



# The Pumpkin Vine



March 2017

There's A New Kid in Town -  
Ed Dennis-the Utah Champ!

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## When the dust settled after two exciting weigh offs, Utah's 2016 Top 10 were as follows:

1.	<b>Ed Dennis</b>	<b>1491.5</b>
2.	Mohammed Sadiq	992.5
3.	Ken Kolb	990
4.	Ralph Laub	969
5.	Juana laub	870.5
6.	DJ Steffler	760.5
7.	Travis Evans	710
8.	Matt McConkie	704.5
9.	James Champagne	672.5
10.	Cliff Warren	667.5

## UPCOMING NEWS

Watch for **Kyle Fox** being interviewed on Ch. 4 on the morning of Friday, March 24th. He will talk about the club's Spring Seminar to get the word out to the community.

Kyle always does such a great job in promoting the UGPG club. *Thanks!*

## Thanks to Kyle Fox

For the past 6 years, Kyle Fox has served as President/Committee Chair for the UGPG. He truly brought a new level of excitement and commitment to the club. Some of the highlights of his service include:

- Club membership nearly doubled
- Feature length documentary featuring Utah Growers
- Development of the Ginourmous Pumpkin Regatta
- Mastermind behind the premier pumpkin drop in the world
- Organized seminar with some of the top worldwide growers

We extend to Kyle a sincere and heartfelt thanks for the hundreds of hours he has spent promoting pumpkins and bringing smiles to the faces of so many. We are grateful Kyle will continue to serve on the committee in other capacities.



## Welcome Dave Bradley - New Committee Chair

**O**n January 19, 2017 Dave Bradley was officially voted in as the UGPG Committee Chair! Dave's enthusiasm is contagious and we are excited to see BIG things from Dave. Dave and his amazing wife Cathy have served the club for many years doing everything from distributing seeds to serving us homemade ice cream in their lovely backyard. We would like to extend our thanks to Dave in advance for being willing to work on our behalf and dedicate so much time and energy to the pumpkin community.



## Q and A with Ed Dennis, Thanksgiving Point Weigh Off Champion

**C**ongratulations Ed on an immensely successful year. Thank you for being willing to share with us a little bit on what you did to land your 1491.5 lb. monster.

### What did you do to prepare your soil?

Over the last two years, we put in over 20 yards of compost in our 750 sq.ft. patch, raising the soil in our patch by about a foot. We also added 4 yards of perlite. In hindsight, it could probably use another 4 yards of perlite. The soil that we started with wasn't bad. There wasn't much clay if any in it. My first soil test, I was probably 3-4% organic but I'm probably somewhere between 10% - 20% now. The soil looks black.

### What seed did you use?

I used the 2230 Wallace because it was the US record the year before plus it went heavy.

### What date do you germinate your seeds?

The 14th of April. It opened on the 16th and I transplanted around the last part of April when the first true leaf is about the size of the palm of my hand, or maybe a little smaller.

### How far out did you pollinate?

At least 12 feet, if not a little further. It was the first female blossom on the plant. It was pollinated the 21st of June. I like to pollinate when there are 16-20 secondaries before the

pumpkin.

### How many plants do you grow and how big is your patch?

I usually start with 4 seeds just to make sure I get some viable seedlings. I watched them as they start growing and put the two strongest in the patch. This last year was a tough one because I had the 2230 Wallace and the 1817 McConkie. They were both running well and when it came time to thin them, it was a tough decision.

### What things do you do to regulate temperature?

I've been using the 40% shade cloth and have debated whether or not to go to 50%. When there was still burning, I would add a second layer of 40% shade to stop the burn. I also have 50 misting heads that are turned on automatically for 10 seconds every 10-20 minutes as temperatures are above 95 degrees. One thing I'm considering for next year is misting with distilled water so you don't get the lime buildup on the leaves. I also put fans under the shade cloth that would blow in fresh air on one side and out the other. I had a weather station inside the patch but it would generally drop the temperature 5-10 degrees below the outside temperature.

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**What's your feeding schedule like?**

The one thing I changed last year was adding the Dosatron [fertilizer injector]. I went to a watering schedule of twice per day. Once about 11:00 and the second time about 4:00. I adjusted the watering as the seasons changed. I water 18 minutes per cycle and like to keep the soil moist but not soggy. I would pick it up and I could never squeeze moisture out of it. The Dosatron was hooked up to a fertilizer tank which primarily fed CalMag but I also used Defy [a biological fungicide] and I also added liquid Elemite [liquid micronutrients]. The whole growing season I put in a very low dose of Holland's Blossom Booster. (2 Tablespoons per 5 gallons of concentrate. After the patch tour, I tried two different versions of potassium. One was a powdered product and the other was a liquid. I may have put some seaweed in once but I don't think I ever put any fish emulsion in the whole growing season.

**Do you have any problems with insects or disease?**

Yes, that's always a battle. There were two times I went out and found squash bugs and I talked to Steve Regan and they recommended a triple spray that includes both a fungicide and insecticide. In addition to the spray, I used dill seeds to repel squash bugs. I took about 2 pounds of dill seeds and sprinkled them around the patch. We never had any other problems. For spider mites, I used Minx spray which is a generic Avid.

For disease, I was in a 3 spray rotation and would spray once a week. I also used Rootshield added to the Mykos.

