



Standard Bank



**2017 Standard
Bank/Livingseeds Giant
Pumpkin Competition**

The following are the official rules of the Standard Bank / Livingseeds Giant Pumpkin Competition General Rules

- 1) Entry Cost for the 2017 has been waived.
- 2) Seed is available from www.livingseeds.co.za .
- 3) You can source your own seed from any supplier.
- 4) Transport of exhibits to and from the competition is at your cost.
- 5) **All entries must be onsite at the Walkerville Agricultural Show by 11:00 on Saturday the 8th of April 2017.**
- 6) 50% of the seeds of each of the top 3 pumpkins will be donated back into to the competition.
- 7) The organisers MAY NOT ENTER this competition.
- 8) Organisers MAY ONLY exhibit pumpkins for exhibition.

Pumpkin Judging Rules

- 2.1 Only pumpkins may be exhibited. Squash are specifically excluded. (Squash are classified as any entry that is 100% Green, Blue or Grey, or any combination of any of these colours totalling 100%)
- 2.3 Your pumpkin must be healthy, sound and free from cracks, soft spots or hole(s) that extend into the cavity.
- 2.4 Any pumpkin with two or more soft spots totalling more than 200gr will be excluded from the competition and will be classed as an exhibit.
- 2.5 All soft spots are only to be excised and weighed by the judges.
- 2.6 Filling of cracks and cavities with any foreign matter is prohibited. (e.g. sand, mud, silicone, poly-filler etc)
- 2.7 If judges determine that point 2.5 needs to be performed then the grower and/or team must be present.
- 2.8 All pumpkins must be exhibited by the grower, proxy entrants are excluded.
- 2.9 The pumpkin **vine** must be trimmed within 5cm of the **stem**, on either side of the stem.
- 2.10 The judge's decision is final on all matters relating to the weigh-off or eligibility of entries.

We are all excited, and looking forward to having plenty of fun with this competition.

Welcome to the obsessive world of giant pumpkin growing. Be warned, once the bug has bitten, there is no turning back. Some people's lives revolve around their pumpkin patch after "The Big One" and many "Pumpkin Widows" abound. There is nothing quite like being the proud father of that Big One, that you have babied and coddled and pampered and loved more and more each day. There is a wonder in watching the pumpkin grow, measuring its girth to estimate its weight..... until that moment of truth..... at weigh in.

We at Livingseeds understand these feelings.....We have watched and coddled our pumpkins and loved them. We have been growing Atlantic Giant for the last four years and have always been impressed how easily a 100 kilo pumpkin grows. To get it over the 300 kilo mark requires a bit of effort.

The current SA record is 506 Kgs. The World record is well over 950Kgs. All of the seed that we are providing, has the potential to exceed 500Kgs.

This competition is the brain child of John McChlery, the previous General Manager of Greens' Greens. John was looking for a way to stimulate some form of 'agricultural' excitement in the Midvaal area. At the same time creating a new community involved event for the Midvaal area. The belief is that this competition will help to bring the community together in friendly competitive spirit.

We the organisers, wish you as the best growing conditions and fertile soil for your entry.

Regards

The Standard Bank/ Livingseeds Giant Pumpkin Competition.

Main Prize Categories

1st Prize - Heaviest Pumpkin

2nd Prize – 2nd Heaviest Pumpkin

3rd Prize – 3rd Heaviest Pumpkin

Junior Prize Categories

1st Prize – Heaviest Pumpkin

2nd Prize – Heaviest Pumpkin

3rd Prize – Heaviest Pumpkin

Fun Prize Categories

Ugliest Pumpkin

Most Beautiful Pumpkin

Mystery Weight Pumpkin

Smallest Giant Pumpkin

Best Dressed Pumpkin

Prizes for each category are still being finalised and we will keep you up to date with prize developments via our own special newsletter “The Vine” which will go out every month.

Pumpkin Growing suggestions.

If you sit down with 10 Giant Pumpkin growers you will get 13 different answers as to how to grow the big one.

This guide is exactly that, a guide. The internet is full of information of growing pumpkins and there are a number of books available for the prospective grower to purchase to ensure that he/she/they have the best chance.

Bear in mind that this is an outline of a method that works, but many other people have other methods that bring them success.

I would advise that once you have started your seed off, spend some time on the internet and maybe join a few forums.

You will find that most people will give you advice that has worked for them and even if they will not give you their 'ultra secret' recipes and techniques, you will get close to what is available.

Our seed.

The seed supplied for the 2017 competition comes from over 10 sources and they represent some of the best strains in the world. The Atlantic Giant is THE variety to use in competition. We have grown some of these strains to 80kg's without even trying.

