



The Pumpkin Vine



Fall 2018

<http://www.utahpumpkingrowers.com/>

Patch Tour Recap

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Ken Kolb

Ken has another big one in the patch this year! Don't think Ken is just a grower of pumpkins, though, he can grow everything from vegetables to long gourds. Ken uses shade cloth over the entire patch and has a personal best of 1188.5 lbs. Good luck this year Ken!



Clint Urry

We are always thrilled to see new growers come on board and nothing is better than watching amazing success in the first year! Clint's home in Bountiful not only has gorgeous valley views, but also a pumpkin that would make any grower proud. Clint is definitely in the running for rookie of the year for 2018.

Bryan and Robin Bennett



Nestled in the center of the Salt Lake Valley, this gardener's paradise features ample room for not only giant pumpkins, but gorgeous flower gardens, a gourd tunnel, and even an artesian well that provides crystal clear mountain springwater. If

you ever have a chance to visit this beautiful site--don't miss it! The Bennetts have a personal best of 653.5 and were winners of the 2016 Howard Dill Award for the prettiest pumpkin. Watch for BIG things from them in the future.

Dave and Cathy Bradley



There is no better way to wrap up a summer patch tour than with a bowl of Cathy's homemade ice cream while looking over the gargantuan gourd Dave has growing in the patch. With the work and knowledge Dave has growing these giants, he is sure to beat his personal best of 920.5 very soon! Will this be the year?



Fall Calendar



Thanksgiving Point Weigh Off - September 29th

Drop Off and Check In--8:00-10:00 (please be on time! Late arrivals could cause delays to the event and could be denied entry)
Judging 10:00-11:00
Jr Division and other specimens-11:00-Noon
Giant Pumpkins (weighed smallest to largest) Noon-3:00 p.m.



Hee Haw Farms Weigh Off- October 13th

Drop Off and Check in 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.
Judging 10:00 a.m. -11:00 a.m.
Other Specimens 11:00 a.m. -Noon
Jr Division Pumpkins 11:00 a.m. -Noon
Giant Pumpkins (weighed smallest to largest) Noon-3:00 p.m.



Daybreak Ginormous Pumpkin Regatta- October 20th

North Shore of Oquirrh Lake
Launch and prepare pumpkin boats- 8:00-10:00
Race starts at 11:00



Hee Haw Farms Giant Pumpkin Drop October 27

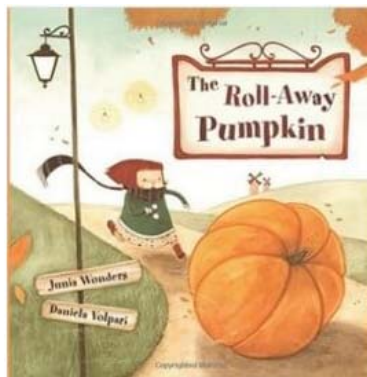
95 S 2000 W Pleasant Grove, UT 84062
12:00-5:00

Better Safe Than Sorry - Your Guide to Dumpkin Transportation

by Gordon Tanner

Sometimes these beasts are sturdy and sometimes they aren't. I've seen growers driving down the road with a huge pumpkin sitting on a pallet with no cushioning and it not strapped to anything. Depending on the size and shape of the pumpkin that might be perfectly safe. . . the question is, do you want to risk it? We've heard of Grow'em, Row'em and Blow'em, but have you heard of Roll'em?

The more round a pumpkin is the more easily it is to roll. It is fun to watch one roll down a steep hill if that was your intention. It's not so fun to roll one off the back of a trailer on the way to the weigh off.



In 2000, I took two pumpkins to a weigh off in Des Moines, Washington. I was kind of new at this pumpkin stuff. They were on pallets but not secured. I figured their weight would hold them in place. No problems getting to the weigh off and getting them weighed. One was 520 lbs. and one was 365 lbs. They were both fairly round. On the way home, at the last second, I decided to put a rope across the back of the trailer just in case, but I was pretty sure they wouldn't move. I put a 2x4 between the back of pumpkin in the rear of the trailer and the pallet that it sat on. The road out was steep and when I was about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up, I could tell that the pumpkins had shifted. I moved to the side of the road and hopped out to check.

