

NEWSLETTER



Craig Weir at the Topsfield fair with his giant pumpkin in 1994

NEPTUNE'S HARVEST AND GIANT PUMPKINS

BY: ANN MOLLOY

Sales Director/ Co-owner of Neptune's Harvest

For years giant pumpkin growers have used Neptune's Harvest Organic Fertilizers to achieve huge results. Here's how it all started. One day, in 1994, I got a call from Craig Weir, from Salisbury, MA. He said he grew the World Record pumpkin, which weighed 914 lbs. and was just weighed at our local Topsfield Fair, which is about 20 minutes from where we are in Gloucester, MA. He said he was contacted by a big (the biggest) fertilizer producer for home growers.

I won't mention their name, but I bet you can figure it out. They asked if he'd say he used their product to grow his pumpkin and offered him money if he did. I can't recall how much, but it was a lot. He told me "Truth be told, I used your Fish Fertilizer, and I can't lie." He had purchased it at the Essex County Co-op, in Topsfield, right across the street from the fairgrounds. He asked if we could do anything. At the time we were a very small company, just getting started in the retail market, so I told him I couldn't give him anywhere near what he'd been offered but would be happy to give him a 5-gallon pail of our Fish Fertilizer, which was the only product we were making back then. He agreed and I went to the fair and took his picture in front of the pumpkin and used it in an ad in American Vegetable Grower magazine. The next day, a grower from Canada, Herman Bax, took the record away from him, with his 990 lb. pumpkin. His record didn't last long, but everyone got very excited knowing a 1000 lb. pumpkin was clearly in reach!

Next, we got a call from Tim Parks, from Park's Garden Center in Canfield, OH, who said he saw the ad and was very interested in using and carrying our fertilizer in his store, since they had a giant pumpkin weigh-off there every year. We sponsored the event (still do), ran more ads, and the rest is history!

Since then, our fertilizers have helped many growers break records, including Travis Gienger, and his 2,749 lb. World Record!

In 2023, the GPC held their convention in Danvers, MA. Woody Lancaster, who I've known for years, called me and asked if we'd give a tour to the growers. Of course we did and they got to see our seafood company, and see fishing boats unloading, then our warehouse, where we mix our blends, package our products, and store them etc., and then we went to the Gloucester House restaurant for a seafood buffet where they ate the fish they saw being unloaded that morning, and met some Wicked Tuna captains! Everyone I talked to loved it. Next time the convention comes this way, we'd love to do it again!

We've come a long way since that call from Craig, and now we have a full line of products including the liquid Fish Fertilizer, Fish & Seaweed Blend, straight Liquid Seaweed, Tomato & Veg, Rose & Flowering, Turf Formula, Lawn Starter, Crab & Lobster Shell, Humate, and 2 dry products, Crab & Lobster Shell and Kelp Meal. We are putting up a bagging machine right now, and will be able to

add more dry product mixes to our line for this Fall. It is a real pleasure to work with the giant pumpkin community, who I call "Salt of the Earth" and meet so many of you. I look forward to meeting many more of you and working together to achieve the best possible results for years to come.



*Travis Gienger at
the Safeway
World
Championship
Pumpkin Weigh
Off in 2023*



GROWER SPOTLIGHT:
Alex Bogie

Alex Bogie is an accountant and artist living in Ham Lake, MN with his wife Heather and two rescue cats, Pepper and Everly. Their backyard is where the giants are, but the real treat is in the basement, where he tends to a massive collection of cacti and succulents they've gathered over the years. His claim to fame is a weedless patch, and his creative and dedicated mind has led him to over 20 years of successful pumpkin growing. Thank you for your countless contributions to the SCGA and giant pumpkin community, Alex!

1. What made you want to grow giant pumpkins?

My grandmother helped me into gardening at an early age. She gifted me a subscription to a gardening magazine which featured an advertisement insert for book written by Don Langevin on how to grow giant pumpkins. I grabbed my dad's credit card and ordered it.

