



# The Pumpkin Vine

## March 2012

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## 2011: A Record Setting Year

by Andrew Israelsen

Once again it is time to start thinking about the upcoming pumpkin season. I always love thinking about the possibilities of the new growing season as the first day of spring approaches. The year is full of hope and anticipation for all of us. The best way to describe the

bests. 2011 truly was the most successful year we have ever had. The crowning moment of the 2011 season was Matt McConkie's new state record of 1600 pounds beating the old state record by a whopping 431 pounds. We were all amazed at this incredible achievement. Matt's pumpkin came in at number 15 in the



*Matt McConkie's winning pumpkin*

2011 season is that it was a record setting year for the UGPG. We had four pumpkins that broke the previous state record and we had seven pumpkins over a thousand pounds. Possibly even more important than these records is the fact that we had 26 personal

world. Congratulations Matt on an amazing year.

For a list of the 2011 weigh off winners, please see page 6.

# Giant Pumpkin Regatta

The first Giant Pumpkin Regatta for the state of Utah was a huge hit in 2011. Special thanks go to Kyle Fox who put the whole thing together. We had a number of challenges in putting this event together. The first challenge was devising a way to get the pumpkins into the water. We had to use some heavy equipment with a long extendable fork lift to gently place our pumpkins into the lake. We then had to decide whether to keep the pumpkins right side up and carve out from the top or turn the pumpkin upside down and carve out the bottom of the pumpkin. It turned out that the pumpkins were quite stable either way and so it was left to the grower's preference.

We were not sure how many people we would get to watch our first Regatta but as it turned out we had quite a large group to witness the event. Once the pumpkins were put into the water people from all over the area stopped to watch and wonder at what was going on. By the time the race started we had a large crowd watching and cheering as we paddled our huge pumpkin boats around the Sugar House Park Lake. A few of our competitors were dressed in their Halloween best like Kyle Fox who was in his Viking outfit with dreadlocks. (Actually I don't remember the Vikings ever having dreadlocks)

Everyone was in a very festive mood and looking forward to the spectacle about to take place.

In the race Kyle took an early and commanding lead. He seemed to be able to paddle circles around the rest of us. Of course I must point out that Kyle's pumpkin was over 300 lbs lighter than the largest pumpkin in the water. Regardless of the weight advantages or disadvantages, Kyle steamed out to the halfway point fairly easily and then decided to just have some fun. In fact he had so much fun that he let the rest of us catch up and pass him. I, on the other hand, was getting very tired paddling that 1182 pound pumpkin so I was highly motivated to hurry and finish the race.

The official outcome of the race was as follows:

- 1) Andrew Israelsen
- 2) Ross Bowman
- 3) Kyle Tanner

In the end it didn't really matter who finished first. The fact is, we all had a great time and whether we paddled around in a big pumpkin boat or not, we were all part of a historical event, the first giant pumpkin regatta in the state of Utah.



*The Men's Race*

*The Women's Race*

## 2nd Annual Pumpkin Drop

The Second Annual Pumpkin Drop at Hee Haw Farms in Pleasant Grove was a big hit. Over ten thousand pounds of pumpkins were dropped that day, the best one in the world from what I have been told. The Club raised over a thousand dollars for charities between the Regatta and the Drop.

The event was topped off with the two largest pumpkins, the 1174 Bowman, and the 1182 Israelsen being hoisted into the air at the same time and dropped onto a car. The plan was to drop the two pumpkins at the same time but the Israelsen fell first and hit the hood of the car. The pumpkin exploded in every direction as if it had been filled with TNT. The Bowman then fell and landed on the roof of the car. The force was so great it knocked the roof of the car right down to the ground and one of the doors flew open.

I suspect that the pumpkin regatta and the pumpkin drop will be one of the many favorite events for the UGPG for years to come.



*Ross, Brian & Kyle at drop*



*Ross and Andrew's pumpkins at drop*



*Pumpkin explodes in pool*



*Ross Bowman's pumpkin being dropped on car*

## Soil Amendments

The club will be ordering the following soil amendments in bulk this year:

- Biogrow Endo Plus (Mycorrhizae) \$7.50 per pound - sold in 4 and 5 pound bags
- Seeweed Powder \$10.50 per pound - sold in 2.5 pound bags

These amendments will be available at our training seminars. You can also contact Andrew Israelsen, Matt McConkie, or Kyle Fox to buy these amendments.

