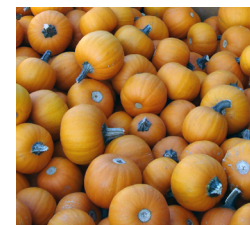


PUMPKIN

Just like watermelons, children pick pumpkins (probably #2 choice) over all other vegetables as their favorite to grow. Who can blame them? Pumpkins are just fun. You can carve them, eat them, eat their seeds, use them for decorations, launch them from catapults, and if they are big enough, you can even make a canoe out of them. Sizes range from 8 oz Jack Be Little to over 1000 lbs of some Atlantic Giant, and they come in all kinds of colors: orange, white, striped, warted, etc. Their only drawback is that they take up a lot of space. For standard varieties, the vines can grow as large as 20 feet in diameter – fortunately there are some bush pumpkins that are still productive for their smaller size plants (still 12-15 feet diameters). If you have the room, pumpkins are worth the space.

SOIL PREPARATION

Pumpkins prefer a sandy soil, rich in organic matter, well drained, and not too heavy. They also need full sun exposure. Before planting, incorporate 1-2 inches of well composted organic matter, Humic, and 1 lb. of all-purpose fertilizer (we recommend "That's all it Takes" complete fertilizer or Happy Frog Organic Tomato & Vegetable Food) per 100 square feet and work them in to a depth of 4-6 inches. Heavy, clay-based soils must be amended with compost and organic matter to encourage and allow for good root development. For best results, add 2-4 inches of a variety of different types of organic matter and 50 lbs. of Zeolite soil conditioner per 100 square feet each fall for multiple years to increase drainage and nutrient availability. By doing this yearly, over time you can create a better growing environment for your garden plants to thrive in and produce. Please consult our Soil Preparation Guide in the attached appendix.



PLANTING

You can grow successful pumpkins from start or seed, it just depends on the preference of the grower. The seeds can also be sowed indoors for starts 2-3 weeks before the last frost date. If planting directly outside, it is possible to do it after the last frost of the season (which for Cache Valley is around Mother's Day). For earlier starts, use plastic walls, row covers, or hot caps to protect against frost danger. Seeds should be planted with 4-6 seeds per cluster, about 1/2 inch deep and 4-6 feet apart. Squashes are commonly grown in "hills," which is not really a hill, but more like a depression that will keep the seeds and water contained in the same location, and for an easier harvest. After the seedlings have two leaves, you can thin them to 2-3 plants per hill, or leave them all to grow. The vines will spread out 6 to 10 to 16 feet depending on varieties, so be sure to leave at least 6 to 8 feet between each hill or row. Some pumpkins come in a bush variety that won't take up as much space, usually 50-60% of a normal vine.

VARIETIES

With so many choices of pumpkins available, a few factors will greatly influence your decisions on which pumpkins to grow: color, shape, size of the fruit, size of vine, and productivity. Here are a few of our favorites at Anderson's to help you make the best choice possible. Burpee Semi Bush pumpkin is our all-time best seller for home gardens. It produces an abundance of 10-20 pound, perfectly shaped fruits on much smaller vines (12-15 ft diameter). For general productivity, and for the best carving pumpkins around, try Harvest Jack or Howden: 15-25 pound fruits, thick sturdy stems for nice handles, good color and smooth skin.

Warty Toad, Wee Be Little, and the baby pumpkins (Jack Be Little [orange], Gooligan [white], and Hooligan [orange, white, & green stripes]) are all just fun to grow and make excellent decorations. Some of our newest, more interesting colors and shapes: Warty Goblin, Porcelain Doll, Blue Doll, and Large Marge.

Atlantic Giant has produced over 1000 pound pumpkins grown right here in Cache Valley (Just over 2200 lbs is the state record in 2000). Cinderella is shaped flat on the top and the bottom, like her namesake carriage, and has distinctively sweet flesh for making pies.



WATER

Pumpkins need regular water and consistent soil moisture to produce well. Use of a soaker hose, drip system and light mulches or weed barrier can assist in maintaining correct soil moisture and guaranteeing a healthy harvest. We recommend about 1-2 inches of water applied per week in 2-3 applications. Moisture fluctuations can cause problems with flower set, and poor yields. Maintaining consistent moisture will prevent early flower drop, proper pollenization, and assist in greater root development.



FERTILIZER

About 6 weeks after germination or transplant, apply a balanced vegetable food ("That's All it Takes" or Natural Guard Organic Tomato & Vegetable Food) around the base of each plant and water thoroughly. 1/2 to 1 cup per 10 square feet of area works well. For quick bursts of growth and flower production, we recommend using a water soluble fertilizer like Ferti-lome Blooming and Rooting or Grow Big from Fox Farm once per week for extra productivity. Just mix in water and apply to the leaves as well as the root zone.



<u>PUMPKIN</u>	
PLANTING TIME	Group D
PLANTING METHOD	Mounds
MOUND SPACING	6-10'
<u>PUMPKIN</u>	
SEED DEPTH	1/2-1"
<u>PUMPKIN</u>	
TIME TO HARVEST	70-110 Days
WATER NEEDS	1", 3x weekly

Many of the giant pumpkin growers use a nitrogen fixing bacteria (Azos) to really enhance the growth and size of their pumpkins. We also recommend treating your pumpkin seed or plants with beneficial microbes and mycorrhizae (Kangaroots or Myke). These added helpers bring nutrients and water directly to the plants that host them, making them stronger, more resistant to insects and diseases, and more drought tolerant. Giant pumpkins consume a lot of water and nutrient when adding that much weight and size daily, and the benefits of beneficial bacteria, microbes and fungi go a long way in making that happen. They will do the same for your other vegetables as well. Don't go home without them.

COMMON PROBLEMS

Anyone who has ever grown pumpkins knows of the problems that can accompany this garden vegetable. Aphids, spider mites, blossom end rot, can all damage a pumpkin crop. Powdery mildew, a white-patchy disease that stunts the plants growth and eventually will kill the whole vine, can easily be taken care of by Natural Guard Copper Soap (organic) or Ferti-lome F-stop. If squash bugs are present, a once healthy plant will suddenly drop like it's not getting enough water. The eggs, which are seen on the bottom of the leaves, are a coppery color. These can be physically smashed or removed. The bugs themselves are black, shiny, oval-shaped beetles; they sting the vine and stop the nutrients from getting to the rest of the plant. Spray with Hi-Yield Indoor/Outdoor Insecticide or dust with Hi-Yield Garden Pet and Livestock Dust. Organically repel bugs with Natural Guard Cedar Oil Granules. And don't forget, deer love to eat pumpkins more than we like carving them.

HARVESTING

Fruits are usually ready late summer. The vines will die back, and the fruit skin will be hard and colorful. We like to harvest just after a light frost (28 and above) or just before a hard frost (27 degrees or less). Once they are ready, cut the stem with a knife or hand pruner, leaving a 2-3 inch stem on the fruit. When storing or if you're planning to use them as decorations, prep the fruits by placing them in a warm, dry location for 2-3 weeks before moving them to a cool (40-55 degrees) and dry location for longer term storage and use.