

# Tropical Pumpkin



*Tropical pumpkin breeding*

Tropical pumpkin (*Cucurbita moschata Duchesne*), also known as calabaza, calabash, auyama, ayote, or zapallo, is a species of pumpkin that is grown throughout the tropics and subtropics. Tropical pumpkins are a valuable source of dietary carotenoids that have a major role in nutrition as provitamin A and antioxidants. Carotenoid concentrations in tropical pumpkin compare favorably with those in butternut squash.

Currently, growers use open-pollinated varieties developed in Florida or Puerto Rico, or use farmer-selected landraces. Farmer-saved seed is generally used because commercially produced seed is not readily available. As a result, genetic contamination is exacerbated in this already diverse crop. Growers use varieties or derived selections from **La Primera**, developed by R.B. Volin and introduced by the FAES; **La Segunda**, also developed by Volin but not formally introduced; and **Soler**, selected

in Puerto Rico by L. Wessel-Beaver but not formally introduced. These varieties are traditional long-vine types.

Don Maynard's current research objectives are to develop hybrid tropical pumpkins with a compact plant habit, uniform fruit size and desirable fruit quality. Hybrid seed provides a profit incentive based on exclusivity, encouraging a commercially available seed supply. A compact plant habit permits higher plant populations, easier cultivation, and a more concentrated maturity, which facilitates production. Two hybrids that differ in maturity, plant habit and flesh color have been developed from this program: **El Dorado** and **La Estrella**.

Variety Releases	
Variety	Date of Release
La Primera	1979
El Dorado, La Estrella	2002



*Tropical pumpkin variety 'El Dorado'*