## 2011 Membership Dues

UGPG membership is the calendar year from January 1st to December 31st. So it is time to renew if you haven't done so already. Membership is \$20. This gets you in the annual seed give away and into most UGPG activities during the year, including free entry into the weigh off. Your membership needs to be postmarked by March 17th for you to be eligible for our seed distribution this year. If you signed up last fall and did not bring a pumpkin to the weigh off then you are OK for 2011.

If you are not sure if you are signed up or not, give Matt McConkie a call at 801-458-3383.

## Seed Distribution

The UGPG seed distribution will include seeds from the area's top growers and some others. You must be a current member to receive the seeds. If you haven't renewed for 2011, please do so. If you come to one of our seminars you can pick up your seed packet there. After the seminars, we will be sending out the seed packets to those who have not already received them. Please share your seeds from last year's pumpkins with the group. We are looking for 60-80 seeds from each of your large pumpkins. Send your seeds to David Bradley at 2944 E. 3135 S. SLC, UT 84109 or call at 801-637-4082 to arrange pick-up. Remember to include the seed cross. Thanks to all who share their seeds.

### Please contact us if you have questions:

#### President

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#### Treasurer/Membership Coordinator

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## Upcoming Seminars

Come join us for our spring "How to Grow" seminars. We have two seminars planned for this year. The first is March 17th at the Wetland Discovery Point classroom. The address is 676 South 50 West, Kaysville. This seminar will start at 10:00 am and will last for approximately three hours. Cost is free. The first two hours will be dedicated to beginning/intermediate growers. The third hour will be for advanced growers and all those who are interested in learning the latest techniques for growing that monster pumpkin.

The directions are as follows:

#### Coming from the South

Take I-15 or Legacy Hwy North to Highway 89  
Highway 89 exit West (left) onto Shepard Lane  
Turn North (right) onto Frontage Rd.

#### Coming from the North

Take I-15 to 200 North Kaysville  
Turn south (right) onto Main Street  
Veer right onto 50 West  
There is parking on the side of the road leading to the building and a gravel parking lot along the access road by the gate.



The second seminar will be held at Thanksgiving Point on April 7th from 1:00pm to 5:00pm and will be for all levels of pumpkin enthusiasts. The address is 3003 N. Thanksgiving Way, Lehi, and we will be in the basement classroom. The cost for this class is \$5.00 and we hope to have several bags of fertilizer to give away to offset the cost. Be sure to invite all your neighbors and friends who would be interested in growing a big pumpkin.

## Other Events

**Pumpkin Patch Tour** – will be held in August – further details to come

**Pumpkin Weigh Off** - will be held on September 29th at Thanksgiving Point

**Pumpkin Regatta** – Tentatively scheduled for October 21st

**Pumpkin Drop at Hee Haw Farms** - Tentatively scheduled for October 22nd

# Suggestions for Starting Seeds

## Soil Preparation

Prepare the soil by raking out large rocks, clumps of sod, or wood. Till in 2 to 6 inches of compost, aged manure, composted yard waste, peat moss, leaf mold, or rotted straw. Till in some ammonium sulphate (nitrogen) with the organic material to help with the decomposition process. Do a soil test in the fall to determine the pH. Contact your local extension agent for soil testing information. The pH should be between 6.5 to 7.0. If the pH is low (below 6.0) add limestone at the rate of 50 lbs per 1000 sq. feet. If you live in Utah chances are your soil pH will be above 7.0 in which case you should add sulphur at the rate of 25 lbs per 1000 sq. ft. Prior to planting, spread a balanced organic or commercial fertilizer (25 lbs. of 20-20-20 or 16-16-16 per 1000 square feet) and till it in the soil. Add Ironite at the rate of 2 lbs per 1000 sq. ft. two weeks before planting. Most of the nutrients the plant gets are in the top 6 to 8 inches.



