



## SEEDHEADS TRANSCRIPT

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### Episode 5: RICHARD FAVREAU English

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#### **Hugo Martorell:**

Hi and welcome to Les Semeurs, 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, Hugo Martorell, coming to you from Tiohtá:ke-Montréal, on the traditional unceded territories of the Kanien'keha:ka nations.

Today, we meet Richard Favreau, vegetable grower and co-owner with Monique Michaud of Val-aux-Vents Farm in Saint-Valérien, near Rimouski in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region. In this episode, Richard tells us how he started producing seeds and selecting tomato and allium varieties.

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#### **Hugo Martorell:**

Richard, to give our listeners an idea of where you live, what does it look like, when you look outside your window?

#### **Richard Favreau**

Oh my God, it's a land that, is half wooded and half cultivated. It's a.. we're in, Appalachian counter slopes. It's a rolling land. From my place, we can see the Côte-Nord, because we're on the "4e rang" of Saint-Valérien, which is in fact the equivalent of the "4e rang" in Bic. Bic is now part of Rimouski, but it was an independent village before that.

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It's a very particular land, because we're right a little under the sea invasion of 12 000 years ago. So, we didn't have sea deposits. We're on what is called till. Till is boulder clay. It's a bonding of ill-assorted materials that ranges from clay to huge blocks, on a thickness of about 30-60 centimeters above the rock in place. Let's just say that when we came here, the land was abandoned for a reason. People around here said it was too hard to produce hay.

We had our farming project and we told ourselves: "Ah, but...". We didn't think about the soil thinness and we started growing vegetables to the surprise of pretty much everyone in the region. Our initial project was to... it's not a very big land you know, we have 4 hectares and we dared use 1 or 2 for growing. The rest is huge rocks and places that are rough terrain or submerged by water. So, it's not easy terrain.

Our farm, ultimately, we had, three main phases. The first phase was that we tried to grow leeks. We'll talk more about it, it's in a way the birth of our seeds. So, leeks for dehydration. We did that, we planted lots and lots of leeks, it was a monoculture [laughs]. After that, we dried. After that, we started selling, but we accumulated bales and bales of dehydrated leeks, because we didn't have the energy, to put it on the market. People liked our leeks and bought a packet, and it lasted them 6 months, so, I wasn't earning a living during those 6 months, before they bought more.

We started growing herbs, edible flowers and fresh vegetables. We noticed that there was a huge demand for fresh vegetables. There was a lack of it in the region. So why bother drying something we could sell fresh? That's when we started diversifying. I think we looked at about every variety in every catalogue, like many curious people like us.

And, in 2000, we started in addition to serving restaurants, we started making community-sustained baskets. We added to our restaurants, we did grocery stores and all that. We got bigger and bigger, until we did like the frog and exploded. We were doing too much for our land, for our managing capacity, and in regard to the available manpower, which always varied a lot, even back then.

I didn't mention a date, we bought in 95, leeks from 96 to 99, baskets started in 2000, and 2003 was the crisis. We solved our crisis only by reducing our clientele, by better targeting what we were doing, and since then, we have never increased our clientele, we even always, reduced our growing surfaces.

So, the manpower requirement allowed me to spend more time in the field instead of doing deliveries in a truck. And so on, until the last phase that started 4 years ago, which is pre-retirement, which I'm well into now. So that's more or less our story.

And where are the seeds?

One of the leek varieties that we like to grow, and that restaurants, after our dehydration phase, really liked, is a leek that didn't... a variety called "unique". It's a fall leek, not a summer leek, not a winter leek. It's a long leek with medium green foliage and a small **[unintelligible]** of blue, the scape elongated and mainly, a very fine seed.

It can also, nine years out of then, survive winter, which means a very generous regrowth in May. The first years, we were seeing that, the regrowths in May, they were a bit like the unsold items of the fall, but we noticed they had flower stalks. So, we had an idea for a project, to sell the flowers to florists. Failure. Because the leek flower is nice in a field, but in a florist shop, it smells like onion and it stinks. Onion is not what people want to smell when they walk into a florist.