The rear pumpkin, the 325 lb-er, was off its pallet and had rolled over the 2x4 to the back end of the trailer and about a foot of it was hanging over the end of the trailer precariously. The rope, which happened to be the right height on the pumpkin to catch it, was barely holding it on the trailer. The 520 lb-er and its pallet had slid back into the other pallet and all were pushing against the 365 lb pumpkin. Yikes -- I was lucky! Lesson learned.

I've seen trucks with a damaged cab and broken back window from a fast stop when a giant pumpkin in the back slide forward.



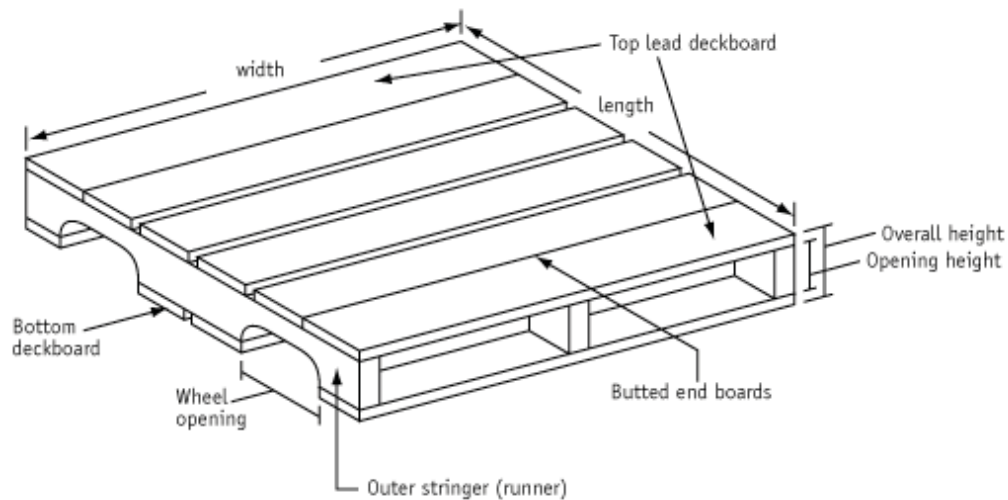
Strap those babies down! Strap the pallet to the truck or trailer. The best thing I have seen is Lee's travel strap.



Honestly, I don't know if any pumpkins have split on the way to the weigh off because they didn't have anything cushioning them, but my bet would be that some have. Cushioning also helps a bit to keep the pumpkin from rolling.

Weigh Off Pallet Instructions

Please bring your pumpkin to the weigh off on a pallet that will accommodate access from all sides as well as room on the bottom of the pallet for the wheels of the pallet jack. (As shown). Cushioning, carpet, or other material may be placed on the top of the pallet while still maintaining access from the sides and an open bottom.



Weight-Off Sneak Peek

Who will walk away the 2018 champion?
Time will soon tell!



GPC Weigh-Off Rules

We are pleased to have not one, but two GPC sanctioned weigh offs in Utah. For any GPC event, the rules for giant pumpkins are as follows:

No foreign material (fungicides, caulking material, dirt, etc.) is permitted to be included in the weighing.

1. Vines must be trimmed to within one inch of the stem of the fruit.
2. The stem itself will not be applicable to judging as stated below.
3. The specimen must be sound, healthy, and undamaged.
4.
 - a) Entries must be free of rot.
 - b) Entries must be free of holes or cracks into the interior cavity of the fruit.
 - c) Entries must be free of damaged areas that are greater than 3 inches in diameter and greater than 3 inches deep. Any single damaged area greater than 3 inches deep will classify the fruit as damaged (DMG). The dimensions of the damage will be measured after all soft material has been removed with a spoon, if needed.
 - d) If there are more than two damaged areas, the pumpkin will be disqualified even if each is smaller than described in 4C.
 - e) Small damaged areas are acceptable if naturally healed over with new rind, also known as natural scabs or new cantalouping.
5. The judge may probe any crack, hole or opening into a pumpkin, which visually appears that it may extend into the interior cavity (in the presence of the grower only). A probe (can be any type of hard wire or plastic zip tie - as long as it is rigid and won't bend too easily) must be provided to the judge to probe suspect openings. An opening where the probe meets no resistance into the interior cavity will disqualify that entry from competition. Small damage that heals during the season to new rind is allowed.



