



The Pumpkin Vine

September 2013

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Show Us What You Got!

by Kyle Fox, 1171.5 lbs. 2012, UGPG President

The Patch Tour this summer was a success if you ask me. The grow big or go home applies to the tour as well. We started at our good friend's, Gordon Tanner's patch. The veterans are always consistent and have answers to any and all questions. Brigham City



Ross was the next stop. Ross and Kaye Bowman feed the club like they have done for many years. The pumpkins looked great and we were all in a good mood even being early on a Saturday.

This year we had a few more folks on the tour than we have had in the past. We even had a film crew who I have grown to know and love. Daria and Mark Matza traveled from Malibu, California to capture the passion of growing the giant. We are all excited to see the final piece when its ready. Expect to see

them both at the weigh off and say hello. The tour did get to step foot on the magic soil of the McQuigley patch - home of the state record

soil. Just as we were expecting, four big ones were growing strong. We then left the north and headed to the home of the Travis Evans, where he so kindly offered up his place and had us all over for BBQ and drinks. Great pumpkins in the Evans' patch too; likely



a new PB. From there, we journeyed over to Andrew's

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patch who was not home but we were watched very closely by Yvonne, who we all know is the secret weapon. Thank goodness the Bradley's patch was not too far away because it was hot and we all know about the ice cream. It was amazing as ever.

Utah County was the last stop on the tour where we visited the Black patch who also has a PB on the vine and I can see this guy going very big in seasons ahead. Kyle Clark, who lives just up the road from Chad, has the experimental-growing technique going on strong. I did sign a non-disclosure so that's all you will get.

Big thanks for coming out on the tour and an even bigger high five to those who hosted this year's tour. We all know its not easy to have bus loads of growers stomp through the yard and patch.



Weigh-off Registration

Every bit of information on the hard copy registration form goes into the Bigpumpkins.com data base which is used on the world rankings. Please take a few minutes to pre-register by going to the link. Check FaceBook to see the conversation about how growers are doing this.

With your help on this, we hope to save a ton of time on the data entree. The UGPG had more entries than any other weigh off site in the world last year.

<http://www.bigpumpkins.com/WeighoffRegistration.aspx>

Thanks for your help, *The UGPG staff*

The Big Pumpkin Fall Schedule



September

Saturday, the 28th - Weigh Off @ Thanksgiving Point

You may have heard of it... TGP welcomes growers from all over the Rocky Mountain states. The magical venue we all love will be filled with food, music and harvest from local farmers. There will be shopping and ice cream and more. Most of all, the streets will be lined with big 'ol pumpkins. Show up early and spend time with the one of a kind club. This day comes around as often as Christmas and it's one week away. Please see Page 2 for details to **REGISTER**. Then go to page 8 to fill out the Registration Form.

October

Saturday, the 5th - Uinta Basin Weigh Off

The battle in the Basin - beautiful Mineral Basin is well worth the drive. Pull into town where the sidewalks are overflowing with wave petunias. Our good friends, Lee and Dori Perry, started this weigh off grass roots only a few years ago and it is a fun family trip. Dori holds the Utah state women's record pumpkin.



Saturday, the 19th - 3rd Annual Regatta presented by Mountain Valley Seed Co. There will be prizes for the winners and the losers. You have won if you can float in your pumpkin! 600 lbs. is pushing it to be a boat, but don't let weight get you down. There is a division for the not-soo-big, the Wacko-Jacko Division. Guidelines are to make a vessel out of "mostly pumpkins". In the past, some growers have duct taped two 200-300 lb. 'kins

together to make kind of a pumpkin sea horse. Others have packed jack o'lanterns into a fishing net and thrown a pallet on top. **Be creative, be bold, be pond worthy.**



To view this year's new commercial (using last year's footage), see <http://www.mvseeds.com/regatta.html>.

Saturday, the 26th - Giant Pumpkin Drop at Hee Haw Farms (a charity event for babies with the March of Dimes). A favorite of growers. Take your giant and get your family in free. The only 120 year old, homesteaded agr-tainment farm in Utah. See the biggest pumpkin drop in our galaxy. The drop is in its 5th year splatting. Talk to anyone who has been, you will know what to expect. This car crushing, piano smashing, pool splashing, is a pumpkin's nightmare. The pumpkin doctor prescribes 9 out of 10 growers to go to the drop as the best remedy to ending a season and growing pumpkins again the next year.

Watch last year's drop video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7h5MtT6F2g>



November

Thursday, the 28th - Hogle Zoo Feast with the Beast. Elephants never forget. Monkey do they are like us. This is another one of the growers' fav's. See Zori, the baby elephant and her mom, eat a giant pumpkin in less than an hour. The new Rocky Shores exhibit is the best. Imagine the seals or polar bear chowing down a Thanksgiving snack like your pumpkin.



