



2008: A YEAR TO REMEMBER FOR THE SCGA



Dean Christopherson & Bill Foss admire giants in Stillwater

Could we have asked for a better day in Stillwater? A far cry from last year's 80+ degrees, this year's event was just right. After a grueling scramble to pull the event together at the last moment, including an overnight change in the physical location itself and last minute funding issues, the 2008 weigh-off will go into the books as our most successful yet. **We had 31 entries, with highlights including a new MN state record, a ¾ ton fruit, a first year grower that broke the 1000lb mark, and a top-ten average of 1003 lbs!!!** Congrats and thank you to every grower who weighed a pumpkin this year, the SCGA appreciates your participation.

Read more about Chad Revier's amazing season later on in this newsletter. I'd also like to extend a thank you to our newsletter sponsors who contributed to help make this publication possible. -Joe Ailts

STILLWATER, 2008 OFFICIAL RESULTS

Place	Weight (lbs)	Grower Name
1	1,428.00	Revier, Chad
2	1,187.50	Marsh, Kevin
3	1,065.00	Revier, Chad
4	1,002.50	Krause, Mitch
5	998.00	Bowles, Dan
6	945.00	Foss, Bill
7	910.50	Fillmore, Andy
8	891.50	Christopherson, Dean
9	822.00	Hopkins, John
10	777.00	Ailts, Joe
11	774.00	Swanson, Jeff
12	772.50	Glockner, Jim
13	748.50	Foss, Bill
14	729.50	Hopkins, John
15	715.50	Bogie, Alexander
16	660.50	Englund, Thomas
17	649.50	Fritz, Mike
18	642.00	Stewart, Mitch
19	630.50	Johnson, Adam
20	622.50	Wittenburg, Wade
21	611.00	Glockner, Jim
22	581.50	Engel, Shannon
23	533.00	Stohr, Rick
24	502.50	Marose, Matt
25	492.00	Stohr, Renae
26	464.50	Matt & Doug
27	364.50	Stevens, Chris
28	284.50	Lorge, Joey
29	238.50	Janicek, Bob
E	1,500.50	Revier, Chad
E	582.50	Hopkins, John



**Minnesota Top Ten
Average: 1147 lbs
Rank: #16 Nationally**

Rank	Grower	Weight
1.	Chad Revier	1428
2.	David Bhaskaran	1258.5
3.	Bill Foss	1213
4.	David Bhaskaran	1087
5.	Jerold Johnson	1083.5
6.	Dean Christopherson	1075
7.	Jerold Johnson	1073.4
8	David Bhaskaran	1068
9.Tie	George Heyne	1065
9.Tie	Dean Christopherson	1065
9 tie	Chad Revier	1065

Rank: #10 Nationally

Rank	Grower	Weight
1.	Alan Kopp	1427
2.	George Poirier	1362
3	Glenn and Margaret Marten	1323.5
4.	Dan Bowles	1313
5.	Rebecca Poirier	1290
6.	Dan Bowles	1290
7.	John Barlow	1279.5
8	Dan Bowles	1250
9.	Ron Gronski	1210.5
10	Casey Neville,	1195.5

Information courtesy of Indiana Pumpkin Growers Association <http://www.ipga.us>



Wisconsin Top Ten Average: 1294

S!!! By Joe Ailts

Back in 2002, I asked growers to list all the pests they encounter in their patches, ranking from most annoying/destructive/threatening to the least. The list was very diverse, as there were 26 different categories to tally when the results were calculated. The scoring system was simple- each pest on a voter's submission was ranked 1-10. The top pest on each list was awarded 10 pts, the 2nd 9 pts, and so on.

Rank	Pest	Points	%Points
1	SVB	99	12.8
2	Cuke beetles	80	10.3
3	Temp extremes	77	9.9
4	Other animals	61	7.9
5	Powdery mildew	55	7.1
6	Woodchucks	55	7.1
7	Weather xtremes	52	6.7
8	Other people	37	4.8
9	Dogs	36	4.6
10	Squash bugs	32	4.1

Even though SVB captured the most points, it only captured 12.8% of the total points. This shows that there are a large number of problems that we as growers have to put up with and that

there is no single pest that really blows the others out of the water. The top 10 represents 75.3% of the total points attributed, meaning about one-quarter of the points are found in the 16 other categories. It may have been more beneficial to do a top 20, since there were that many categories to choose from. Growing the big one is a never-ending battle. You already know that, because as soon as one pest is under control, the next one rears its ugly head.



At this point I have to assign an "Honorable Mention" to a category that I feel deserves to be listed. Coming in at just under the bar, the "me, myself, and I" category scored 31 points. If the scoring

system had been based on number of votes rather than a point system, this category would have been ranked #5! However, it was towards the bottom of most people's lists, therefore did not receive a ranking in the top 10. Message to growers: Be careful out there!