**Your previous best was 953, and this year you jumped to 1491.5. Nicely done, that's a major increase. What was the single biggest factor that caused the increase?**

The addition of Perlite for one—but also the Dosatron that allowed me to fertilize every day. The third factor was the regular spraying. I didn't miss a week. This summer, we went to Lake Powell and a circuit breaker got blown and we didn't get any water to the plant for 3 full days with temperatures over 100 degrees. The pumpkin was growing 40-45 lbs per day, but dropped to 25 lbs per day. I think the Perlite saved us there.

**What advice would you give a new grower?**

Learn as much as you can. If you listened to everything people had to say and put it into practice and follow through with everything. In 2010 I grew a 91 lb pumpkin. So I went from 91 lbs to 183, then 432, 953 and finally 1491.

**Anything else you want to tell the growers?**

It's been a great thing for our family. My daughter and son-in-law grow and we've had so much fun. Last year, my granddaughter Lauren delayed her homecoming date because she wanted to come to the weigh off. I tell new growers to just have fun and try not to worry too much.

## 2017 UGPG CALENDAR

*Mark the Dates on your calendar!*

March 25	Spring Seminar and Seed Distribution at Mountain Valley Seed Co.
August 12	Patch Tour (this year visiting Northern sites)
September 23	Thanksgiving Point Weigh Off
October 7	Hee Haw Farms Weigh Off
October 21	Ginourmous Pumpkin Regatta
October 28	Pumpkin Drop at Hee Haw Farms
November 23	Feast with the Beasts at Hogle Zoo

# Q and A with Ralph Laub, Hee Haw Farms Weigh Off Champion

## What type of soil prep have you done in your garden?

We added compost in the fall, and took a soil sample in the spring. Our patch is 1560 ft and we added 12 yards of compost. We used a dump trailer. We get a soil test and divide the patch into 25 sqft areas and we stay two weeks ahead of the plant so when the plant gets to that area, the soil is ready for it.

## Why do you think so many pumpkins went light this year?

In our patch, we have cottonwood trees, and everything we have grown under them has been light. Under the mill fabric, there were cottonwood tree roots.

Talked to the local county agent and if you tip a tree over, wherever it will land would be where the roots reach.

## What seed did you use?

The 1529 Marsh. I also like the genetics of the 1073.5 Laub. It's a 1817 McConkie x 1526 Menting. The leaves don't grow too big so they don't get sunburned or tipped over by the wind.

## What date did you start your seed?

April 9th (2nd weekend of April) 10 days after the seed hits the soil, it goes outside. I want the soil to be all heated up and ready so that 10 days after, the seedling is outside.

## Did you do anything to optimize the temperature of the plant?

We in the past have put heating cables around the stump. We use 80-100 ft long ones. We start them in cold frames. At night time, we cover it up with a blanket and put a heater in the cold frame. I don't ever want it dropping below 60 degrees on it. Juany

opens all of them in the morning when it starts to warm up. We use 50% shade cloth that we bought at Ace. We only use the shade when it's needed. If weather is above 90 degrees, the shade is on. If it's below 90, shade is off. I think you get more photosynthesis if they're uncovered.



## How far from the stump did you set your pumpkin?

About 17 feet out. We like them 15-20 ft out. We've grown them more than 20 feet out, and they haven't done well.

## What was your feeding schedule like?

I feed 1 tsp of urea mate every week. We found if you go heavy, you'll blow them up. Once the fruit is on and going, we'll add

some CalMag to it every week. We also feed kelp once a week. We also add a little bit of humic acid 3 times a week.

## If you could only have one product to add to your pumpkin, what would it be?

I think mycorrhizae would be the one product you have to have. If you don't you're limiting your growth, and it has to be fresh. I'm a firm believer that fresh mycorrhizae makes a huge difference.

## What do you do to fight disease or insects?

Every Monday night, we use a fungicide and insecticide. We do it every week like clockwork. Since we started that, we haven't had any problems with disease. We used to fight spider mites and powdery mildew, but since we started that, we haven't had any problems. Every Monday without fail we apply generic Avid and other fungicides in rotation.

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### What advice would you give a new grower?

Find somebody who grows consistently big year after year and talk to them and learn what they have to say. The 2nd time we went to Las Vegas, there was a couple who got GPC jackets and we talked to them to find out what they did. Find someone who knows how to do it, and learn what they do.

### Any other words of wisdom for the club?

The number one thing people have to realize is that the closer you can get your soil to being right, the better your plants will do. Last year, we used soil sensors to give us temperature and water and we cut our watering way back. It all comes down to your soil.



## SPRING SEMINAR

Our Spring Seminar will be held on **March 25th** at Mountain Valley Seed Company, 175 W. 2700 S., Salt Lake City, UT.



Beginner's Class taught by the *one-and-only* Dave Bradley.

Advanced topics will be addressed via Skype by 2-time World Record Holder, **Ron Wallace**.

### SCHEDULE

- 9:00 - 10:00am     Introductory Class
- 10:00 - 11:00am     Ron Wallace via Skype
- 11:00 - 12:00pm     Advanced Topics & Q&A  
(Panel Discussion)



# Prodigious Pumpkins



Getting a thirst-quenching drink of water at the Thanksgiving Point Weigh Off



It was a cold rainy day at Thanksgiving Point's Weigh Off



Pumpkin Drop at Hee Haw Farms



Working it at the Hee Haw Farms Weigh Off



Feast with the Beasts at Hogle Zoo - it was a *FREEZING* cold day!