just sit with it. The trick is, learn about the species. They're called *Cucurbita pepo*, *Cucurbita moschata*, and *Cucurbita maxima*.

And, these are the Latin names for the three squash species: the pumpkin species, the butternut species, and hubbard squash species. That's what you look for. Look for the different species names when you look up the variety on the internet. And you can have one of each, right next to each other. So really, three squashes of your choice, as long as they're different species, in the same, really, literally, next to each other, won't cross. That makes things that much easier.

### **Steph Benoit**

So, once we've made sure that we're not going to have members of the same species crossing with each other and we're confident that our seeds will meet our standards, what's the next step? How do you personally choose which plants to save seeds from?

### **Bob Wildfong**

You should always look through all of your plants that you expect to save seeds from, not just squash but everything. Look for any that just don't quite look like what you expect. If your guiding rule is you want the seeds to grow into the plant that you want, then only take the seeds from the plants that look like what you want. And, that sounds so simple and trivial and common sense. There must be more to it? But it's really that simple. If the plant is, kind of like, the wrong shape, sometimes you find a plant that has just a bit of

a funny branching kind of look that it's not supposed to have, or it's different from the others in that it's reaching too tall, flowering too early, maybe it has funny spots on the leaves, never a good sign, don't save the seeds from that plant. If you can spare it, even pull that plant up and compost it, get rid of it just so that it doesn't cross with the other plants. And, if it happened to be, say, a hybrid that accidentally got crossed in a previous generation, then it might cross further with your other plants and you might sort of have that funny look, that funny other shape, whatever is not quite right. And, getting rid of it as soon as you notice that is usually what people do.

It's called roguing. It's a, I think it sounds like a pirate kind of word, rogue out the plants that have a different appearance. And then you just wind up saving seeds from all the plants that are what you expect next year's seeds will grow into.

### **Steph Benoit**

And so handy if you have a tiny plank for them to walk at the end of the row.

### **Bob Wildfong**

Yes, if you can, if you can carry a sword along and have a parrot or something, it's and it's something we do at all stages.

### **Steph Benoit**

Okay, I'm taking note.

### **Bob Wildfong**

We look at the seedlings and we look at the young plants and we look at the middle-sized plants and when they have flowers and when they have fruit, especially. At all stages, kind of look and see that they're all what you expect. And particularly looking for signs of diseases. And diseases, you don't have to be a plant pathologist to know exactly which disease a squash plant might have but if it's starting to curl up and starting to get powdery fuzz on it, or the leaves are crinkling up and turning brown, those are the kinds of things that happen when plants get diseases.

You don't have to know what the disease is; if it looks wrong, it looks sick, remove it because it might spread to your other plants, for one thing. But for certain don't save seeds from that plant because then next year's plants will all be sick.

## **Steph Benoit**

Which of these crops can then you eat after you remove the seeds? Because I think most people who have, you know, carved a pumpkin before understand a little bit of the basics of taking the seeds out. What can you do with that after then, both in terms of harvesting the seeds and making sure that they are cleaned properly to save, and also making the most of all that's leftover?

## **Bob Wildfong**

Yeah, well now we're at the stage where you've picked the squash, you cut it open and take the seeds out and I, very often, wash the squash really carefully because I want to save the edible part as well. And so if there's mud all over the outside of the squash and you cut it open take the seeds out, you'll get mud all over the nice inside part and that's the part I want to eat. So, you wash everything nicely first.

Taking seeds out of a squash is really just like carving a Jack-o-Lantern. You got it right there, that's really all there is to it. If you've carved a Jack-o-Lantern before you've saved squash seeds. It's sticky and gooey and kind of horrible on the fingers to pull those pumpkin guts out. Here's a trick, is just put some warm water in. If you chop the squash in half, say, put the whole thing in a little tub of warm water and then the seeds don't stick. They don't stick on your hands, you can pull them right out, quite easily, separate the seeds away from the pulp, put them on a tray, put them on a screen so that they will dry nicely, and I'll get to that in a sec. You can pretty easily set aside the edible part of the squash and I like to chop it up in pieces, put them in bags and freeze them. A freezer full of squash and that winds up going into bread or something. I eat a lot of zucchini bread in the middle of the winter. But all of the squash that gets saved went through this whole process of seeds getting saved first which makes the whole process a little bit longer but you get two things out of it, so it's worthwhile that way.

You set the seeds aside, the important thing is to make sure that they dry well because they were underwater, they were wet when they were in the squash. So you rinse them, get them a little bit clean. They don't have to be too perfectly clean, but get some of the pulp off of them and then let them dry.