Quick description of pests- Our #1 contender begins as an egg, laid by a female borer moth, on the under side of a leaf or a vine. The egg

hatches and the larvae makes its way down to the vine. It then proceeds to drill a hole into the vine, leaving a sawdust trail in its tracks. The larvae chew their way through the vine, cutting off water and nutrient supply to your fruit.



#2 Cucumber beetles are characterized by their yellow and black stripes. They appear by the hundreds in the middle of May, munching and mating on precious new growth. Also known to be a vector for a pumpkin bacterial disease. **#3** Temperature extremes are tough to deal with. Frosts in May, June, and September are tough to deal with as they usually result in plant death. Extreme heat in July makes fruit setting tough and plants wilt. **#4** Animals such as deer, gophers, and squirrels can be big pests. Why is it that they need to take just one bite out of your contest fruit? Why not munch on that cull you tossed into the compost heap? Seems like there is no trap smart enough to catch these animals. Mother nature always wins in the end. **#5** Powdery Mildew is a fungus that shows up in mid-September. It thrives in humid, cool conditions. If infected, leaves will

turn a dull-white color. The fungus blocks the ability to photosynthesize, thus choking the plant. **#6** Woodchucks could have been lumped in with the other animals, but received enough votes to warrant a class of their own. These guys are smart, real smart. They are quite skittish, and usually do their damage at night. For some reason, an AG plant is the equivalent of a woodchuck buffet. They nibble vine tips, your biggest fruit, scratch the soil, and create problems all around. **#7** Not enough rain will usually slow fruit growth, and on the other extreme, 1 inch hail will bring it to a screeching halt. Hail can deal a serious amount of damage in a very short time. However, even the Swiss-cheese shredded plants can recover and produce. **#8** Other people in the patch can create some unique problems. It's the one pest on the list that you may feel guilty for removing. People just do not understand how fragile a grower's patch is. They stomp on vines, break leaf stalks, cull prize fruit and then proceed to call YOU crazy? The nerve! **#9** They call him man's best friend, that is until he enters the patch. Dogs innocently run around the patches, doing much the same damage that people do. Whether they are chasing butterflies, the cat, or the owner, they always manage to create some sort of havoc. Rounding out the list is squash bugs. These bugs are brown in color and pretty good sized. They hang out around the stump of the plant, often times you will find their eggs in small groups on leaves.

Recommended in
How to Grow
World Class Pumpkins
by Don Lan gavin

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If there is a good thing about these about these pests, it's that most can be controlled some degree by the grower.



Bugs can be sprayed, animals can be trapped, plants can be watered, and kids can be scolded. Of course, its hard to turn down mother nature's thermostat when its 104 in August, but growers can cope with these problems by putting their heads together, letting creativity flow, and sharing great ideas on pest control. Keep the pest control ideas flowing, and thank you to those who contributed to my over-analysis of the top 10 pests.

SCGA SEED AUCTION TO BE HELD FEB 21ST AT 7PM CST

Don't miss your chance to score the hottest seeds our hobby has to offer at the first annual SCGA seed auction. Log on to www.bigpumpkins.com on Saturday, February 21st at 7pm central time to get in on the action. Here's a quick sampling of the seeds that will be available:

- ✓ 1689 Jutras!
- ✓ 1385 Jutras!
- ✓ 985 Werner!
- ✓ 1556 Werner!
- ✓ 1568 Connolly!
- ✓ 1566 Rodonis!
- ✓ 1161 Rodonis!

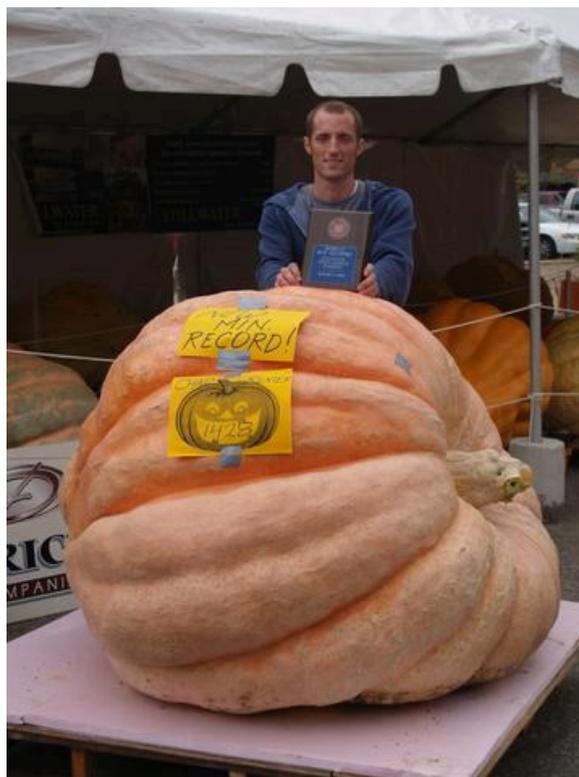
**Don't Miss
This event!!**

We've got many more lots on top of this that include seeds from top growers around the country as well as local favorites. All proceeds directly support the costs of hosting our GPC-weigh off. See you there!