Watch video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_NRX1qpoq-M
www.hoglezoo.org

OUR SPONSORS

by Brian Davis, Sponsorship

Can you feel it?? The excitement is in the air, and the success continues again in 2013 for the Great Pumpkin Cause!! The UGPG is growing in membership and we continue to be the BEST Giant Pumpkin organization in the world!! Last year when all was said and done, our weigh off here in Utah saw more pumpkins hit the scales than anywhere in the world.

Our sponsors are a BIG part of why we have that great success. We wouldn't be able to do many of the events that we do, without our sponsors' continued support. We at the UGPG feel like we have the BEST of the BEST sponsors.

Please accept our BIG thank you, for all your generous contributions in helping us make our vision a reality. We hope to continue our partnership in all future successes. Thanks again and GROW BIG!!

IFA

CornBelly's

G&S Crane Services

Meldrum Scale Co.

Wicked Audio

Mountain Valley Seed Co.

Wasatch Shadows

SignCity

Diamond Rental

Hee Haw Farms

Basin Nursery

John Deere

Lee's Lifting Rings

*Save your back and your neighbors.
Top of the line lifts*

13" ring \$150.00

27" ring (either variety) \$250.00

39" ring \$300.00

- 13" ring was tested for 5,190 lbs then I stopped the test.
- 27" ring (lighter ring) was tested for 4,140 lbs.

I had wanted to test them till they failed but man, running the test machine, I was afraid a flying strap might damage the computer on the testing device. 39" ring has not been tested on testing device as it was too large to fit on the machine. I have tested a similar design with a much thinner ring at 2,800 lbs and then bounced the weight to see if it would fail. The ring bent but did not fail. I will use that ring at our weight off. The heaver ring will handle anything that it picks up. I would not be afraid to pick up 4,500 lbs with it. Both of the larger rings (39" and 27") are dual rings. Straps can be hung from the outside of the ring or over the welded part between the rings making a smaller ring.

To arrange payments, set up, pick up,
or delivery to your door:

Contact Lee @ (435) 790-1051
Lee@ccutah.com

Pumpkin Links

Pumpkin Drop: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7h5MtT6F2g>

Grower diaries: www.bigpumpkins.com

Find us on Facebook: Utah giant pumpkin growers



The Pumpkid

by Kyle Fox, 1171.5 lbs. 2012

The patch was hoed
The seeds were sowed
The leaves unfurled
The tendrils curled
I trimmed and snipped
I postponed a trip
Bigger she crawled, I removed the hoop
The plant grew and gave me fruit
I dreamed what the scale might read in summers end
I drove for miles and was given pollen from a friend
The cross was round, orange and big
Again I was dreaming we are headed to the weigh off & she's in the back of my rig
And then the sun turned it up and got hot
It changed my attitude to oh maybe not
Sixty feet of vine to be buried every few days
With a passion like this I'm suprised my wife stays
Gallons of water and mixtures of magic
Winds in the air and hail to wreak havoc.
A jack o'lantern looks small to this baby doll.
My journal shows age, now we're having a ball.
Watering to cool and feed is nice when its all automation.
But again in the patch I missed that vacation.
With some shifting and shoving now she is sitting just right.
Vines, roots and tendrils I should be sleeping, its 1 o'clock at night.
Started losing leaves and vines just won't grow
So I jump on Facebook someone must know
Taping by myself begins to get tough
On the other hand this type of gardening sure makes you buff
Stretch marks and ribs and blankets and nerves
After all this hard work I should get what I deserve
Last night on the vine tomorrow we load
Then its on the pallet to the weigh off we go
No matter the speed on streets with two lanes or four
swerving drivers with cameras hanging out the door.
The big day is here, rows of pumpkins in the street
Music and smells, crowds and the shuffling of feet
New growers' nerves are the same as the vets
Today is the day decisions on the bets
Now moved into position and hanging high from the ring
I stand behind her in silence waiting and listening
A new personal best for you are the words from Larry
The silence is broken,
Cheers begin to carry

Smiles in the crowd and from up on top of the scale
No question
Is it worth it
this face tells the tale.

Soil Preparation

By Matt McConkie

One of the largest factors in growing a giant pumpkin is having the right soil. The purpose of this article is to give Utah growers step-by-step instructions on how to get the right soil for 2014 so it can be a year we all remember.