## Starting Seeds



You can plant your seeds the last part of April or first part of May. File the edges of the seeds from top to bottom, completely around the seed case. Select a good quality potting mixture and place the potting soil in half gallon plastic nursery pots. Place the seed in the middle of the pot with the point of the seed down and ½ inch of potting soil over the tip. A commercial propagation heat mat may be used or place them in a warm consistent environment at 80 to 90 degrees. Seed pots may be placed over a hot water tank, in an oven with the light on, above a mantle near a stove or fire place, or in a cooler chest with hot water bottles. Change the hot water bottles 3 times a day. Room temperature (65-70) may cause slow germination or no germination at all. Germination will take place between 3 to 7 days. As soon as the seed leaf appears place the pot in the direct sun or under a light source. Place a piece of 4 by 4 clear plastic over the prepared pumpkin site to warm the soil prior to planting.



## Hats and Shirts

We have hats and shirts available with the club's new logo. You can check out the new logo on our website [www.utahpumpkingrowers.com](http://www.utahpumpkingrowers.com) in the merchandise section. We are selling them at the following prices:

Short Sleeved Shirts: \$20.00

Long Sleeved Shirts: \$20.00

Hats: \$22.00

Please contact Kyle Fox at 801-319-9926 to order your hats and shirts.

## 2011 Weigh Off Results

|    |                   |      |
|----|-------------------|------|
| 1  | Matt McConkie     | 1600 |
| 2  | Andrew Israelsen  | 1182 |
| 3  | Ross Bowman       | 1174 |
| 4  | Dale Elwood       | 1032 |
| 5  | Kyle Tanner       | 995  |
| 6  | Tyler Quigley     | 994  |
| 7  | Gordan Tanner     | 960  |
| 8  | Mohammed Sadiq    | 901  |
| 9  | Kyle Fox          | 870  |
| 10 | Lee Perry         | 666  |
| 11 | Chad Black        | 648  |
| 12 | Dale Thurber      | 616  |
| 13 | Cliff Warren      | 596  |
| 14 | Brent Hughes      | 587  |
| 15 | Steve Ure         | 581  |
| 16 | Dori Perry        | 545  |
| 17 | David Bradley     | 541  |
| 18 | Brian Davis       | 524  |
| 19 | Rick Carlson      | 464  |
| 20 | Russ Haslam       | 450  |
| 21 | Scott Nelson      | 442  |
| 22 | Richard Leavitt   | 438  |
| 23 | Dwayne Pryor      | 410  |
| 24 | Travis Evans      | 380  |
| 25 | Cathy Hughes      | 372  |
| 26 | Iris Ford         | 374  |
| 27 | Richard Glassford | 297  |
| 28 | Jacobsen Family   | 265  |
| 29 | Jim Schulte       | 228  |
| 30 | David Glassford   | 214  |
| 31 | Cole Fox          | 209  |
| 32 | Anthony Buckley   | 202  |
| 33 | Dwayne Butler     | 201  |
| 34 | Ed Dennis         | 184  |
| 35 | Scott Smith       | 159  |
| 36 | Ken Kolb          | 137  |

### First Place Squash

|   |             |     |
|---|-------------|-----|
| 1 | Kyle Tanner | 413 |
|---|-------------|-----|

### Exhibition Pumpkins

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Matt McConkie     | 1338 |
| Ross Bowman       | 1082 |
| Ross Bowman       | 1013 |
| Matt McConkie     | 909  |
| Gordon Tanner     | 614  |
| David Bradley     | 512  |
| Brent Hughes      | 442  |
| Russ Haslam       | 426  |
| Scott Nelson      | 418  |
| Dale Thurber      | 418  |
| Gordon Tanner     | 406  |
| Steve Ure         | 370  |
| Richard Glassford | 256  |
| Anthony Buckley   | 166  |

# 2011 Weigh Off Thanksgiving Point



Andrew Israelson and his family



Gordon Tanner and his family



Mohammed Sadiq and his family



Tyler Quigley and his family



Ross Bowman and his wife



Dale Elwood and his family



Gordon Tanner and his daughter



Kyle Fox and his family



Chad Black and his family

## Great Pumpkin Commonwealth - "The Big Show"

The Great Pumpkin Commonwealth Convention was held in Las Vegas, Nevada on February 24 - 26. Utah was represented well. We had 22 growers attend. Only growers from California outdid us with the number of growers that attended.



Ross Bowman and his wife enjoying dinner.



Did Kyle Fox have a lot of explaining to do to his wife?



Wow! Who knew that a clown was hiding in that pumpkin!



Why is Matt McConkie flexing his muscle? Look closely at the picture on the screen behind him -- it's a greenhouse! Yes, Matt is excited to grow in a greenhouse come Spring of 2013.