But we realised that the flowers could hold the seeds, so for fun, we started saving those seeds, even more so because we realised that our "unique" variety was no longer sold by seed producers, for several years, and then I saw it reappear about 4-5 years ago. It was discontinued, but we really liked that variety.

We had also started building a clientele with that variety. Lots of bales of one, two, three, four, five, six, eight dozen of leeks in the fall, it was a lot. It was fun. We were used to working with that variety. It's not the best, it's not the one with the best yield, but we know it. So, the Val-aux-Vents cultivar, that leek from the "unique" variety, it kind of became, our brand. And what was interesting is that it also pertained to the farm's debut.

That leek, growing seeds over time, well, at one point, there was Patrice Fortier From La société des plantes, who, grows a lot of varieties, and we had a relationship with him. He's in Kamouraska, only about one hour and a half from here. He was looking for seed producers in the region, because like to

respect for example a distancing rule between plants, he, he could not grow everything he was selling.

I offered him my leek and he was enchanted. So, in 2010, we started selling seeds. Since then, well, we try to select the plants that perform well in the fall, and then, among them, those that survive winter. After that, we chose among those who have survived winter, those who produce nice flowers, and in the end, those who produce viable seeds. That is the leek seed. There are several flowers of different colors. So, there is a diversified genetic pool, inside, not 100% consistent. It doesn't bother me.

I know we are the only one producing leek seeds in Quebec. The only other leek seed producers are in British-Columbia, because of the length of the season. The leek flower takes a long time to grow. We have to harvest the flower before the first frost, otherwise, it will be impossible to take the seeds out of the capsules.

For the leeks, forget the fact that we have to harvest, like maybe they do in when the capsules open on their own. They don't have time to open. We have to harvest the leeks with maximum stalk. That means stalks of about 5 feet long. And we have to hang them in a cool, ventilated and not too dry place, because the goal is not to dry them, but to let the leek continue maturing the seeds, even if it doesn't have roots anymore.

There is still in fact a lot of juice, a lot of energy left in the flower stalk, and even in all the small peduncles, those who, connect the capsules to the base of the ball. And we have to wait and wait and wait, and once in a while, check the capsules, see how the seeds are. When I harvest, the seeds are only starting to change color in the capsules, and it takes 10-12 weeks for the seeds to mature. The capsules are then not open, and we have to open them ourselves, with the good old method of "rubbing". We grab them by the handful and we rub, rub, rub, rub, rub, to brake the capsules and get the seeds to come off.

It's rather painstaking. I haven't found a way to do it mechanically, because there is a risk of damaging the seeds, and a leek seed is already fragile enough, especially when it's fresh. And normally, a good germinating power starts about one month after the seed extraction. for sure, when we rub like that, we do a good clean in there, it is in fact a screening by flotation. It has two goals.

Flotation is when we take the leek seeds with the shreds from the rubbing. We were able to get rid of the floral waste and we let everything float in water, in big recipients of water, of very cold water. We shake vigorously, and immediately pick up what floats. It's the shreds, but also the non-viable seeds. The non-viable seeds are not dense, not as dense as the water, so they float to the surface. We get rid of everything, and then we rinse 3 or 4 times, until all the seeds are clean.

A bit of advice to those who want to do this: be strict. The seeds that are half floating should be thrown away. Keep only those at the very bottom. It's worth it to think in terms of quality, otherwise, you will have empty spaces in your trays if you keep bad seeds. You have to be very strict in that regard.

After that comes the drying. The seeds dry at room temperature, not by heat, not too much heat, because too much heat can alter the seeds. And that's it for leek seeds. How many seeds do we get? in fact, from one year to the next, the flower population I harvest is about 100-120 umbels. That, gives me about 500 grams of seeds, grams of seeds. And of those 500, I sell about 300-350, because I do a second or third screening for quality.

Those at home who want to add things up: How many seeds is that? We could say that the way I screen the seeds, it gives me a ratio of 300 seeds per gram. I don't screen more than that, because the seeds don't become that big. We would throw away viable seeds. If we look in a seed catalogue, it's the standard really for the seeds on the market, for the hybrids and for the OP seeds.