Now, your question is which of these crops can you eat and the answer to me is all of them. But only at the point where the fruit, I'm going to call it a fruit because we're talking about squash and cucumbers and watermelon, is ripe

at an eating stage. All of our members of this family, cucumbers and watermelons and muskmelons and all the different kinds of squash, they all ripen at different stages in two different ways. One is they ripen to the point where we like to eat them. And the other one, is they ripen to the point where the seeds are ripe and ready to grow. The seeds are only ripe and ready to grow at the end of the whole life cycle when the fruit has fed them completely. Every seed has a little living baby plant inside it and that little baby plant is fed by the fruit, whether it's a squash or watermelon or a cucumber. And that little baby plant has to have lots of food.

So, it takes the whole ripening of that fruit to get to that stage. For, let's say, a pumpkin, the time that we normally pick a pumpkin to eat it is the same as the time when we normally pick a pumpkin to take the seeds out. The seeds are nice and big and plump and they look just like in the seed packet. That's a good way to tell. They look like the size and the plumpness of the seeds in the seed packet. And, as well, the fruit of the pumpkin is ready to make a pie. But a zucchini, like we mentioned before, we normally pick those even before there any seeds at all.

So, what happens if you let a zucchini ripen all the way until it has seeds inside and the seeds are big and hard and plump and good for growing. Well, by that time, the zucchini is sort of like a winter squash, at that point. They'll be much bigger, they grow huge if you let them. And, they're not so great on the barbecue. They're kind of tough.

So, do we eat zucchinis at the same time the seeds are ripe? Well, the answer is, you pick some at the time when you want to eat them and you pick others when the seeds are ripe and you don't eat those. That's kind of how it works with zucchini. The same is true with cucumber, if you eat a cucumber, slice it up, put it in your salad, it usually doesn't have great big hard seeds.

And, we kind of forget what cucumber seeds are really like, we only see them in a seed packet. They're like muskmelon seeds or cantaloupe seeds. They're hard and they have points on the end, and if you eat them, they hurt your mouth.

So, nobody eats cucumbers when the seeds are ripe. They always pick cucumbers when they're still under-ripe when they're still soft inside. If you let a cucumber mature all the way until the seeds are ripe, it usually turns yellow. It usually gets to a kind of a spongy texture and it's very bitter.

So, we don't eat cucumbers at the time when the seeds are ripe. You have to let your cucumbers way over ripen.

### **Steph Benoit**

I guess it's a nice part about roguing out earlier in the season some of the less desirable ones.

### **Bob Wildfong**

Oh, eat them if you can!

### **Steph Benoit**

Eat the ones you rogue! Yeah, so, the last sort of question here, we have a relatively short growing season here in Canada, do you have any tips for working within this timeframe?

### **Bob Wildfong**

Yes, if you have seeds or, sorry, if you have squash that takes a long time to ripen and, you know, watermelon is actually a really good example of a squash family relative that has lots of long season varieties that we wish we could grow. I think the best solution for that is to start the plants early. You can start them indoors and transplant them when they're of a pretty good size.

And that will help to get them started. Another thing you can do is you can warm up the soil. Overall, squash and watermelons and cucumbers, they're tropical plants. They come from tropical parts of the world, all around the world, but normally tropical places and they like the soil to be warm. So, don't plant the seeds, for one thing, too early. Wait until it gets consistently above 10 degrees at night before you plant outside. And if you want to get a much better start, plant the seeds indoors, in a nice warm place, right in the full sun if you can, the nice warm soil about four weeks before you would expect to plant them outside.

And I would not go longer than four weeks because they grow vines. If you start your squash or watermelon or cucumber plants six weeks before you would plant them outside, guess what? After four weeks you'll start to think, these are getting kind of viney and hard to manage. And the vines will grow over the sides of the pot then when you try to plant them in the garden, you'll inevitably break them off. It's really hard to handle them; they're just too big.

So, four weeks before you plant them out, not more, and keep them nice and warm; they'll get a good start and that just gives you a whole month advantage in when you can harvest those delicious watermelons.

Don't plant them out too early, wait until it's nice and warm at night because if they get a chill, they'll stop growing for a little while. Then you just sort of wasted your advantage. And then if you can, get something that would warm up the soil. People use a black mulch sometimes just to warm the soil up.

If you have mulch on the ground, move the mulch away from the cucumber plants and the watermelon plants and let the sunshine right on the soil because that will warm-up where the roots are. And if the roots are warm, the plants will grow faster and you'll get results quicker. And you can put the mulch back on when it gets really hot and dry and that helps to keep the water in which is actually another thing; they grow faster and mature earlier if they're well watered.

They have huge root systems and all members of the squash family love to have lots of moisture. They grow better that way.

### **Steph Benoit**

Well, thank you so much, Bob. This has been a great first episode to start off with and I'm excited to hear everything that you have to say about hand pollination, cross-pollination, all of that. I'm excited for that conversation.

### **Bob Wildfong**

Well, thank you. I look forward to that too.

### **Steph Benoit**

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