2. How long have you been growing?

I grew my first giant pumpkins in 1995-1996 to around eighty pounds. After a long break, I returned to the hobby ten years later and grew a 294-pound pumpkin off store seeds and have been growing more regularly since then. I've taken a few years off here and there to finish my education and take breaks to rest the soil and pursue other interests.

3. What are your short-term gardening goals?

I would like to grow a one-ton pumpkin someday. I grew a 1,956 pound pumpkin in 2022, a personal best off my own seed. Would also like to experiment with some better ways to control powdery mildew, insects, and soil diseases.

4. What is your BIGGEST dream for your pumpkin growing?

Early on I imagined growing a world record or a state record pumpkin, but as time went on, I was just as happy pursuing a win at a local weigh off surrounded by family and friends. I realized everyone has environmental and life situations that are unique and different like my own, so do the best you can and have fun doing it.

5. What do you enjoy besides pumpkin growing? Do you have any hobbies?

I enjoy finding opportunities to do some colored pencil drawings. I've built many fine scale models of battleships, tanks, and airplanes over the years. Also earned my ham radio technician license and call sign in 2018 while finishing college. I'm good at being handy and fixing things too.

6. What's your favorite food?

I'd go for a slice of supreme deep-dish pizza any day, every day.

7. What's your go to fertilizer?

I believe in soil tests and getting bulk material added and bonded in the soil well before planting. If the soil is dialed in properly, you should be good to go.

8. Why might your patch differ from others, and have you faced any challenges because of it?

I have high organic matter soil that tends to waterlog and create disease conditions very easily. It's right next to a creek, which means it's in very low ground. The biggest battles are cold temperatures early and late season and mad swings all year. When the sun goes down it's like the dark side of the moon instantly. My best years have been hot and dry years.

9. What's something we should know about you?

Perfect question for this oddball fact: In 2009, I designed and drew the SCGA logo of the pumpkin with seeds and blue river banner that represents our club to this day.

10. Have pests or disease affected your patch more? What do you do to prevent plant damage?

I've had many issues with soil diseases taking down my pumpkins. I'm still trying to figure out how to control the problem. I couldn't do what I do without having a backpack mist blower, get one!

11. Do you use city water to water your patch, and do you use a filter?

I have well water in Ham Lake, but I've used city water in the past while I was in Minneapolis. Would be nice to use warm water to mimic nature. I think the cold water can shock roots and microbe webs. Possibly even the chloramines in city tap water are hurting the soil diversity.

“I’m proud of the challenges I’ve taken on because I feel I’ve done well, faced fears, and continued to find myself in a better position for it. Fortune favors the bold.”

-Alex Bogie



No weeds in here either.



SPRING MEETING



SATURDAY, MARCH 29TH, 2025

10AM - 2PM

Big Bore Barbecue Company

10940 4th St NE

Hanover, MN 55341

What to expect

- Jim Ford, the current Wisconsin state record champ and Paul Bongers, the current world record holder for the 150 sq ft contest will be our speakers.
- Join the SCGA board! Positions up for election are the Vice President, Secretary, and at large members. Please email Craig at cbierle@gmail.com before the meeting if you're interested.
- Belly laughs and a belly full of BBQ! Big Bore specializes in a wood fired, Texas inspired, dry rubbed, craft barbeque experience. Think brisket, mac n cheese, and a cold drink with your favorite pumpkin people.
- Highly discounted Neptune's Harvest fertilizer - You won't find cheaper anywhere else! (We know a guy.)

SEEDS FOR SALE

www.stcroixgrowers.org



SCGA Premium Seed packs speak for themselves. The biggest pumpkins come from the biggest genetics, and our seeds are sourced from some of the largest pumpkins in the world. The SCGA website has been updated, and we encourage you to check out the new selection!



LOOKING AHEAD

Patch tour volunteers needed this summer. Give us a shout at the spring meeting if hosting a stop on the tour is something you'd consider!