CHAD REVIER'S 1428lb MN STATE RECORD

As I look back on a successful 2008 season, I can't help but think that this experience started with me shoveling snow from my patch so I could put down my cold frames. What I did not realize at that time was this was going to be a year to remember. After my spring prep of peat moss, gypsum, humic acid, corn meal, and alfalfa pellets, I was ready to germinate my seeds. Seeds were filed and soaked on April 25th and transplanted outside on May 4th. With the wonderful spring temps, I would find myself at Home Depot within two days searching for heating laps to deal with the cold. I also used blood meal and calcium nitrate to help promote growth early in the season. My first pollination of the season was made on the 1207 Young at about 9.5 feet. Over the next two weeks, I would pollinate several more on all my plants; a female flower with 6 lobes at about 13 feet on the 1207 Young caught my eye. Soon, I would be attempting to convince myself it was the right decision to cull a hundred pound pumpkin in favor of a ten-day-old pumpkin with more lobes and further from the stump. With knife and stem in hand, I decided to wait one more day. The next morning the smaller pumpkin lost its shine and aborted. Just one of the many lessons I learned during this process. From this point, I looked toward consistency in my patch. Training, burying vines, watering, and applications of fish emulsion, calcium, and seaweed were all on a schedule that was rarely deviated from. This is when you put in the work to see the results into October. It was not until late August that I started to look at the 1207 Young as

having the potential to break the state record. At this point, my 1248 Ford built my excitement with its numbers only to go down to blossom end split. The fruit on the 985 Werner was holding together but putting up ten day intervals that were at record pace, which caused concern. The 1207 was behind all of them but maintaining sustainable consistent numbers. Over the following weeks, I lost the 985 Werner to a dill ring and nighttime temperatures hovering around freezing would occupy my mind. The 1207 come out of the cold snap in one piece but the growth slowed to less than 3 pounds a day. With my calculation, this would put me at about 1300 pounds by weigh-off time. The Friday before the weigh-off, all three remaining pumpkins were loaded and final measurements were made. The 1207 measured at 396.5 OTT for an estimated weight of 1302 pounds. With the knowledge that all 1207 offspring had gone heavy, I set off to Stillwater hoping to break the state record of 1258. When I reached Stillwater the speculating began. I thought the 1320 would weigh in at 1350. For those of you who were there or saw the picture, you could see the disbelief when the scale read 1428. People always ask when did you know you had something special? "Simple", I would say, "When the scale read 1428 and never before that point." I had already lost three pumpkins that would have broken the state record. I always say it is a hobby built on failure, yet I enjoy every aspect of it.





THE BENEFITS OF USING MYCORRHIZAE FOR GIANT PUMPKINS

By Joel Holland

The last few years has seen most all of the top pumpkin growers begin to use Mycorrhizae. The expanded use has played a significant role in the recent increases in pumpkin size and weight. It has become clear that using the correct type of Mycorrhizae in three different ways can greatly increase the giant pumpkin growers opportunities for success. Endo, also called “Abuscular” Mycorrhizae should be used in the seed starting mix, in the planting hole and at each leaf axil on the main and lateral vines for maximum effectiveness. Mycorrhizae literally means “Fungus Foot” and Endo means “Within”. The Endo or Abuscular Mycorrhizal Fungi grows within the roots and pushes hyphae out into the soil. Hyphae are much thinner than even root hairs and are able to penetrate the tiniest pores in the soil. A thimbleful of healthy inoculated soil can contain miles of these fungal hyphae. The interaction between the soil, the plant, and the fungus is extraordinary, in exchange for sugars from the host plant. The fungi produce chemicals and enzymes which modify the soil structure and chemistry. The excretions by the fungi not only form aggregates or soil crumbs, but also unlock tightly bound nutrients such as phosphorous, and transport these nutrients back to the plant via the vast network of hyphae in the soil. The Mycorrhizal fungi need the sugars produced by the plants leaves through photosynthesis, so they have evolved to help the plant in every conceivable way. Not only does this synergistic relationship

result in a better soil structure and greatly expand a plants access to soil nutrients and water, the process goes a step further! The Endo Mycorrhizal fungi need a healthy plant so they also are able to wage chemical warfare against disease and pathenogenic activity. The fungi actually release powerful antibiotics to protect the host plant and its root systems from disease, such as fusarium, phythium, phytophthora, rhizoctonia.

