

The fruit will grow for 60-120 days depending on the weather, plant health, watering, and soil fertility.

Below is a Beginner's Guide to growing Giant Pumpkins that goes further in depth for those interested.

<http://How2GrowAGs.blogspot.com>

(Click the Beginner's Guide link)

Local growers are encouraged to show their pumpkins at the Pumpkin Show and join the Oklahoma Giant Pumpkin Growers club to share growing experiences and knowledge. If you want to join the club, or have questions about the club or general questions about growing Giant Pumpkins you can contact:

OGPG- [oklahomagiants@gmail.com](mailto:oklahomagiants@gmail.com)

"Like" us on Facebook at the Oklahoma Giant Pumpkins Growers

If you are not from the local area, seek out a Giant growers group in your area and attend a Giant Pumpkin weigh off near your home. There are many all over the world. We have listed some on the back page of this brochure.

The 2021 Giant Pumpkin Weigh Off will be held on Saturday September 18, 2021 at 1 p.m. in the

Claremore Expo Center  
400 Veterans Parkway  
Claremore, OK 74017



## COMPETITIVE GROWING INFORMATION

A good place to start is:

<http://www.bigpumpkins.com>

It is a worldwide Giant Pumpkin Growing community and has all of the information you could ever need to grow a Giant. Meet fellow growers, online chat, message boards, keep track of your progress in a personal diary.

More very good information and club sites

<http://www.team-pumpkin.org/>

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

<http://www.maine-pumpkins.com/>

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

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

<http://www.gvgo.ca/>

<https://pnwgpg.com/>

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

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

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

<https://ipga.us/>

<https://www.backyardgardener.com/?s=giant+pumpkins>

[http://www.spectrumanalytic.com/doc/library/article\\_list](http://www.spectrumanalytic.com/doc/library/article_list)

<http://www.wisconsin-giant-pumpkin-growers.com/>

<http://gpc1.org>

<https://tools.pumpkinfanatic.com/>

## How to Grow a Giant Pumpkin



You have already taken the first step to growing a Giant Pumpkin, obtaining good seeds. Store them in a cool dry place until it is time to plant them. There is no need to refrigerate or freeze them. The seeds that you have just received have the genetic potential to grow as big as 2000 lbs. How big it gets depends on the weather, soil fertility, gardening knowledge, keeping the plant healthy, lots of water and a little luck.

Included below are the basic steps to successfully growing the biggest pumpkin in your neighborhood. If you are interested in competitive growing, there are links to information on the web at the end of this brochure that will get you started in competition growing.

The next step is preparing the place that you want to grow your Giant. One plant can take from 200-900 square feet. To get the biggest pumpkin, you should consider from 600-900

square feet. Tilling in 2-3 inches of compost will go a long ways to improving your existing soil and improving your chance of growing a really big pumpkin.

Using the following method is almost fool proof in getting your seed to germinate.

1. Use PLAIN (no fertilizer) potting soil. Dampen it to the point when it is squeezed as hard as you can ONE drop of water comes out. (Two drops is too wet, no drops is too dry). Put potting soil in a pot in a warm place (on top of a cable box, or refrigerator works if you don't have a seed starting mat. If possible you want the soil to be as close to 88 degrees as possible. If you are using peat pots soak them for several hours before adding potting soil so the pot doesn't wick all of the moisture out of the soil.
2. Sand the edges of the seed with an emery board to weaken the hard shell. You want to remove about 1/16 of an inch (stop if you see a crack forming), from everywhere but the tip. You will see 2 small holes at the tip where the root will emerge and you do not want to damage this area.
3. Soak the seeds in peroxide for 30 minutes.
4. Exchange the peroxide with a cup of water (and a teaspoon of liquid seaweed if it is available) and continue to soak for 3-6 hours.
5. Plant the seed about one inch below the surface of your pot flat on its side.
6. Cover the pot with a piece of plastic wrap and keep it warm.
7. If temperature is close to 88 degrees the seedling should emerge in 3-4 days. If the temperature is cooler it will take longer but it will sprout.

8. Do not be tempted to water unless the soil gets extremely dry.

You want to start your seed indoors when the danger of all frost is over. Check your zone at <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>. The plant only needs to be indoors until the 3<sup>rd</sup> leaf appears, typically only for 3-5 days. Setting it out as soon as possible will reduce the chances of the plant becoming root bound or experiencing transplant shock.

When you set the plant out, great care should be taken to keep from disturbing the roots. The plant will typically grow AWAY from the 3<sup>rd</sup> leaf that appears. So plant the plant with that leaf pointing toward you with the leaves just barely above the soil line. Water the transplant with a gallon of HALF strength High Phosphorus (middle number) fertilizer.

If the nights are still cold, covering the plants with a Styrofoam cooler for the first few nights will help harden it off.

In a couple of weeks your plant will begin to vine. The first (main vine) will start having secondary vines growing to the sides at the leaf nodes. Guiding them at more or less right angles from the main vine will make it easier to get into the plant to weed and feed it. The secondary vines will also have vines growing from the sides of them. These are called third stage or tertiary growth and should be removed. If you do not remove this growth it will become impossible to enter the plant to do any maintenance. It also reduces airflow which can increase the chance of having a disease problem. Tertiaries also take energy away from the pumpkin, which will reduce its overall size in the end.

Pumpkin plants are susceptible to cucumber beetles, aphids, squash bugs and SVBs (Squash Vine Borer). These pests not only eat the foliage and vines but can carry diseases that will kill the plant, so measures need to be taken to protect the plant. Any insecticide labeled for these pests will be effective. Garlic is a very good repellent as well.

Powdery Mildew is another big problem in growing pumpkins. Using Daconil following the instructions on the label will help. Organic gardeners have found that spraying the leaves with 40% skim milk and 60% water once a week will also provide some protection from Powdery Mildew.

After the plant is about 45-60 days old it will start having flowers. Female blossoms have a bulb behind the flower that will become the pumpkin. Male blossoms do not.

As soon as the pumpkin is pollinated and growing, it needs to be shaded from the harsh sun. Many people cover with a white towel when small and a bed sheet once it outgrows the towel. Another option is erecting a tarp structure over the pumpkin. This will keep the water off of it as well as the sun. If this method is chosen, the tarp needs to be at least 3 ft. above the fruit or the heat will be too great for the fruit and it will stop growing.

To get the biggest pumpkin possible it is best to grow a single pumpkin on the main vine so the plant gives all of its energy to one fruit. It is possible to grow 3-5 on a plant and still get in the 200-500 lb. range.