### **Hugo Martorell**

Is there a risk for the flower stalk to be damaged, for example by rain in the spring?

### **Richard Favreau**

Yes, but in fact, I know there is a risk, but it never happened to me. it happened once that all my leeks did not survive winter. And of course, they did not produce flowers. not survive, when we look at the leeks in the spring, once the snow is gone, the shoot is almost always broken, and we only see the base of the leaves.

But when the soil starts to get warmer, before May 5-6 where we are, the growth starts again. The important thing is that the basal plate, where the roots and the base of the leaves meet underground, the important thing is that it be alive and healthy. And then, there is a big growth. Even if it is broken, the leek will grow again in 3 weeks. After that, if we give it 2 more weeks, it will become one and half time bigger than it was in the fall. Spring is a good time to harvest leeks. They are even more sweet and tender than in the fall and it's a product that's really appreciated. In fact, in the end, when I was selling leeks, I was selling more spring leeks than fall leeks.

### **Hugo Martorell**

Today, how would you, quantify your winter survival rate, with the current leek population at Val-aux-Vents?

### **Richard Favreau**

It depends. It depends on the year. And I can't really attribute that to a certain kind of winter. Last spring, I realised I had only maybe a 60% survival rate. Other years, it was maybe 80-90. But, surviving doesn't necessarily mean being in good shape. several developed a kind of infection I don't have a name for. So, in general, we could say I can keep about half of the plants I winterised to produce seeds.

### **Hugo Martorell**

And what's the... you were saying earlier that the population, that it wasn't entirely consistent. Can you give us an estimate of the number of off-types you find these days in your population?

### **Richard Favreau**

I don't have any numbers. I have been saving seeds for a long time, but I think it's the plant for which I have done the least selection. In fact, I work, very intuitively, keeping the best-looking leeks in the fall. The best-looking leeks are the ones that, let's say around October 10, it's pretty much the date where they all reach maturity to be harvested, because I grow them without any or with very little irrigation.

Even this year, they are doing very well. I think they are becoming quite resilient, because it was as dry here as in the south. What I mean is that, for me, the important thing is that at Thanksgiving, the leeks have a stem of about 4-5 cm in diameter, a portion above ground, because I ridge them

vigorously by about, what? 20 cm. 8 inches. And then a leek that reaches maturity, that means a stem is growing above ground.

We can see the leaves starting to spread out a little and forming a sort of green stem above ground that can reach about 15 cm. They will normally weigh once, I mean once cut, without the roots, without the extra foliage, they will weigh about 300-325 grams, minimum 250. That's generally what I keep.

### **Hugo Martorell**

Thanks Richard, we got a good portrait of your seed production. Was there anything else you wanted to share with our listeners about your leek seed production?

### **Richard Favreau**

I think it's a seed that doesn't appeal to vegetable seed producers (laughs) because these days, they are really pressured by the market. everything has to get to the public market. And a lot of hybrid leek seeds that are faster have been developed. So, but I know some producers who like our leek seeds, because they are ready to wait a bit to put it on the market, to wait until it's ready. They are a little less in a hurry. I'm really happy to have a grower for whom I will have to improve my line. It's fun.

### **Hugo Martorell**

So, in the same allium family, you have also started saving and selecting shallots, is that right?

### **Richard Favreau**

That's right. It started a little by accident. A good friend of mine gave me a bunch of shallots that he had grown from one he had bought, I don't remember where. He got discouraged growing them and I started growing them by vegetative propagation. That means planting bulbs either in the fall or the spring, and then harvesting the product of the division.

I had a population of shallots that was, frankly yellow, and others that were copper to red. There were two stocks in there. I realised it, one spring, that many left in the field had survived winter and were starting to flower. I thought to myself: "Hey, I didn't think shallots had flowers."

In fact, certain types of shallots, like the small grey shallot, almost never have flowers. But the Jersey type shallot, botanically, it's the same, uh variety, but it's rather distinctive because it can flower. Okay, so I told myself: "All right, I will try to, I will save those seeds to see what happens." And I had fun saving some seeds.

