

SQUASHES

Origin :
between America and Asia

Latin name
Cucurbita pepo

Breton name
Koulourdr

HISTORY

A big family !

Squashes form part of the Cucurbitaceae family, with no less than 800 species.

There is some doubt as to their origin, which varies from America to Asia. Traces of squashes have been found in Peru from as early as 1200 BC, but the red kuri squash, for example, is said to have Chinese origins. It's a real mystery.

Grouped under the name of «squashes», several botanical species belong to the «cucurbita» genus :

cucurbita pepo

Courgette
Pumpkin
Spaghetti squash
Pattypan squash

cucurbita maxima

Winter squash
Red kuri squash
Turban squash

cucurbita moschata

Courge musquée de Provence
Butternut squash

ZOOM on the RED KURI SQUASH PRODUCTION

This squash is planted either by sowing a seed or planting a seedling. This latter method requires growers to take great care in monitoring the moisture content of the root ball.

The RED KURI SQUASH CYCLE

• *with seed sowing* •



1 - SOWING

The first stage consists of preparing the land by plowing the field, then laying black mulch (half-plastic, half-biodegradable), just like for shallots, with holes every 80 cm.

Seeds are sown at the end of May when the earth is sufficiently warmed up. Scarecrow kites are set up in the fields to scare away magpies, jackdaws, and crows – all very fond of red kuri squash seeds. Seedlings sprout about 8 days after sowing. Then, the rows are hoed.

2 - HIVES FOR THE POLLINATION OF FLOWERS

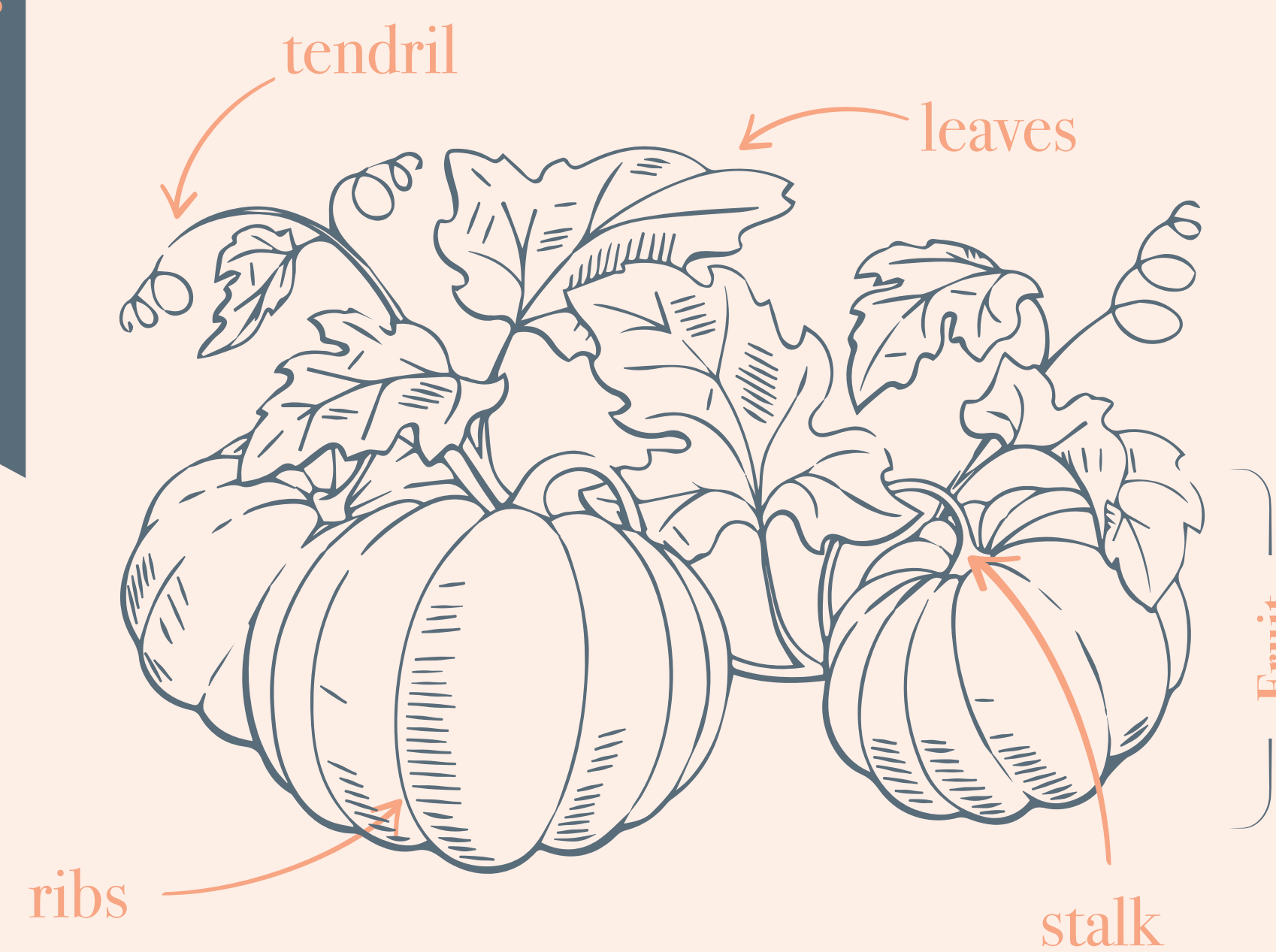
On some farms, hives are installed in the rows for two months, in order to pollinate the flowers. This allows the bees to make reserves for the winter. They are then moved to beehives of Mont d'Arrée for the production of heather honey. The bees gather pollen from the male and female flowers, and it is the female flower that will then produce the fruit.

