

# How to Grow Giant Pumpkins

## SOIL SELECTION

Choose a location that is high in organic matter with some fine sand mixed in the soil. Red or black clay soils are not good for growing pumpkins. Add well-rotted manure, peat moss, or grass clippings to the place you plan to grow the pumpkin. The site must be well drained, not a location where water remains in puddles.

## SOIL TEST

Obtain a soil sample and submit for analysis.

## FERTILIZER

The soil test will explain how much plant food is needed (fertilizer, lime, etc.).

## VARIETY SELECTION

Plant the kinds of seeds that will grow *Giant* pumpkins. Atlantic Giant seeds will grow pumpkins up

to 500 pounds. The growing period for this variety is 145 days from planting to harvest. Check with your county Extension agent for other seed varieties.

## WHEN TO PLANT SEEDS

Plant seeds in hills after mid-May. Plant four to five seeds per hill at a depth of one inch. When the plants have put on four leaves, remove all but one plant. Allow 100 square feet for vines to run.

## REMOVING SMALL PUMPKINS FROM THE VINES

Leave only one or two small pumpkins on the vine. When the small pumpkins weigh about one pound, leave the most attractive one on the vine and remove the other one. Cut off all little pumpkins throughout the growing season.

## DISEASE AND INSECT CONTROL

Use a fungicide such as Daconil for disease control according to the rate and schedule on the bottle label. Use Thiodan or Sevin for control of squash vine borer and squash bug. Check the label for the rate and spray schedule needed. It is very important to follow all label directions carefully.

## WEED CONTROL

Keep the weeds and grass under control throughout the growing season.

## WATER

A high level of moisture should be present throughout the growing season. Two inches of water is needed every seven to ten days. Water should not remain in puddles on the soil surface for more than one day.

# PUMPKINS CONTINUED

## PROTECTION FROM WIND AND SUN

Protect pumpkins from wind damage until the vines are interwoven and well anchored. It's particularly critical during the first four or five weeks after pumpkins germinate. Protect pumpkins by placing them on a bed of straw and sand (see watermelon). Cover the top with more straw to protect from the sun.

## LATE GROWING SEASON - WATCH FOR STINK BUG ATTACK

Late in the season pumpkins are attacked by stink bugs; use Sevin 50% wettable powder (WP) or Thiodan 50% WP. Follow the label directions carefully.

## HARVEST

Harvest late in September or October when the pumpkin is a deep, solid color and the rind is hard.

## HARVEST CARE

Leave a four to five inch stem attached to the pumpkin. If the stem is broken off at the base of the pumpkin. It will not keep well. Store in a dry building at 50-to-55 degrees Fahrenheit.

Use straw! Don't place on cement.