In the spring, I started using them in the field and I saw that it gave an interesting result. My interest started and kind of increased, a year where I had a big mildew infestation. It was clear that the mildew came from infected bulbs that were asymptomatic. Because you know, when we harvest onion or shallots at the end of the season, the leaves are damaged and it's not, you know, what we're harvesting is not really young.

So, it's not always easy to see if the plant is 100% healthy or not. And we got infected bulbs. I realised it after and then, I spoke with people who told me that vegetative propagation is always more risky than sexual reproduction from seeds, because seeds don't come in contact with the soil. There are a whole bunch of things.

So I wanted to keep those seeds precisely so it wouldn't happen to me again, or to at least reduce the risk of it happening.

I started doing some and then I started doing a bit more. I did tests, planting in the fall, planting in the spring. Finally, I realised I could harvest a certain quantity of seeds. I asked Patrice, because he's always, a buyer who will do that, how do we say? The producer tries, but ultimately, it's the buyer that will motivate the producer to grow more. You know, it's a kind of dialogue.

He ended up being really interested, because he, since it's the same, species as the onion, he grows the "cuisse de poulet du Poitou" onion, he can't do alliums that will flower at the same time on his field. He can't grow, two *alliums cepa*. The leek, it doesn't matter, because it doesn't cross with the onion, but onions and shallots can cross, so distancing is really necessary. He can't do both. He was interested because it could expand the choice in his catalogue. At the same time, he was very happy since it came from the Bas-Saint-Laurent region.

So, I started doing that. Then, there was several development phases with the shallot. First, it was, there was the shallots that were reddish, others that were more yellow. For the yellow one, people would say: "Ah! It's a small

onion.” It’s really about cutting the onion and the shallot, just... it needs to be cut to see if there is only one growing point or if there are really several growing points. Except the buyer will, often, he will refer to the color, the look and all that. And I thought that the yellow shallot tended to divide a lot, but it remained small, too small for my liking.

I started rogueing and always planting seeds that came from red bulbs. It took, 2-3 generations, I can’t give exact dates, until we had a stock that was almost entirely red. I can say I’ve had an entirely red stock for 3 generations. I say red, I mean copper red. The other selection step was to, I noticed that when I do the seedlings, there is a kind of infection, a defect, a virus maybe, I don’t know, that makes it so that when the seeds germinate, the little plant is light yellow, almost white, without any chlorophyll.

It’s been 2 years... It’s been 1 year now since I got rid of it, simply by screening. When I do my seedlings, if I see one with some yellow, I take it out. When I plant a bulb, if I see it’s yellow, I take it out. I take it out, I take it out. That’s really what we call rogueing. I don’t know the French term for rogueing. *Épuration*?

### **Hugo Martorell**

I really like the word *épuration*, but otherwise, the term I use is *sélection négative*.

### **Richard Favreau**

*Sélection négative*, that’s it. So those problems are gone now and that makes me happy. And, I was encouraged to make, to produce more seeds by commercial producers who adopted my variety. I’m thinking of Étienne Goyer in the Gaspésie region, because he’s like a mirror in this regard and he loved doing it.

So, my selection was also done through format. A trial was done in the Gaspésie region, at Étienne Goyer’s farm. A trial was done on my farm. The idea was to do a comparison with a commercial hybrid, because in my mind, it wasn’t only about having seeds as a product, even though that was my first goal, because a hybrid shallot seed is very expensive. Let’s not delude ourselves. And we don’t know when the seed producer will decide to stop producing the seed and so on. And we’re always proud when we can say: “Great, my shallot was really good.” But it was time, we were at the point to stop crowing over and compare ourselves objectively.

We were on that project. I was doing a comparison with a hybrid and, Etienne was doing a comparison with another hybrid. We realised we still had a lot to learn [laughs]. What I mean is that our yield was maybe twice as less than the hybrid, on my farm that is. And maybe 30% less, because the hybrid was not the same on Etienne's farm. Okay. And we also did, we tried to see why our yield was not as good. Finally, we understood that in the population, in what we were planting, our seeds, our shallot seeds, there were a lot of little individuals who lacked vigour. So, I did some reading. I did some reading, I did some research that showed that the seed caliber is very important. In fact, when we clean shallot seeds, we proceed like we do for the leeks, except more seeds are free, the capsules are more open. We do a screening by flotation. In other words, we measure the seed density and we only keep the seeds that are dense, because we need a seed that is denser than water so it can germinate. Okay.

