

Wallace's Whoppers Growing Tips

Pumpkin Care and Fertilizer Suggestions

Welcome to the exciting world of growing giant pumpkins! Growing giant pumpkins is a family fun event that for some has turned a hobby into an obsession. Some people grow for neighborhood "bragging" rights, others for competition. Depending on what category of grower you fall into, the one thing all growers have in common is we all started at the "beginner" level.

If you have purchased a pack of Wallace's Whoppers and have never grown a giant pumpkin, I would also suggest you **subscribe to my exclusive pumpkin growing tips, weekly updates, and videos starting in the spring of 2018 at the Wallace Organic Wonder YouTube channel.** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrGKtAPO27GCmvv3m7uyQew> These videos will feature both beginner and intermediate growing practices.

Below are some suggestions to help you get started on giant pumpkin growing. All product suggestions in **bold** are available at www.wallacewow.com.

Location and soil test: Giant pumpkins like all day sun and a fertile well-drained soil that is high in organic matter. Competition growers can allocate as much as 1,000 sq. ft. for a single plant! If you are just starting out, have no fear you can grow a single plant in a 300 sq. ft. area and still grow a pumpkin up to 800 pounds or more! First thing you will need to do is to take a soil test from your garden area and send it to your local soil-testing lab. Most tests cost less than \$30 and are well worth the money. One of the things you need to do, if you do nothing else, is to take a soil test and adjust per the lab's recommendations. Pumpkins like a soil pH of 6.5 to 7. I've had good results from Western Laboratories for my soil and plant tissue testing. www.westernlaboratories.com. Once you've received the results, you can email me your soil test information and I will advise. ron@wallacewow.com

It is best to start your pumpkin patch the previous fall if possible. At this time you can add compost and organic matter to your soil, adjust your soil pH per the lab's recommendations and also plant a cover crop of winter rye. This cover crop will "hold" all of your soil's nutrients in place until it is ready to be tilled under in the spring.

The biggest mistake first time growers make is starting their seeds too early. If you do not plan to place a small greenhouse over your pumpkin plant, there is no need to start your seeds until the first week of May or later. Then place your plants outside after the last expected day of frost for your area. Outside planting instructions are listed on the back of your Wallace's Whoppers Seed packet. If you plan on starting your seeds indoors, please see our video for seed starting at www.wallacewow.com

Starting Seeds: Lightly file the edges of your seeds with a fine grit sand paper. This helps the seed coat remove easily from the new seedling. Soak seeds for 1 hour in 1 quart of warm water with ¼ teaspoon **WOW Seaweed Powder**. Mix 6 ounces of **WOW Pumpkin Pro Mycorrhizal Inoculant** with 1.5 cubic foot of seed starting mix. Add moistened seed starting mix to **5-inch peat pot** and place 1 seed per pot – point down – no deeper than 1 inch below the soil line. Place peat pots in **seed starting tray**, and cover with **2-inch plastic dome**. Place tray on top of **seedling heat mat** and keep in a warm place. Keep soil moist but not wet. Seedling will germinate in 4 to 5 days. After germination, place seedling under **grow light** for 14 hours a day

for several days. After a few days the seedlings will need to be transferred to a 1-gallon pot or planted directly into the garden. Before planting seedlings outside, make sure they are exposed to some natural sunlight for a few hours each day along with keeping them cool at night. This will properly “harden off” your seedlings.

The following are some fertilizing suggestions. These are the fertilization products I use when growing for competition. Some fertilizers are very basic in nature and others are “cutting edge.” You do NOT have to go “all-in” on all fertilizer suggestions. I suggest you educate yourself on all products recommended and see if they are right for you and what you are looking for out of your pumpkin patch. Some growers are high tech, and others only apply basic rudimentary gardening skills. Both methods have been found to be very successful. The biggest thing to remember is to have FUN! You will be amazed at just how fast your Wallace’s Whopper pumpkins will grow and the excitement it brings to you.

May: For a pumpkin patch of approximately 500 square feet, add to your soil and till in 10 pounds of **WOW Kelp Meal** and 2 pounds **WOW Humic and Fulvic Acid**.

When transplanting out into the patch, work into the soil where your plant will be planted ½ cup **Pumpkin Pro**, 3 tablespoons **WOW Soil and Plant Booster**, and 1 tablespoon of powdered **Azos**.