The nice thing about starting off with such a large number of strains is that right-up front we have a mix of genetics that will allow you the opportunity to grow a real monster.

We have named and numbered the seed from last year's winners and they are be available to competitors.

Planting your seed.

Our recommended planting date for this year is between the 9th and the 19th of November 2016

You want an 80 day pumpkin growing period, so work back from the 8th of April 2017 to get your ideal pollination date.

Starting your seed is best done indoors in a warm (North Facing) area or on the back of your fridge (warm air) to assist with speeding up the germination.

Some people sand the rims on the outer casing of the seed to help with the plant shedding the seed shell. Soak your seed in warm water for 4-5 hours before planting to help properly soften the outer casing. Plant the seed with the sharp end down and about 2-3 time deeper than the seed is long.

A good commercial germination mix is probably the best way to start your seeds off. If you would prefer to make your own germination mix a good base mix is:

1/3 Washed River sand or Pool filter sand

1/3 Sifted Compost

1/3 Vermiculite

To this you can add, EM cultures, Vermicompost, mycorhyza or any other additive that you may think will assist with germination and seedling growth.

Talborne Organics one of our Sponsors www.talborne.co.za have a number of fantastic products to help with starting off your seed, as well as feeding your monster. Please visit their website for more information on their Organically Certified products.

Soil Preparation.

While your seedling is growing indoors, now is the best time to start preparing your soil for transplanting your potential prize-winner.

As pumpkins are heavy feeders, and require large amounts of quality nutrients throughout the season, large applications of organic food in the forms of well rotted manure and mature compost are a necessity for good growth.

Most growers will dig out a base planting station 1m x 1m and fill this with their 'special compost mix' and transplant their seedlings into this station.

Transplanting outside

The best time to transplant your seedling outside is based on a number of conditions. If you can match all of them then great, however try and get as many as possible on transplant day.

In order of importance.

- 1) 3+ true leaves on the seedling.
- 2) Transplant in the evening.
- 3) Transplant into moist soil.
- 4) Transplant just before or just after rain.
- 5) Transplant when you will be home for a day or two to give attention.

ALWAYS Transplant with the first leaf facing OPPOSITE the direction of growth.

