

Hey everyone, I am at my (Heartwood) squash patch- half of this year's breeding project in relation with the squash bug. These squash were planted about 60 days ago, May 15<sup>th</sup>, and last week Ini and I came and removed all of the lumber wraps that we suppressed weeds with. This started off as an old pasture which is now grass and has been mowed for many years. So it's been pretty amazing to witness just how effective that tarping was. All the weeds are pretty well suppressed so the squash have a great opportunity to root at the nodes as they grow which these moschata like to do which increases their chance of remaining vigorous even amidst squash bug attacks.

And the squash bugs are attacking just as we know them to do. They do tend to push back the vigor of plants and even kill them outright so this is a great example of what squash bugs do. You can see that they've completely eaten the leaf and I'm guessing, if I lift that up, we're going to even see a lot of the little blue young ones. So let's see if I can get a little image of that. Yeah so we clearly have the subject that we are breeding in relationship with.

And this is a Thai Kang Kob squash, one of the first out of the gate. It's very vigorous and yeah you can see it is looking a little bit hit. It has some of these drooping leaves. Some of the nutrients might have been stopped from getting down into the plants via that squash bug predation on nutrient dispersal. As we look around, you can see on the yellowing of the leaves, some of the spots where the squash bug have been hitting, but overall I think the plants are looking pretty vigorous. This is another Thai Kang Kob and you can see the difference from plant to plant, right? Side by side with that one.

And as we step into the patch, we have some plants that are pretty far along. Here are some fruits 60 days in. You can see this guy here and a little fruit over here. And a lot of fruit setting right now. Just coming today to monitor how the plants are doing, witness any extreme predation and resilience in the face of it. So this one here, I think this is an Ozark Cheese that has been grown in the Ozarks for a few years. This row also looks pretty good. It has been getting hit, but it is resilient in the face of it. There are a couple fruits that are even further along and they are a Lofthouse variety. There they are. And these came out oddly enough even before any male flowers had come out so we'll see if they have seeds or what happens there – they were so early.

Let's see what else we have going on. A lot of vigor, some stress from the squash bugs. Like this, I would call that extreme stress. And the plant though is continuing. A little light green. This one has a bit of the wilt and heat stress. So overall I think the plot is looking very good. We are getting some extreme vigor and some of the plants aren't showing any wilt from the squash bugs at all. That one is - a row of Seminole Pumpkins which crossed last year with Thai Kang Kob and Cheese and Rancho Marques doing great. So this is just the little 60 days in, 2 months, update on the squash grant. Mid season.