Step 1 Add Bulk Material and Organic Matter

I cannot overemphasize this step. No amount of fertilization or plant care will make up for poor soil structure and low organic matter. Native Utah and Southern Idaho soils are often compacted clay that is nearly impenetrable by pumpkin roots. Adding large amounts of composted manure, leaf compost, peat moss, coarse sand, or other amendments can dramatically improve your soil tilth, drainage and nutrient levels. It is possible to transform hardpan clay into fluffy rich garden soil, but it takes great effort and heavy amendment. Successful growers often add compost and/or composted



manure by the truckful until they reach 8-13% organic matter. Depending on what

your current levels are and the size of your patch, this can take 3-6 pickup truck loads per plant. I do not know of a grower in Utah that has achieved a 1000 lb pumpkin that has not aggressively amended their soil. Please exercise caution when adding large amounts of fresh manure as it can drive pH and salinity upward to undesirable levels.

Step 2 Fall Soil Test

A soil test is the best money you can spend in pumpkin growing (except of course for your \$25 UGPG membership!). At a minimum, your fall soil test should include your % organic matter and current pH level. These tests can be ordered through private testing labs such as AL Western Labs in Modesto, CA or Western Laboratories in Parma, ID. Many local Universities also offer soil testing. Adjustment of individual nutrients can be addressed in the spring, as the winter snows will leach nutrients and consequently your levels will change from fall to spring.

Reputable testing facilities will have results emailed to you within 1 week of sending the sample. The lab websites have detailed instructions on how to collect the sample.

Step 3 Adjust pH

When you receive your test results back, check your current pH. Giant pumpkins have shown the most success in the pH range of 6.8-7.2. If you are outside of this range, you may consider making adjustments. If your pH is low, you would

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add lime to raise it. If it is high, add elemental sulfur to lower it. Utah soils are most often high in pH, and therefore sulfur will likely be needed. There are garden calculators or tables online that will help you figure out how much to add for your particular pH, soil makeup, and patch size. This needs to be done in the fall as it takes months for the amendments to change the pH of your soil.

Step 4 Cover Crop

After adding organic matter and making pH adjustments, you can go ahead and plant a fall/winter cover crop. Planting a cover crop has many benefits which include reducing soil erosion, increasing nitrogen levels, moisture retention, as well as disease and weed suppression. Popular cover crops include: Winter Rye, Wheat, Oats, Hairy Vetch, Field Peas, Mustard, or Buckwheat. What to plant depends on your goals as well as what time of year you are planting. Some crops winterkill and others will need to be mowed and tilled under in the spring. Do not let your cover crop go to seed or you will be fighting unwanted species in your patch throughout the season.

Step 5 Spring Soil Test and Amendments

In March or April, a second soil test is recommended. Your spring test should be a complete analysis including: pH, major nutrient levels, micronutrient levels, % organic matter, salinity, and extractable cations. Some soil testing facilities also provide recommendations. These recommendations are typically geared toward production agriculture and are not always applicable to giant pumpkin growers. In general, we are targeting higher levels than a commercial farm would. While we want "high" nutrient levels, please remember that more is not always better. The bulk of your nutrition including nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and magnesium should come from the compost/manure you added the previous fall. Organic or chemical fertilizers can be added in the spring to fill in the gaps. Adding too much fertilizer can result in levels that are detrimental or even toxic to plant or fruit growth. Add nutrients only to correct deficiencies shown by the soil test.

There are so many things that are difficult to control in this sport --weather, splits, disease, insect infestations, neighborhood children, and wild animals. There is peace in knowing that there is at least one thing we can control though simple testing and hard work and that is our own soil.

Watch for more information about the *Premier Night for the pumpkin film documentary*. It will be held at the Water Garden Theatres in Pleasant Grove.



2013 UGPG Weigh-Off Entry Form

Utah Giant Pumpkin Growers 9th Annual Weigh-Off
at
Thanksgiving Point, Lehi, Utah

Please also pre-register online at:

<http://www.bigpumpkins.com/WeighoffRegistration.aspx>

Growers Name (please print) _____

Current Member: YES or NO If No, fill out middle section.

Pumpkin ___ Squash ___ Sound ___ Damaged ___

Junior Class (15 years or younger) ___

seed (f) _____ pollinator (m) _____ poll. date _____

start date _____ sq ft _____ feet out _____ lobes ___ main vine Y N

Circ. ___ f-b ___ s-s ___ OTT _____ Est.wt. _____

Signature _____ Date _____

By signing this form the applicant agrees to the rules & regulations.