But it's not because it germinates that it's strong. It has a genetic bag, but not necessarily what it takes to produce a vigorous plant. It's important for the seed to be dense, but also to have a certain weight. That's what we did this year, but with seeds I harvested last fall. I did a screening, I did some research, I used a sieve and tried about every mesh size. Because we had to take some out but not too much. There had to be some seeds left.

And, currently, unfortunately, I can't share the results. But visually, I planted some rows of the hybrid Camelot, which is the best variety on the market. I planted two rows side by side with, Val-aux-Vents, doing a strict screening. And last year, we could see differences in vigour and densities. Even if it was planted with the same density, because of mortalities, because the plants weren't as strong. There were a lot, there were, okay, it became **[unintelligible]** density. Now, the density is almost the same, the same number of plants who are all as high.

Seen before the harvest, they are as big, so I think we made a huge leap in selections for, shallot seeds. It's interesting, because last year, we also did some small taste tests with, one of the chefs.

I also did some Brix analysis the sugar level. The sugar level, it was the sweetest of all the shallots, because we were also looking at, three other hybrids. We also found that the level of dry matter was a little more interesting for our shallot than for the Camelot, in the sense that, it allowed,

when we panfry the shallot, the eyes, they have a tendency, that shallot can fry before the rings separate. In other words, it was very good for panfrying.

As for the flavor, it was very interesting, because our shallot was the only one whose aroma did not have an after-taste of onion. It seems possible that for performance issues, the hybrids on the market have some onion genes but ours doesn't or has lost them. I don't know, we haven't done any DNA analysis yet.

So, it was interesting, because first, we got a shallot that was different than all the others. We did not just reproduce something that was already on the market. It's something that can, that can become big enough to please restaurant owners. There are even some chefs that, one chef asked me for a shallot of a certain format to make a black shallot, like for the black garlic. Some are doing black shallots. My Val-aux-Vents is excellent for that.

So, it was, there are some beautiful developments in that area. And, with that one I sell a lot with Patrice from La Société des plantes, but I also have a strict selection that I sell directly to vegetable growers. Because I'm confident that I can offer them an alternative to hybrids. It's a kind of OP that is healthy, a little less expensive, to create a distinctive product. And I, I always have good feedbacks. We hope that those who tried it this year will be vocal within the network [laughs], so I can sell more next year. That all for the shallot seeds.

### **Hugo Martorell**

That's great Richard, great. You gave an excellent overview of those two crops, intertwined with your story. And there are moments, that are not, that are surprising, progress that you made. I found it very inspiring. What are 2 or 3 tips you would give, a young seed producer in, in Quebec who would like to produce seeds from the lily family?

### **Richard Favreau**

It's not easy to incorporate seed production in a vegetable growing production. It's possible to reproduce certain things that work well, some lines that are stable. If it's to sell seeds, it's another ball game entirely. Because then, it's really important to take the time to do things well, the negative selection, the rogueing.

But otherwise, I think it can be very interesting. I think you shouldn't hope to make a lot of money. It does not pay well. Selling lettuces, selling fresh onions, selling fresh shallots pays a lot more than selling seeds. It's a value. It takes a year. And you produce, you get your money. There is a lot of unknown with seeds.

If you want, it's not a business, but it helps you understand things. I think it's a tool for gardeners. How should I say it? If you are doing it for money, well, maybe you will not be as strict when screening. And maybe the variety, the quality in the end will not be as good.

You have to be careful you know, because seeking financial gain is always twisted. [laughs] It's vicious. Doing a little. And if you want to do, it's useful also to do something when you see a, a variety that can be improved, a hybrid that is disappearing from the market. We'll talk about the Viva later. It's useful to do an experiment.

