

Podcast: Geneticist Kevin Folta responds after anti-biotech social media attacks led to his exclusion from Florida gardening event

Recently, University of Florida plant scientist Kevin Folta was invited to present a series of lectures at a seed saving conference in Gainesville, Florida, the third annual Southern Seed School. But just days before the conference began, the plant scientist received an email informing him he had been excluded from the event. As the GLP [reported on April 26](#),

The [event organizer] disinvited Folta after several Twitter users resurrected [an anti-GMO] campaign against him and claimed his views as a biotechnology advocate conflicted with the purpose of the workshop. On April 21, messages began hitting Twitter with the hashtag #BanFolta

Melissa DeSa, Community Programs Director for Working Food, told Folta in an email: ‘Since your sharing of the event on Twitter, we have received so much back lash and negative attention I truly defend free speech, information sharing, and science literacy, but now realize that the messenger matters, and do not believe that our audience will be able to hear you’

On this episode of Talking Biotech, Folta tells his side of the story, explaining how he ended up being excluded from an educational event he helped organize. The controversy, Folta argues, makes “seed savers” and organic gardeners look like they are offended by science, which is a shame because it’s not true. However, Folta says their actions in this situation reinforce those negative perceptions of the organic gardening community. Folta plans to present his lectures at a future date in the fall of 2019.

https://geneticliteracyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/184_folta.mp3

Kevin M. Folta is a professor in the Horticultural Sciences Department at the University of Florida. Follow professor Folta on Twitter [@kevinfolta](#) and email your questions to kfolta@ufl.edu.

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