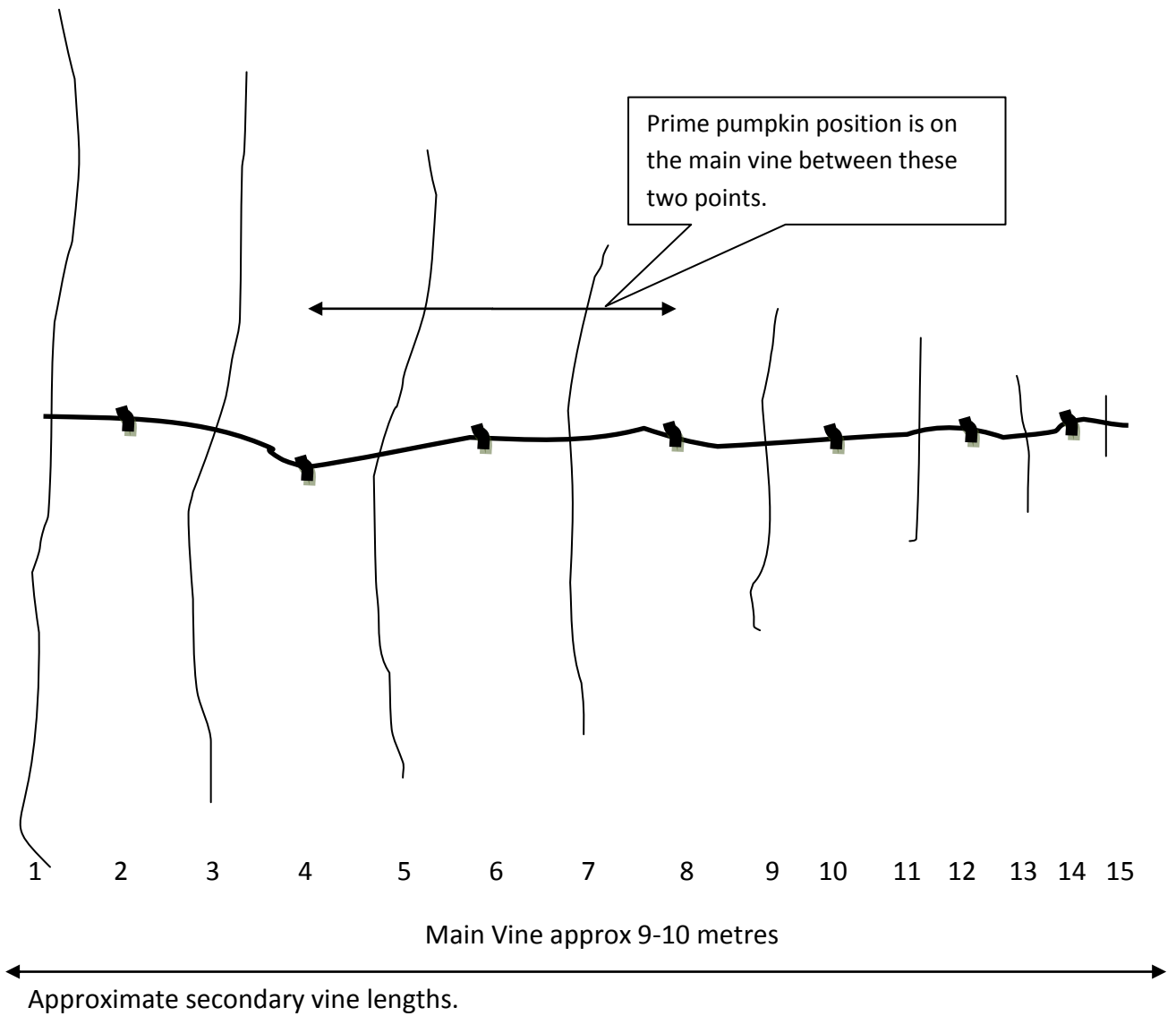
Training your vine

With your first leaf facing away from the direction of growth, train the main vine straight down your growing area.

The idea is to place sort stakes every meter or so to allow the vine to fasten onto these with their tendrils, thus anchoring the vine in place.

This booklet describes the "Christmas tree" method used by Bill Foss and is one of the most manageable methods allowing for a good ration of plant vs fruit.

The "Christmas Tree" Method



- 1) 3.6 m
- 2) nip
- 3) 3 m
- 4) nip
- 5) 2.6 m
- 6) nip
- 7) 2.2 m
- 8) nip
- 9) 1.8 m
- 10) nip
- 11) 1.2 m
- 12) nip
- 13) 0.8 m
- 14) nip
- 15) 0.3 m

The distances are ALL APPROXIMATE and you can play with them to suit your conditions and growing requirements.

The dark marks between each secondary vine is where you skip a node by pruning the secondary vine and allow every second node to grow out.

This method allows you to create space between the vines, so that you can access all parts of the vine. In addition this gives you an ordered layout and it simplifies the management of your pumpkin vine.

The ideal position for your pumpkin is firstly on the main vine, secondly you want the pumpkin to be between nodes 4 and 8.

Understand that this is the 'ideal' position, however often the fruit does not take where you would like it, so you may have to work with what nature throws at you. If you have an option of a fruit on a main vine or on a secondary vine, always choose the main vine fruit.

Pumpkin attachment point.

One of the areas that you need apply particular attention is the area where the pumpkin attaches itself to the vine. The most important thing to understand is that the attachment joint can be lifted about 500mm off the ground as the pumpkin grows.

Leave some 'slack' in the vine at your pumpkin so that the vine is easily able to lift off the ground as the pumpkin grows. If not the fast growing pumpkin will actually snap the vine at its weakest point. Thereby destroying your chances of growing a potential prize-winner.

Vine management

There are two main aspects of vine management. Both are important and each one will help you increase your chances of growing a winner.

Burial of vines. This is one of the most important aspects of growing a GIANT pumpkin. Start by covering the secondary vines as they grow out with compost or an enriched soil. The vines will push out roots into the soil, the compost that you use to cover the vines will just provide additional food for your pumpkin.

Once your pumpkin has started to grow out, you can then cover the balance of the main vine with compost. Please ensure that you leave the portion where the pumpkin is attached free of soil.

If you have the resources to improve all the soil under your entire plant, even better. The story that the best pumpkins grow on the compost heap is very true.

Don't bury the main vine until you know where your pumpkin is going to be situated.

Learn the difference between male and female flowers. (See below)

Removal of fruit. This is probably the hardest part and it pays to be ruthless. If you are not ruthless the growth of extra fruit will just take precious resources away from your potential prize winner.

Any fruit of a secondary vine should be removed as early as possible. Fruits on main vines can be left until you have Hand-Pollinated your 3-4 potential pumpkins.

Hand Pollination.

If you want to grow a winner, you have to hand pollinate.