But take your time. It can take a lot of time if it's about dehybridizing, stabilising a hybrid. That is completely nuts. We never know when we will see the end of it. But I think it can also be a way to reclaim it. To reclaim, yes, but what do the growers have? They are all doing 200, 300 varieties of vegetables. Have no doubt, the grower producing all his seeds is a myth. Maybe it exists in books, but even then, I don't know who was bold enough to write it [laughs]. But there are now, lots of vegetable growers in Quebec. If they could all adapt, one variety they like and continue perfecting it, one, one by farm, multiplied by 300 farms, that would mean 300 varieties. We could fill a catalogue. That could be interesting. It could be a great challenge.

But doing one, doing one like **[unintelligible]**. Even then, if we could ask growers what they think, its' **[unintelligible]**, it takes a lot of discipline to do that. But it's also good to not stay in your corner, to work with other growers so they can also try. We're never good at judging ourselves. It's useful to work with others. Some might say: "Wait, this is not good at all." Others might say: "Keep going, it's good but could you get a better germination rate?" And others might say: "It would be fun to... can you guarantee me more." You know? So, working with other growers or producers, that's really the advice I have to give.

## Hugo Martorell

That's great, thanks. You nailed it. Richard, you mentioned earlier that growers rely a lot on hybrids for, their production, their vegetable production. From what I understood, you, several years ago, you started saving seeds from a tomato hybrid. I wanted you to talk a bit about that project, saving seeds from a tomato hybrid, to understand how to stabilise that. What got you into that work? And what steps did you go through?

## Richard Favreau

Yes. It's a project that started in 2005, in 2015. In the history of our farm, we always sold annual subscriptions, but we also always had reservation contracts with the same partners for extra vegetables.

And it was kind of by chance, we fell, we grew a lot of tomatoes. The variety is called Viva Italia. It's a hybrid. Several tomato experts did, hearing from left and right, they told me: "That's the one we want." It's a different tomato that one. It's not like an Italian tomato, a roman type. It's a kind of salad tomato shaped like an egg. The fruit is not very big: 80-90 grams. It can go up to 110-120.

It's a fruit that is easy to peel, with thick flesh, enough to make sauce, but juicy enough to eat in a salad. [unintelligible] The best of both worlds. And, in the Brix tests, it was one of the highest. The results are easily 6, 6.32, 6.3. A nice acidity as well. Sweet and sour, a nice combination.

Our partners started at 30, 40, 50 kilos. Restaurants, they jump on it. I never have any left. Okay, so why? That seed, it wasn't offered anymore in certain, catalogues. The reseller confirmed that it was discontinued. The company was offering an alternative, but that wasn't like, then, Mr. Dam, William Dam told me, uh: "Actually, it wasn't a Viva." So, I said: "We should try to, like I said, to dehybridize it."

So, trying to get a stable open-pollinated hybrid line, well, that's done by producing tomatoes and having lots of time [laughs]. I bought all the Viva Italia seeds that the reseller still had in the bottom of a drawer, so I could compare some elements, to keep in mind what I was looking for. Because the memory forgets things over time.

And then, I started growing it, my Viva one year, and I kept a few tomatoes from the most vigorous and productive plants, the best plants. It doesn't take

a lot of tomatoes to, get a lot of seeds. Those seeds, I planted them the year after and I also kept a row of Viva close by so I could do a comparison.

The first year, I made the mistake of realising it was a real hybrid, because you know, there are fake hybrids, hybrids that, that are practically brothers and sisters, and others that are distant cousins, and that, we could say, is a distant cousin. One I call the father and the other, the mother. Sorry for the anthropomorphism. The father is round. He looks like a small round tomato not very big: 125-130 grams. The mother looks like a small San Marzano with a very pointed apex. The father has specific traits. He is juicy, easy to peel and matures early. The mother matures a little later, is harder to peel, practically has no liquid inside and because of her pointed apex, is sensitive to blossom-end rot. So, between the round one and the pointed elongated one, I am trying to find the ovoid with little or no blossom-end protrusions. That's what I'm looking for.

