

# Hardly anyone grows winter squash anymore

By Kay Melia  
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Growing winter squash in our backyard garden these days is a bit like smoking a pipe. Hardly anyone does it anymore. Actually, my Dad was an avid pipe smoker, but he never planted a winter squash in his entire life. Which has nothing to do with anything, but to be perfectly honest, you've got to search diligently around Northwest Kansas to find anyone who will harvest one of those big blue, warty Hubbard squashes, the kind that has the wonderfully sweet flesh inside, and will store safely all winter when placed



kay melia

• the gardener

in a cool dry area.

Nowadays, gardeners, especially younger ones, will more likely devote space in their small garden for a couple of hills of pumpkin rather than to mess around with some kind of ugly winter squash. At least with a pumpkin, you have something the kids will enjoy, as a Jack-o-lantern, not to eat.

Early last spring, a longtime area gardener knocked on my door one Sunday afternoon and handed me a packet of Cushaw winter squash seed. The name was Cushaw. I had never heard of it. The lady explained that she just didn't have a decent growing area in her small backyard, and would I please grow some Cushaw for her? She said she and her late husband used to grow them each year, and enjoyed them more than any other winter squash they had ever grown. She found the

seed last winter on the Ferry-Morse rack at the store.

The only winter squash I had ever grown was the well known Butternut squash, the one with the thick orange flesh and the nice nutty flavor that makes a better pumpkin pie than a pumpkin does....in my opinion. Plus, they're almost as tasty as a sweet potato when baked and properly seasoned....in my opinion. Several gardeners I know grow those nice looking Acorn winter squash, as well as the Buttercups and the newer Delicata. all are winter keepers, as opposed to summer squash such as zucchini,

scallop, straight neck, crookneck, and scads of others. Most winter squash require 90 to 100 growing days to reach maturity while those quick growing summer squash are usually ready in 45 to 50 days.

So, on May 14th, I planted 3 hills of Cushaw winter squash, 5 or 6 seeds to the hill. When they came up, I thinned them to 2 or 3 plants per hill, formed a "well" around them, mulched them heavily, and watered them regularly. They showed a good fruit set, and sent out long runners all the way into the zucchini, which unfortunately, didn't seem to bother the zucchini.

The Cushaws grew rapidly into a beautiful cream-colored fruit with green stripes. They were big, too, with a crook-neck and a very large lower bowl. I picked them on September 5th, a bit earlier than I expected, because they were beginning to sunburn.

The largest Cushaw weighed 13 pounds and I picked 13 of them and delivered them to my gardener friend. I kept one, and am anxious to cut in to it. I also harvested a dozen Waltham Butternuts and will store them for the winter. Winter squash. Cushaws. Something new in my garden this summer.

# Recycling fundamental part of its enterprise

By Ron Wilson  
Director

Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University "Reduce, reuse, recycle." That's a familiar phrase which reminds us to recycle and be environmentally wise. Today we'll learn about a business which has made recycling a fundamental part of its enterprise.

Greg Wilson is co-owner of Howie's Trash Service in Manhattan. The business was founded by his father, Howard Wilson. The Wilsons (no relation to me) have rural roots. Howard grew up near the rural community of Alta Vista, population 434 people. Now, that's rural.

Howard Wilson met his wife Joann at Alta Vista and went on to Kansas State University where he studied dairy management. When children were born, he started running a trash route as a way to pay his way through college. He called it Howie's Trash Service.

"Thanks to that trash route, my dad got through college in five years while being married with two kids, debt-free," Greg said. After graduation, Howie sold the trash route and worked for the Safeway milk plant for 17 years.

In 1984, Howard and Joann and son, Greg, went back into the trash business in Manhattan. The business had one rear load trash truck and four Golden Goat machines.

What is a Golden Goat? They were yellow-colored machines that sat in parking lots around Manhattan. A person could put aluminum cans in the front and quarters came out the back. "It was pretty meager," Greg said.

In 1985, they decided to focus their efforts on the recycling business. Today, the business is known as Howie's Recycling and Trash Service.

Howie's opened its first recycling

center in May of 1986. At that time, Howie's Recycling, Inc. bought aluminum cans, scrap aluminum and other non-ferrous metals from individuals and businesses. It soon expanded into other household products, such as cardboard, glass, and newspapers.

The papers were shredded with a tree shredder, baled with a John Deere hay baler, and sold as animal bedding. Now, that's rural ingenuity.

Trying to recycle plastics proved to be a challenge in the beginning.

"The companies we shipped plastics to went out of business or found some fault with the shipment," Greg said. "We never received payment for the first three loads of plastic that we shipped out."

In 1993, Howie's Recycling purchased land in south Manhattan where its building is currently located. The main building is 150 feet x 200 feet in size. All of the materials received at the recycling center are baled with a horizontal baler housed within that building.

In 1998 Howie's Recycling added a roll-off trash service to its business. Since then, it has expanded to operate four roll-off semi-trucks and more than 200 open top containers in order to keep up with the demands of new construction in Manhattan and the surrounding area. The company also provides services to small or large companies needing demolition, handling all sizes and types of debris. The roll-off service services trash compactors for businesses like the K-State Union and Home Depot.

In 2008 Howie's added a residential and commercial trash service to its business. It currently runs two front load and one rear-load trash trucks and services Manhattan, Ogden, and Keats.

In 2010, Howie's Recycling, Inc. added optional curbside recycling

services for its residential and commercial customers. Recycling containers are picked up from customers twice a month.

The company currently has 12 employees. However, Howard, Joann, and Greg Wilson still do a lot of the work themselves.

Today, Howie's is a self-serve center for the recycler. Howie's accepts aluminum cans, food and beverage glass, plastic (#1 and #2), newspaper, magazines, office paper, cardboard and tin cans, as well as all non-ferrous metals. Saturday mornings are an especially busy

time, when families bring their recyclables to Howie's.

When Howie's Recycling started, it took about six months to generate a semi load of aluminum cans. Today, it ships an average of 15 semi loads of materials to be recycled per month.

"Reduce, reuse, recycle." We salute Howard, Joann, and Greg Wilson and all those involved with Howie's Recycling and Trash Service for making a difference with this environmentally positive business. So reduce, reuse, recycle - and revive rural Kansas.

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