After seed germination and planting in your patch, water plants weekly with **WOW Soluble Seaweed Powder** (1 teaspoon per gallon of water) combined with **WOW Humic Acid** (½ teaspoon per gallon of water), and **Triple 12 Liquid Fertilizer** (¾ ounce per gallon of water). All can be mixed in a watering can and applied in and around the plant. Any time you use a watering can or other methods to soak the soil, this is called a “soil drench.” Seaweed can also be foliar applied through the season and is very effective. A “foliar” application is misting your plants’ leaves using a mechanical or hand pump sprayer. Humic Acid is more effective when soil drenched. All application rates and instructions are printed on each product label.

Also I am excited to be one of the first in the USA to sell the product **Root**. Root’s active ingredient Formononetin is a naturally-occurring compound found in plant roots, which stimulates the natural growth of vesicular-arbuscular mycorrhizae, enhancing the growth of plants! Bottom line and translated into understandable terms: Formononetin is a food source for mycorrhizae. Seedlings should be drenched every week at 2 teaspoons per gallon of water. Established plants should be drenched every 2 weeks at 1 teaspoon of **Root** per gallon of water. I have studied Formononetin for years and am anxious to see the results!

June: Continue feeding plants with **WOW Seaweed, Humic Acid, and Triple 12 Liquid Fertilizer**. Use 2 tablespoons of **Pumpkin Pro** and 1 tablespoon of **WOW Soil and Plant Booster** and place under each leaf rooting point when burying vines. When burying vines, I always place what I need to a small bowl and to that add a few tablespoons of powdered **Azos**. Research has shown that adding **Azos** provides an extra biological presence to the soil and this helps mycorrhizal fungi establish and grow. I also will be adding **Root** to my vine-burying mixture in 2018. Every 2 weeks drench the soil and plants with **Azos Blue**. Early in June would be the time to consider foliar applying **Axiom Harpin Proteins**. (2.0 grams per 1 gallon of water will cover 1,000 sq ft.) I applied **Harpin Proteins** last year to tomato plants and saw significant results compared to the ones without. I will apply **Harpin Proteins** to a few plants this year and will report on my findings at year-end. There is extensive information on the web as it pertains to the ISR Induced Systemic Resistance plants get from **Harpin Proteins**. Starting in early June, every 14 days, I will add **Companion Biological Fungicide**, (2 teaspoons per gallon of water) and

Essential (¼ ounce per gallon of water) to my Seaweed and Humic/Fulvic fertilizers. The **Companion** will help shield your roots and leaves from harmful fungi. **Essential** contains 20 natural L-amino acids that will aid in plant growth! Starting around the third week of June, apply **TKO Phosphite** to the plants at ¼ ounce per gallon of water. This will add needed phosphorus and potassium along with the power of phosphite plant protection.

July: Weekly additions of **WOW Seaweed** and **Humic Acid**, and **Triple 12 Liquid Fertilizer**. Continue to bury vines using a mixture of **Pumpkin Pro**, **WOW Soil and Plant Booster**, and Powdered **Azos**. Every 2 weeks drench the plants and soil with **Azos Blue** and continue weekly with **TKO Phosphite** applications. Let's not forget to sit back and have a cold beverage and enjoy all your hard work! Every other week continue with **Companion** and **Essential**.

August: This is my last soil and plant drench of **Azos Blue**. I will also continue to bury vines till plants have filled their allocated area with a mixture of **Pumpkin Pro**, **Soil and Plant Booster**, and powdered **Azos**. Weekly applications of **WOW Seaweed** and **Humic Acid**, and **Triple 12** should continue. At this time depending on tissue test results, I will add **0-0-25** from **Growth Products** to **TKO Phosphite**. Every other week continue with **Companion** and **Essential**.

September: The first thing you should do is add mouse bait around all of your pumpkins! Do not let a mouse ruin all your hard work. Continue feeding with **WOW Seaweed** and **Humic Acid** and **Triple 12**. Depending on my growth rates and shape of the pumpkin, I will continue to keep my foot on the "throttle" till season's end. **TKO Phosphite** and **0-0-25** is applied weekly till the third week of September. If my pumpkin has a very high growth rate or a stem crack, I will ease off on applying fertilizers. The middle of September will be the last of our fertilizer applications, along with **Companion** and **Essential**.

At the end of the season, I immediately make notes on my calendar and update what I have done to be better prepared for next season. I urge everyone to enter one of the GPC (Great Pumpkin Commonwealth) weigh-offs. With or without a pumpkin you will make friends that will last a lifetime.

Insect & disease control: Please view our Wallace WOW YouTube channel for Insect and disease control measures.

Here is one last **WOW** tip if you want to get ahead on next season. Prepare your garden during the month of October by adding compost and plant a cover crop of winter rye and hairy vetch mixed with 3 pounds per 750 sq. ft. of **WOW Pumpkin Pro Mycorrhizal Inoculant**.