FALL PATCH PREP

By Matt McConkie

Champion pumpkin growers are made not during the growing season, but long before the season even starts. Rest assured that the growers bringing giants to the scales at our weigh offs this fall worked very hard last fall and early spring in preparing their soils. When looking to build championship quality soil, there are two things we are trying to improve:

1. Soil Tilth
2. Soil Fertility

Soil Tilth

Tilth is the measure of the physical condition and structure of the soil. Pumpkins love fluffy soil with light soil particles that vary in size, thus maintaining aeration and drainage. Many parts of Utah, particularly the valley floor, have largely clay-based soils which pumpkins and many other crops do not like. Clay particles are small and flat and compact very tightly with irrigation and surface pressure. You can easily observe this by trying to dig in natural clay soils- it is very difficult! The delicate roots of the pumpkin plants have a very hard time penetrating the compacted clay and they never reach their full potential. Adding coarse sand, Perlite, Utelite, Vermiculite, peat moss, Coco Coir, and other soil lighteners will help dramatically with your soil tilth. Large amounts are needed to make a meaningful difference.



Compost will also dramatically help your soil tilth, in addition to providing nutrition and raising organic matter. My opinion is that tilth is as important and perhaps more important than nutrition. We see champion pumpkins thrive in soils with nutrient levels that vary widely but there is one common theme with the heavy hitters--they take great care in maintaining soil porosity, minimizing compaction and maximizing oxygen levels in the root zone.

Many growers test their soil nutrition every year, but do we test our soil tilth? A simple way to measure the tilth of your garden soil would be to take a 4' long piece of rebar and push it down with your bare hands into the garden soil. If you cannot push the rebar at least 18" -24" into the soil, you'll want to work to improve your tilth! You can also dig a test hole in your patch 24" down and observe visually the soil structure. Does it crumble easily or does it clump and stick together on the end of your shovel? Do you have to jump on the shovel to get it to enter the earth or does it slide in with little effort? The closer you can get to the texture of potting soil, the happier your roots will be.

Fertility

Fall is a great time for adding bulk amendments such as manure, leaves and compost since it allows any naturally occurring salts to leach out with winter rain and snowfall. Additionally, the high nitrogen levels found in some manures will have time to dissipate and not damage the plant by being too "hot". Fall is also a great time to add sulfur if you are trying to lower the pH of your soil for the upcoming year, since sulfur is not very mobile in soils and takes some time to effectively impact the pH.. Many will also start a cover crop of winter wheat or rye as well. These cover crops can maintain the soil biology and protect your precious soil against winter erosion. Although some studies suggest that cover crops can slightly improve surface organic matter, generally speaking, it is best to add large quantities of bulk organics such as compost to increase organic matter to the levels targeted by giant pumpkin growers.

I would not recommend trying to balance individual nutrient levels in the fall or even in the early spring. The reason for this is that with precipitation and time, nutrient levels change dramatically and you could waste hundreds of dollars putting nutrients in your patch that are gone long before they are able to be taken in by the pumpkin roots. Growers have different timing and techniques when it comes to balancing nutrients, but here is one suggestion for your consideration:

If your target seed starting date is April 15th, send in a sample of soil on April 15th. While your seed is germinating and your seedling is maturing indoors (10-14 days), you can get your soil test back and make the necessary additions to your soil just before transplant.

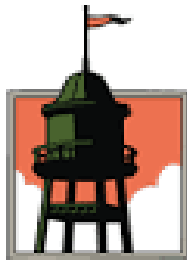
This way the nutrients you add will still be there when the plant roots reach that area. Resist the temptation that comes with spring sunshine to send in samples and do testing in March! The results from a March soil test will likely be dramatically different by the time the seedling hits the ground. Also, instead of adding all the required nutrients to the whole patch at once, you may consider adding nutrients only to the 150 square feet or so around where the seedling is planted. Pumpkin plants take approximately 25 days or so to start vining and spreading out. Once the plant starts vining, add the nutrients in small areas where the pumpkin plant is likely to reach within the next couple of weeks. The name of the game is to get and maintain optimal nutrition at the time the roots enter the area.

Best of luck this fall as you dream BIG and shoot for the stars in 2019.



Our Sponsors

Our sponsors are a BIG part of why we have such great success! We wouldn't be able to do many of the events that we do, without our sponsors' continued support. Please accept a BIG thank you, for all your generous contributions in helping us make our vision a reality. Thanks again, and **GROW BIG!!**



**THANKSGIVING
— POINT —**