One important consideration is to use enough Mycorrhizae to establish enough colonization of the root systems to get the optimum results. There is no practical way to overdose, the only consideration is a cost benefit analysis. I don’t think we have seen a level of diminishing returns as yet. The Napa California area growers have steadily increased their use of Mycorrhizae the last several years. I thought it was noteworthy in 2006 when Gary Miller pushed the State Giant Pumpkin Record up to 1,280-pounds, but this year Pete Glasier took things to a whole new level with his amazing 1,535.5-pound record breaker. Leonardo Urena not only broke the World Record for Long Gourds, he set a new State Record in Squash and a new personal best in Giant Pumpkins, and Giant Watermelons, as well. I interviewed Leonardo for this years DVD and he disclosed that he used 6-pounds per plant of “Endo” The last several years we have assisted several clubs in making BioGrow Endo Plus available to their members at considerable savings through bulk purchases that save a lot in quantity discounts and freight costs. Our local Northwest club has the ability to save even more. If a member of any giant pumpkin club would like to facilitate procurement and disbursement, I would be very happy to work with them to make it as cost effective as possible for all members.

Many brands of Mycorrhizae are blends of Endo meaning “within the root” and Ecto meaning “outside the root”. Our BioGrow Endo Plus has three species of “Endo” and also 2 species of Trichoderma, another powerful tool against pathogens. We also time our supply so it is absolutely fresh for the growing season. Many growers are finding BioGrow Endo Plus can provide the same benefits they see with their pumpkins to other garden plants as well. Endo, or Abuscular Mycorrhizae can actually benefit 9 out of 10 of the 300,000 species of vascular plants in the World. These include most vines, vegetables, fruits, grains, grasses and nut or fruit producing trees. Many other trees including Pines need Ecto, but who wants to grow a giant pinecone? If you have any further questions please don’t hesitate to contact me.

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DVD'S/VIDEOS

Our 2008 (How To Grow Giant Pumpkins) production may be the most comprehensive guide to growing monster pumpkins ever produced. See actual microscopic pictures of Mycorrhizal Colonization and meet Dr. Michael Amaranthus, one of the World's leading authorities on Mycorrhizae

Also available on our website are Soluble Humic Acid, Soluble Fish Powder, Biomin Calcium, Blossom Booster and Fruit Finisher, Whizzer Sprinklers, organic controls, and much more!

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2009 SCGA Membership Form

The annual membership fee for joining the St. Croix Grower's Association is \$20 for a single or family membership. Please make your check payable to the SCGA and mail to:

SCGA
c/o Joe Ailts
2226 Cty T
Deer Park, WI 54007

2008 Membership Dues: \$20.00
(\$25.00 day of Event)

Memberships run from October 15 through October 14th of the following year. A family membership consists of you, your spouse, and children 17 years old and under. There is a limit of one family membership per household.

SCGA weighoff rules:

- ◆ Previously weighed fruit can be entered as exhibition only and are not eligible for prize money.
- ◆ A husband and wife are considered a family membership.
- ◆ All fruit must remain on display until 4pm the day of the weighoff.
- ◆ All fruit must be removed from the premises after 4pm unless special arrangements are made.
- ◆ All fruit are considered pumpkins. This includes squash, watermelons, cantaloupe, you name it.

Please note this information regarding SCGA membership:

Single memberships: Can weigh one pumpkin eligible for prize money

Family Memberships: Can weigh two pumpkins eligible for prize money*

*If entering more than one pumpkin under a family membership, additional fruit must have been grown/cared for by family members listed on membership form. Additional entries will cost \$5 each and are considered exhibition only. Each entry must be grown and cared for by the exhibitor, and the exhibitor must be present when the entry is registered.

Primary Name: _____

2nd Name: _____

Address: _____

City, St, Zip _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone: _____

Official Pumpkin weight: _____

Placing: _____

Official use only

Exh. Fruit weight: _____

Official use only _____

2009 SCGA MEMBER SEED DISTRIBUTION



1187.5 Marsh and 1428 Revier

Growers- complete the included 2009 membership form and return, along with your membership dues, to take advantage of this year's seed distribution. Your membership entitles you to not only the seed distribution, but also future copies of this newsletter, as well as your pass to weighing a pumpkin at next fall's weighoff.

Club seed packets are available on a first-come, first serve basis. This year's collection includes: **1163 Revier**1157 Bhaskaran**1087 Bhaskaran**869 Bhaskaran**1002.5 Krause**945 Foss**748 Foss**924 Johnson**894 Johnson**772 Johnson**715 Bogie**Marsh Galore** + many more!**

Comments? Suggestions? Questions?
Contact us: stcroixgrowers@frontiernet.net

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