



The SEED Guide To Saving

Summer Squash, Winter Squash – Pumpkin

Squashes will cross-pollinate within their own species and may not breed true, however, *Cucurbita maxima*, *Cucurbita mixta*, *Cucurbita moschata* and *Cucurbita pepo* species will not cross with each other and can be grown together.

To keep a strain pure, the easiest method is to plant just one variety from each species in any year. Or make sure that you are the only pollinator, to do so, begin by placing bags over an equal number of budding male and female flowers just as they are about to open; female flowers are those with a swelling at the base.

The following day, cut the bagged males from the plant. Open a female flower and, using tweezers, remove each stamen from the male flower and rub it against the stigma at the end of the pistil of the female flower you've just opened. Put the bags back over the females for a least three or four days to keep pollinating insects from spoiling your work.

Before harvesting your squash make sure it is fully ripe otherwise the seeds won't be fully formed. Summer squash i.e courgette and patti pan the skin will go hard and will be beyond the eating stage. Winter squash i.e pumpkins the stem may wither and brown.

At harvest time, scoop out the pulp and seeds into a sieve, separate them under running water and dry the seeds on a ceramic plate before storing them for the next season.