



RISK BACKGROUND

Cucurbita maxima seeds for sowing

Overview



Figure 1. *Cucurbita maxima* seeds¹

Cucurbita maxima (winter squash, pumpkin) seeds imported for sowing do not require an import permit, however consignments must be:

- labelled with the full botanical name
- in new, clean packaging
- compliant with Australia's seed purity requirements
- inspected on arrival
- tested according to Australian requirements

Importers and department staff must ensure that all BICON conditions are met and that goods are free from biosecurity risk material, as well as the key risks described below.

Key risks

Seeds of *Cucurbita maxima* (winter squash, pumpkin) can harbour seed-borne pathogens of biosecurity concern, as well as a range of biosecurity risk material.

Tobamoviruses

Tobamoviruses are generally considered to be seed-borne, and can be transmitted by mechanical contact. These viruses are also highly stable and remain for months to years in plant debris and contaminated soil.

Cucumber green mottle mosaic virus (CGMMV) is a tobamovirus that produces mottle and severe mosaic symptoms on infected plants (Figure 2). This may result in severe reductions in fruit yield and quality, leading to serious economic losses in host crops. Australia manages the biosecurity risks posed by CGMMV by requiring the seeds of cucurbitaceous hosts to be tested and found free from this virus, prior to release from biosecurity control.



Figure 2. CGMMV symptoms in pumpkin, which includes leaf mottling².

Other pathway risks

Imported seeds may harbour a range of other biosecurity risk material, including live insects, disease symptoms, and contaminants such as soil, weed seeds, hitchhiker pests (e.g. [Khapra beetle](#)) and trash. These biosecurity risks are managed through standard seed import conditions, including on-arrival inspection of all consignments and purity testing as required under import conditions.

¹ McDonald, M, Bennet, M, Evans, A & Sites, A (n.d.), [Seed ID Workshop: Members of the Cucurbitaceae Family](#), Department of Horticulture & Crop Sciences, Ohio State University, accessed 18 May 2020.

² Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic Virus (CGMMV) National Management Plan (2016).