

## More Thanksgiving Dirt On Squanto And The Pilgrims

(Thomson, Illinois)—By now most Americans know that the real first Thanksgiving had very little to do with what is shown in elementary school pageants. What they may not know as much about is the story of the Pilgrims' survival in the New World, the Native American Squanto who helped them and how it all had a lot to do with the dirt underneath their feet.

Even after surviving through their first winter, the Pilgrims' fate was still very much up in the air and dependent on learning to cultivate the poor soil of the area in which they had made landfall. Squanto, a Native American who spoke English because he had been kidnapped by early English explorers and taken to England, was sent to act as an interpreter. Among other things, he taught them the now famous technique of burying a dead fish in each mound of corn in order to fertilize it.

Both Squanto and the Pilgrims had no way of understanding the science behind fish fertilization and the other techniques that were borrowed from the Native Americans. That is exactly what Bill Heid, the president of the Thomson-based "Solutions From Science" set out to explore in "Squanto's Secret Garden," a free Thanksgiving eBook available at: [www.squantosgarden.com](http://www.squantosgarden.com). Heid has also developed a new product called ProtoGrow that brings about the success conditions engineered by Squanto. ProtoGrow, is an organic "super-food" for plants that acts as an alternative to traditional, chemical-based fertilizers. It was created to actually mimic Squanto's fish fertilization technique.

"What a lot of people don't know," says Heid, "is that the food the Pilgrims grew probably tasted better than the food we eat today. And it was also better for them." That is because fish, and all marine life are uniquely suited to giving the soil the nutrients that will make it produce the best food. In addition to providing the soil with vital nutrients like calcium, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulfur, marine life is the best source of trace elements. Trace elements are the near microscopic amounts of different elements that are necessary for the human body to survive and that poor soil often lacks. "Food can only ever be as good as the soil you grow it in," Heid explains.

In "Squanto's Garden," Heid looks at what really happened as the Pilgrims learned to cultivate the land properly. He also goes back far earlier to examine the problems of the soil in New England through the area's geological history. By learning about the rocky, poor soil conditions in the area and how the Native American's living there originally had adapted their lifestyle to it, he is able to show his reader why the Pilgrims came so close to failing. But it wasn't just the fish fertilization that saved them. The Pilgrims changed from a large collective farm to the Native American technique of using smaller "family" gardens that made optimal use of the pockets of better soil. They also began to copy the Native American "companion planting" gardens that helped to nourish the soil. Companion planting is growing specific varieties of plants in the same space to benefit the plants and the soil.

While all of this information makes sense in a historical context, "Squanto's Secret Garden" doesn't end there. Many of the soil problems that the Pilgrims had to overcome are problems today because of over farming and soil depletion. Heid refers to scientific studies that show how the nutritional value of fruits and vegetables has diminished dramatically over the past 40 years. Other studies show that organic fruits and vegetables are nutritionally superior to those produced using traditional farming methods. The answer, Heid contends, is the same now as it was in Squanto's day: using marine-based fertilization.

Specifically geared towards the backyard gardener, the second half of Heid's book explains how to grow an organic garden using Native American planting techniques and marine-based fertilizer to enrich and improve the soil. A variety of companion planting possibilities are suggested along with layouts for three traditional Native American gardens that suit different environments and soil conditions. It culminates with a selection of English and Native American recipes making use of garden produce that are based on what was actually eaten at the first Thanksgiving.

By reconnecting people today with one of America's greatest heroes and his life-giving gift to the Pilgrims, Heid hopes to revitalize interest in the forgotten gardening methods that gave birth to the very first Thanksgiving. The story goes that Samoset and Squanto welcomed the Pilgrims and then asked for beer. But in the end, it wasn't the beer the Pilgrims had for the Native Americans, so much as it was the fertile gardens and bountiful harvest the natives returned so freely. "I really want to show all Americans why Squanto's Secrets worked for our Pilgrim Fathers and how his life-giving secrets are even more valuable today. As Americans, we should all be thankful for this great man."

Solutions From Science is a small Illinois company helping backyard gardeners grow healthier and better tasting fruits and vegetables with alternative, marine based fertilizers.

### About the Author

Bill Heid is the President of Solutions From Science, a small Illinois company helping backyard gardeners grow healthier and better tasting fruits and vegetables with alternative, marine-based fertilizers. Check out the site here: [Full Spectrum Plant Nutrition From the Sea](http://www.solutionsfromscience.com).