Any genetics that is introduced from Non Atlantic Giant Pumpkin stock will have a detrimental effect of the size of your pumpkin. The idea is to keep the genetics within the “Atlantic Giant Group” you are encouraged to cross between two or more Atlantic Giant Plants, but ensure that you hand pollinate them. Using a male from a different Atlantic Giant plant or even a different strain of Atlantic Giant will assist you in growing a larger pumpkin as ‘hybrid vigour’ will play in your favour.

How to hand Pollinate

Step 1: The evening before you plan to hand pollinate select two male flowers that are just about to open and a female that is also just about to open. You can normally see this by watching the flowers for a few days and you will very quickly be able to establish at what stage the flower is about to open. Make sure that the flower has NOT opened to allow a bee or insect in. Bee’s will typically push themselves into a flower even if it’s just slightly open. So timing is critical. Do not use a flower that you think has had a bee in it. Pick the male flowers that are about to open. We use tape or a cloths peg to keep the male and female flowers closed.

Step 2: Peg the flowers together ensuring that the peg keeps the ‘opening end’ closed and wait till early the next morning. You need to wait the 12 hours otherwise the “reproductive bits” will not be ready.

Step 3: Tear the petals all the way away from the **male** while trying to keep as much pollen on the anther as possible and VERY carefully open the female flower, insert the male flower and rub the male anthers onto the style of the female flower. Thereby transferring pollen between the chosen flowers. You should also mark the fruit so that you know which ones are hand pollinated. It is preferable to use more than one male flower to pollinate a single female flower. Note that each pollen grain equals a single seed in the pumpkin.

Step 4: Very Important. Close the female flower with the peg again. And leave it on until there is definite growth on the fruit.

To see photographs of the process please click on the Pollination link on this page

<http://www.selfsustainable.co.za/pumpkin-sex-the-other-side-of-curcubit-pollination/>

It is best to have 3-4 fruits developing on the main vine and then select the SINGLE fruit that conforms closest to the following three points.

- 1) Most ideal position on the main vine.
- 2) Most perpendicular fruit to the vine.
- 3) Fastest growing.

All other fruit should be continually removed from the vine to allow any resources to be given directly to the single pumpkin.

Fruit Care

Care of your growing fruit is very important. I would advise that you erect a screen above the pumpkin to prevent your Giant Pumpkin getting sunburnt. A piece of shade cloth 1.5 mt x 1.5 mt erected over the pumpkin will protect the pumpkin against sunburn or hail. Both of which can cause considerable damage to your beauty.

Watering

Watering is a critical aspect of your pumpkin, this needs to be done on a regular basis. If not the stress of water shortage and then sudden water abundance can cause your pumpkin to split as it's not able to quickly stop the uptake of water when it's water stressed.

Long deep watering is much preferred to light watering of the plants. It has been estimated that these pumpkins need around 25 litres of water a day while in its peak growth phase.

Feeding

Atlantic Giant Pumpkins are gross feeders, this means that they are ALWAYS hungry.

Talborne Organics has developed a regular feeding regimen specifically for the food and nutrient hungry Atlantic Giant Pumpkin.

Feed to succeed

When And How Much Fertilizer?

One of the great myths of gardening is that fertilizer is plant food. It's not. Plants make their own food in their leaves and stems with the energy of the sun. A better way to think of fertilizer is like a vitamin and mineral supplement. Plants need the nutrients in fertilizer to grow and stay healthy, but will only benefit from nutrients in the proper amounts. Fight the misconception that "more is better" - a little fertilizer is much better than a lot.

Artificial feeding will only take your pumpkin so far. For a place on the podium, it needs to feed from the soil. Pumpkins root along the ground at the intersections or nodes where the stems and side shoots join. Cover with garden compost enriched with Talborne Vita Grow 2:3:2 (16) and some Fertilis earth worm casting, prior to planting your seed. Then follow up with Vita Veg 6:3:4 (16) two weeks after your seed has germinated. Take care not to compact the soil around your pumpkin plant, preferably place planks around and walk on them. The Vita Veg needs to be fed in an area of approx 4m². Do not dump the fertiliser on the stem, even though it is organic, it is concentrated and will burn the soft pumpkin stem. The Vita Veg 6:3:4 (16) should be fed at a rate of 100g per m². As this fertilizer is organic and not water soluble it will not leach out of the soil..