As the red kuri squash is a creeping variety, this method makes it possible to contain the fruit's growth near the plant, preventing the squash from scattering – as they would then be subject to the dryness of the soil and may detach from the stem. The flower opens only for one day, while the fruit appears in mid-July.

3 - HARVEST

By the end of August, the leaves are gone. The more the squash is exposed to the sun, the redder it turns! From mid-August to the end of September, once the plant is dry, the stem is cut with secateurs and the squash is picked the following day. They are then graded in fields, then sorted by size. The squashes are then stored in a Cooperative for the Use of Agricultural Equipment (CUMA) in Kerlouan, under continuous ventilation. They are then hand collected and placed on brushers (with a set of eight rotating brushes) to reveal their shine.

Anatomy



1 plant = 5 squashes



**Squashes
carpaccio
recipe**

by the chef of the restaurant
**Au Grain
de sel**
LESNEVEN

These vegetables all have a mild flavour, with a pronounced taste of chestnut and a thick and particularly creamy flesh.

Ingredients for the marinated squash

- 1 Blue Ballet squash (80 g shavings/person)
- 20 cl olive oil
- 200 g coarse salt
- Chilli pepper

Ingredients for the squash-seed granola

- 25 g rolled oats
- 50 g shelled squash seeds
- 1 egg white
- 10 g honey
- Fleur de Sel (flake salt)

Squash condiment

- 200 g squash
- 50 g candied lemon
- Rosemary
- Seasoning (fine salt, chilli pepper)

STEP 1

Start by brining (rolling in coarse salt for 15 minutes) the squash shavings, then rinse well in water and leave in the oil with the chilli flakes.

Store in the fridge for 24 hours.

STEP 2

Burn a few squash shavings with a torch and finish cooking in the oven to make them tender.

STEP3

Prepare the granola: whisk the egg whites with the honey, add the rolled oats, squash seeds and fleur de sel.

Bake at 180°C until browned.

STEP 4

For the squash condiment, cook the squash in foil with the candied lemon, rosemary and seasonings at 160°C in the oven until the squash is tender.

Blend well and check seasoning to taste.