

In memoriam

David Warren Groff, Plant Breeder (1938 – 2022)

David Warren Groff, PhD, Age 84 of Lake Wisteria, Tifton, Georgia, passed away at home on Dec. 8, 2022.

Dave was a plant breeder, station manager and seedsman for The Asgrow Seed Company in Bridgeton, New Jersey (1966-1988) and Tifton, Georgia (1988-2000). From his work, over 100 hybrids of cucumber (92), squash (10) and spinach (9) varieties have been sold commercially worldwide. During 1994-2000, the company released the first commercial transgenic squash cultivars (Freedom II; Destiny III, and Liberator III) with multi-virus resistance (to ZYMV-WMV in 'Freedom II'; to ZYMV-WMV-CMV in 'Destiny III' and 'Liberator III'). After his retirement from Asgrow-SEMINIS Vegetable Seeds, he independently bred cucumber, squash, and bush-habit winged gourds.

Dave was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, the son of the late Warren C. and Eleanor Rapp Groff. He married the former Susan Pierson of State College, Pennsylvania on June 17, 1961,

who survives him in Tifton, Georgia. Together they had three children and were blessed with five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He achieved B.S. (1960) and M.S. (1962) degrees in horticulture and plant breeding, respectively, from Pennsylvania State University in State College and a Ph.D. in horticulture from the University of Arizona (1966).

Dave was passionately committed to hobbies, church and civic affiliations including hunting, breeding, and showing Brittany spaniels, and board positions and volunteering at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture.

He had served on the USDA Cucurbit Advisory Committee and, in 2001, received the American Society of Horticultural Science "Vegetable Breeding Working Group Award of Excellence."

Contributor: Jean M. Poulos, PhD



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