Membership Application _____ A membership is \$25.00 from Jan-Dec 2013

Mailing Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Home Phone _____ Other Phone _____

The Rules & Regulations

- 1.) This contest is open to UGPG members only. UGPG Membership is \$25.00 per calendar year. You may register to become a member of the UGPG at the weigh off.
- 2.) The entry must be a Cucurbita sp. specimen that was grown by the exhibitor (person signing this document).
- 3.) The entry must be exhibited by the grower or team. In the case of an emergency where the grower or team cannot be present to exhibit the entry, the UGPG will make a determination regarding the validity of a grower or team's absence.
 - a. "Grower" is defined as a person who has grown and cared for the entry from planting to harvest.
 - b. "Team" is defined as any two or more "Growers" who exhibit together.
- 4.) All specimens that will be submitted to the UGPG for prize money and recognition must be weighed on a certified scale with only the fruit on the scale. Any fruit weighed with a tarp, pallet, or any other lifting device will be classified unofficial weight or "EXH".
- 5.) No foreign material (i.e.: fungicides, caulking, skin additives et cetera) will be permitted in the weighing of any fruit. Vines must be trimmed to within one inch of the stem of the fruit. The judges have the right to inspect any and all fruit before weights and measurements become official. Refusal of any inspection to an entry will cause the entry to be classified exhibition only.
- 6.) The specimen must be sound, healthy, and undamaged. Entries must be free of rot, holes or cracks through to the cavity, and serious soft spots.

- a. The Judges reserve the right to probe cracks, holes, and to dig out soft spots to judge a fruit official or not. Before the Judges can execute any of the previous they must have the grower present.
 - b. A serious soft spot is one that is greater than 3 inches in diameter, and greater than 3 inches deep. The dimensions of the soft spot will be measured after all soft material has been removed with a spoon.
 - c. If there are more than two soft spots that require material to be removed and measured, the pumpkin will be disqualified even if each is smaller than the definition of 'a serious soft spot'.
 - d. Judging is to be completed before a fruit is officially weighed.
- 7.) The UGPG will only recognize one specimen per grower.
 - a. Entries other than the grower's one official entry will be entered as "EXH - exhibition" for legal fruit and "DMG - damaged" for illegal fruit. EXH and DMG fruit are ineligible for prizes.
 - b. A grower or team may bring up to 2 pumpkins. If a grower or team wishes to bring 3 or more pumpkins they must contact a club representative(s) prior to weigh-off day to ensure the UGPG can accommodate their multiple fruit.
 - 8.) No specimen will be allowed into competition if that specimen has been previously entered at another GPC (Great Pumpkin Commonwealth) weigh off competition.
 - 9.) Minimum weight for an entry is 100 lbs.
 - 10.) Heaviest sound entry wins.
 - 11.) Squash will be classified as follows -100% of the following colors or color combinations green, blue, and gray. The surface area of the fruit as grown in the garden, not including the portion that was in contact with, or close proximity to the ground will be considered. This area will include the area between the ribs, around the stem, and the blossom end. This will not include any netting (cantaloping), any discoloration caused by the close proximity to the ground, or minimal amounts of white striping or mottling associated with some squash.
 - 12.) Pumpkins will be all fruit not classified as squash.
 - 13.) In the event of a tie of two or more places all entries that are tied will have the prize money for the places that are tied added together then split equally amongst the places that are involved.
 - 14.) The three Judges are will be three club/grower representatives selected by the UGPG.
 - 15.) Any attempt to coerce or influence a judge is grounds for disqualification at the discretion of the UGPG executive board.
 - 16.) If a judge has a fruit entered and should the entry require a judge's ruling, the entered judge will be replaced by another judge/club representative until after the final decision is made.
 - 17.) Registration begins at 8:00 AM. All entries must be on the ground staged for inspection by 11:00 AM. All entries must arrive on a pallet.
 - 18.) Neither Thanksgiving Point nor the UGPG will be responsible for any damages caused to any person(s) or specimen(s) at this event.

UTAH GIANT PUMPKIN GROWERS 2013 WEIGH OFF SATURDAY SEPT. 28th

THANKSGIVING POINT
LEHI, UTAH 84043
www.thanksgivingpoint.com

Registration is from 8 am till 11 am. Bring each pumpkin on a pallet.

Judging is from 11 am till noon.

Weigh off starts at Noon.

We would like to encourage everyone to bring a pallet for their pumpkin that has a 4-inch rise from the ground, allows the forklift access on all 4 sides of the pallet, and a solid surface for the pumpkin to sit on. The surface could be plywood, carpet, cardboard, foam, etc. This will help the lifting crew move the pumpkin without damaging it.

Up to two pumpkins per grower are allowed but only one will count toward prizes. If desired, extra pumpkins may be weighed. Extra pumpkins will be weighed in beginning at 11 am. Contact Kyle (801) 319-9926 or Matt (801) 458-3383.



To unload your Pumpkin please follow the path shown below. You will enter the lot from the South Entrance and proceed to the parking lot above (East) of the "Pumpkin Area" and exit to the North. You may then proceed to park you Pumpkin towing vehicle. There will be no vehicle Access to the "Pumpkin Area" as the area will be set up for weighing and displaying of the Pumpkins.

Pumpkin area "NO" vehicle access

Detailed view provided in a separate image. It highlights the unloading area in detail.