Because the plant sends down secondary roots along the vine system, you must put in some nutrients around your main planting station as well. Add some compost and manure here as well and remember to make sure whatever you add is completely decomposed. Remember that one plant can cover up to 50 square metres of space by the end of the season, so make sure you have

enough space. If you have a small garden, plant your pumpkin at the edge of the garden and let the vines grow out along the yard

Liquid asset

Water is by far the most important influence on a potential prize-winner, accounting for a fluctuating 90 per cent of the weight. During dry weather, the leaves draw moisture out from the fruit to keep growing, which reduces the size of the pumpkin.

So keeping the roots hydrated is key. Do this with a hose set to drip alongside where the main stem meets the soil, or, better still, with soaker-hose or drip irrigation kit (available from Livingseeds) laid in a spiral beneath the leaves and plumbed to the garden tap.

With the hose left to run for an hour every day – more if the weather is hot – the pumpkin will quickly start to plump up. During the most vigorous growth phase, a champion can bulk up 11 kg a day. Yours might not gain weight this quickly, but the difference in growth from day to day will almost certainly be noticeable.

When watering, avoid wetting the foliage – this invariably leads to an attack of powdery mildew fungus that appears as a talc-like white coating on the leaves. Although the fungus won't spread to the fruit, it curbs the capacity of affected leaves to photosynthesis, thereby reducing the growth of the pumpkin. Removing badly affected leaves and pruning side shoots that are crowded together and encroaching on your pumpkin will help to reduce this, as will feeding.

Liquid Fertilizers

Liquid Fertilizers such as Biogrow Biotrissol or Kelplus are favoured. Liquid fertilizer, is applied to the leaves, hand applied to secondary roots or included in the water supply of irrigation system.

Foliar Feeding

Foliar feeding is the simple, but important process of feeding your plant through the leaves. Use a liquid fertilizer like Biotrissol or Kelplus and spray leaves and vines. Make sure to follow the directions on the fertilizer container.

Practice foliar feeding regularly beginning early in the season. You will have much healthier and stronger plants. And you will add kilos to the fruit.

Common Diseases and Pests

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.....

There are a variety of bugs that can harm pumpkin plants and fruit. In addition to directly harming the plants, vine or fruit, they carry a double edged sword as these pests carry diseases and transmit them from plant to plant. Controlling these "bad boys" can save you troubles with disease down the road.

Here are some of the common insect and bug problems and what you should do to avoid them.

Cucumber Beetle - (and other beetles) This is the most common insect enemy to your vine crops. These pests can damage the leaves and transmit diseases which may prove fatal to the plant. Spray your vines with Biogrow Pyrol every 10 to 14 days as a preventative against insect invasion. Make sure you spray thoroughly on top and underneath the leaves. You should only spray the Pyrol very early morning or late afternoon to prevent killing any beneficial insects such as bees.

Snails and Slugs - These slimy little creatures of the night love to suck on the soft pumpkin fruit. They normally do not attack regular pumpkins. A favourite snack is a young Atlantic Giant fruit before the skin begins to harden. They will eat holes deeply into the fruit and destroy it. Apply Ferramol at a rate of 10g / 2 teaspoons per m². As long as you can see the pellets on the ground, the snails or slugs will feed on the Ferramol instead of your plants or fruit

Vine Borers - There is no more certain way to end your pumpkin growing season than to leave an infestation of vine borers. These little pests will bore into the vine at or near the base, sucking on the juices and eating away the vine. Once inside, they usually progress up from the bottom side of the vine making it difficult to detect until great damage is already done.

If your fruit is growing well and all of a sudden slows down, this may be the cause. After the damage is done the vine will shrivel and die. The presence of secondary roots may continue to produce a little more towards fruit weight, but effectively your season is over if they eat through the vine. . Vine borers attack most members of the Cucurbit family, pumpkins, squash and cucumbers. It is important to guard against an infestation before it happens. Spray your vines with Biogrow Pyrol every 10 to 14 days as a preventative against insect invasion. Make sure you spray thoroughly on top and underneath the leaves. You should only spray the Pyrol very early morning or late afternoon to prevent killing any beneficial insects such as bees.

Calcium and Disease Resistance

Adequate calcium provides for strong cell walls. Strong cell walls are less prone to disease. Calcium deficiencies in pumpkins may result in cracking, blossom end rot, internal breakdowns or post-harvest rot. Many studies have shown increased disease resistance with elevated calcium levels, although some of the studies involve other vegetables such as potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers and the like. I believe the benefits will also apply to the pumpkin. Calcium levels should make up 1 to 2 percent of leaf tissue and 3 tenths of one percent of the fruit. Since most of us will not be monitoring calcium levels with tissue analysis, the practical thing to do is to elevate calcium with the following guidelines

Just Grow It !