The first year, it was 25-25-50: 25 fathers, 25 mothers and 50, that were, let's say that went left or right. Some looked a little more like the father and some like the mother. It's like a variation, a spectrum. Every year, I tried to work on the spectrum, but a little more towards the father's side, because I wanted... I was scared of blossom-end rot.

I used different procedures, that means, the plants that have produced fruits that have the shape I'm looking for, I tasted them to validate 2-3 times and I measured the Brix. I always had nice Brix. That was fine. By the way, I continued selling all the tomatoes, because they were all good, the fathers and the mothers, so I didn't need to throw anything away on the compost pile, far from it.

And I selected something else, always, always. Now, we're at, we planted this year the F6 variety. F6 seeds. That means that when we plant the original Viva, it's F1. When we plant seeds from Viva F1, that's F2, and so on. So, we planted that, and now, I am doing my selections, selecting my plants for the, for F7 next year.

What have I been doing also the last 2-3 years? I normally select 2-3 plants and then with these, I will plant, I will have maybe 30-40 plants of A, 30-40 plants of B, 30-40 plants of C. At the end of the season, when doing the selections, I will choose. I will evaluate if A, B or C was better, and this year, the best letter was C. So, I looked for the best plants. Like with my C line this

year, I was at 36 plants, I had three that were no doubt from the father. I had three that were no doubt from the mother. I had 30 that were acceptable for my goal.

That now means 87%. It's not necessarily all in the middle of the spectrum, not too far to the left or too far to the right. So, it's starting to be interesting. People are asking if I will be able to reach 90 or 95 next year. It takes time, because looking back at 2016, I planted my F2, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020.

I now have my seeds from 2020. We'll see in 2021 if it gave good results. Yes or no? Is it okay if another person grows it? Or to have other producers try it? We'll see then. But, this year, I want to harvest more tomatoes. Tomato seeds can be kept 3, 4, 5 years in good conditions, sometimes more.

So, in case I hit the jackpot, in case the tomatoes I keep give good results next year, well, I want to make sure I have a good stock of seeds from A, B and C from this year, so I can spread the good news. We never know. We'll see, but it takes a long time.

### **Hugo Martorell**

I think we talked about many things and you gave us a lot of details. You, you explained step by step, your selection, your seed production projects and you mentioned several parameters, on, that will be very useful for the listeners and those who want to, try saving their own allium or tomato seeds.

You're known Richard for your generous contribution, to the mailing list of the Réseau des joyeux maraîchers écologiques. We can't do this podcast without mentioning that mailing list. From what you've, what you've read from the RJME growers about the varieties they appreciate, what do they look for in, in terms of variety traits, that are different from, the gardeners' criteria?

### **Richard Favreau**

I think vegetable growers are trained more and more to have a very tight production calendar. They want a product, that is reliable because they often, they want to know in March what they will put in their baskets in July and in August. Reliability is very demanding. A certain kind of consistency. If I plant that, that's what I want, nothing else. We can tolerate certain variations, it's a bit *rock and roll*, that's okay, but not too much. They can be disease resistant, or climate resistant. It can be hot.

We can play, with climate resistance in several way, by irrigating, not planting too close, but the plant nonetheless needs a certain level of resistance. It can't be too, too vulnerable you might say. Depending on the growers, some do business with chefs. Then, you can work on, some flavors. But it really depends.

So, if it's, if it has to be good, there is another **[unintelligible]** as well, I think for vegetable growers, it's how long it keeps in the field. for example, for the tomato, you know, the best tomatoes don't keep. They don't reach the market. They melt in your pocket. Personally, the Viva because I can pick it when it's green and it will still be good, even when picked green. When picked red, it will make really good sauce or a nice dehydrated tomato. I had a **[unintelligible]** of tomatoes that, there was all kinds of warehouse liaisons.

I tried many. We tried. It was the Viva that kept well in the warehouse when it was maturing. That's an important factor for me. So, that might be something, important to the growers. So, those traits really.

### **Hugo Martorell**

Thank you Richard for, this great chat. Thank you for your time and your generosity in sharing with me your knowledge and stories. And, to have given me the privilege of meeting you.

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