

Port Elgin Pumpkinfest  
October 1 & 2, 2011  
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Summer 2011

# GROWERS VINE

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Brought to you by Port Elgin Pumpkinfest and the GVGO

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE By Kirk Chenier, President

Hopefully all of our members are gaining ground, so to speak on the terrible weather we have experienced not only here in Ontario but all over North America. If it wasn't torrential downpours or micro wind bursts it was tornados or something of that nature. We obviously can't change what Mother Nature brings our way but only adapt and make the best of it. I've been keeping a close eye on several growers through Big Pumpkins and our message board and I'm confident we will do well come this fall. Things in our gardens are making strides to get back on track and gaining quickly. I'm not sure if I'll obtain June pollinations or not but it is what it is.

Your GVGO team is busy once again planning events and taking care of business as usual. We are bringing new volunteers into the mix to take over some of the duties I have been doing such as advertising boards, seed sorting and raffle purchases so the transition to the New President come next Spring Seminar is a good one. I'm really enjoying growing some other veggies this year and have 4 decent cabbages going along with some nice Heavy carrots. This will be the last year I grow pumpkins on a competitive level and look forward to

concentrating on the giant veggies in the future. The usual events are covered below so I will sign off and wish everyone good growing and hope to see a lot of you at a weigh off this fall.

## PATCH TOUR – 2011 EDITION

The Patch Tour will be in the Bowmanville/Cameron area this year on Saturday August 6th, Your hosts for this event will be the Delaney's in Pickering, Joynsons in Enniskillen, Maileys in Udora and the Hunts with a bonus in Cameron. The patch tours are the second best event for learning and chatting with other growers we put on. The directions for the tour are printed later in the newsletter and hopefully we can set a new record for attendees.

## 2011 MEMBERSHIPS & SEED PACKS

This winters seed sorting was a good event as usual with lots of chatter amongst the seed stuffers. With the club limiting the seeds under 800 pounds and with the increase in the Veggie seeds, we have received many positive comments back from our members that the packs were very attractive this year and many of the seeds are seeing dirt. Our membership cost is going to stay the same as we are holding our own financially and are just a few members away from the 300 mark. We had quite a good rise in new members right here in Ontario this year which I

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think is directly due to Ontario members taking it on themselves to help promote our club in each of their own areas. We thank all of our members throughout the world for their support through memberships. We will have a new seed sorter come this winter as Pat Watson and his gang of Merry Men have stepped up and will take on the task of sorting and stuffing seeds for the mailout – Thanks for coming forward Pat – your mailman will never be the same!

### GROWERS SEMINAR

Our growers' seminar had 60+ members attend with several thousand pounds of amendments change hands that day. It was a whirlwind day and thanks go out to all involved to make it happen. Russ Landry and John Vincent conducted presentations on some techniques and products that are going to assist us in our goals this year and the info was very well received. The GVGO awards were presented to the hard working growers in several categories and all the info is printed in the newsletter – congrats to all on your hard work. The Heavy Hitter panel was quite revealing this year with many a growing tip being told to all in attendance. It was broken down into 2 separate slots this year with veggies being first and then squash and pumpkins being discussed in the remainder of the time slot. Thanks once again to the Joynson family for organizing the meal it was great and to all who contributed to making this year's event a success!

### MASTER GROWER & HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

We had the honour of presenting 3 Hall of Fame Inductee awards at the seminar and it was a special day as they were all people who have helped build the hobby from the ground up by starting weigh offs and/or growers clubs to keep the interest for the growers and spread the word. We once again thank Doug Court, Glenn Cheam and Jim and Marilyn Ives.



The club awarded two more master growers awards this year. The hard working recipients were John Butler and Art Johnston. As we all know these two gents excel in many categories and it was only a matter of time until they achieved this award. They were presented with their master growers jackets that day.



### GROWER OF THE YEAR

The club's grower of the year award was very close once again with it coming down to the tandem of Jane and Phil Hunt and Chris Lyons with the Hunts narrowly edging Chris out by a very small margin on the Joynson scoring standard. Congrats to the Hunts and keep up the great work.



### SERVICE AWARDS



The club has started a new award for years of service by a Executive Member. This years award winners for 5 years of service to the GVGO were Jane and Phil Hunt, Phil Joynson, John Vincent, Russ Landry, Marc Levy, Ben Johnson. Phil Hunt was presented a crest for Past President service. Each recipient has their name on our new plaque and a crest to go on their GVGO jackets along with a gift card for appreciation of their hard work. Thanks to all from all our members



## TOMATOES



## LONG GOURDS



## TALL SUNFLOWERS



## WATERMELONS



## TALL CORN



## SQUASH



## CABBAGE



## PUMPKINS



## CLOSING REMARKS

With my closing remarks this summer I hope all of you obtain your goals- whatever they may be. We hope to see you out to the club events and weigh offs that so many people work so hard to put on. Our club will be going through a bit of a transition over the next several months as I exit and the new president is brought in but all will strive to keep the standards you have come to expect and enjoy from your club the same. Thanks to those that have come forward to volunteer with club duties. Have a great summer and have fun growing!

### Patch Vandalism Deterrent Gone Bad!

Mrs Jones was proud of her pumpkin patch, so she was real disappointed when some of the the local kids were taking them to make Jack-o-Lanterns.

One evening while Mrs Jones was soaking in the bath, the answer to the pumpkin thefts came to her. After supper she went out and put up a sign: 'Beware, one of these pumpkins is coated with a special colourless rat poison!'

A day or two later when Mrs Jones checked out her pumpkin patch she was pleased to see that no more had been stolen.

Then she saw a second sign next to hers which said: 'NOW THERE ARE TWO!!'

**PORT ELGIN PUMPKINFEST  
UPDATE  
By Sally Hunt**

Things are revving up to high gear here in Port Elgin as we ramp up for our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on October 1 and 2, 2011. We were lucky enough to receive government funding to hire Lacey Boyd, (whom some of you met in Niagara), as our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Coordinator. Lacey is new to Ontario, coming from Fredericton, New Brunswick.



Lacey is very excited to learn all aspects of hosting the festival and has already developed a special interest in giant pumpkin seeds and their genetics. Lacey has been very busy arranging all details regarding our Saturday evening birthday bash festivities, which I hope some of you will stay in town to attend.

Starting at 6 p.m, on Saturday after the festival gates close for the day, a birthday party, complete with cake and balloons will take place at our community coliseum. The Pumpkinfest mascots will be joined by Dreamworks Productions' Shrek and Fiona, as well as a Captain Jack Sparrow look-a-like, clowns, jugglers and stilt-walkers. There will also be a mobile display put on by the Hockey Hall of Fame with interactive games, model display cases and NHL trophies.

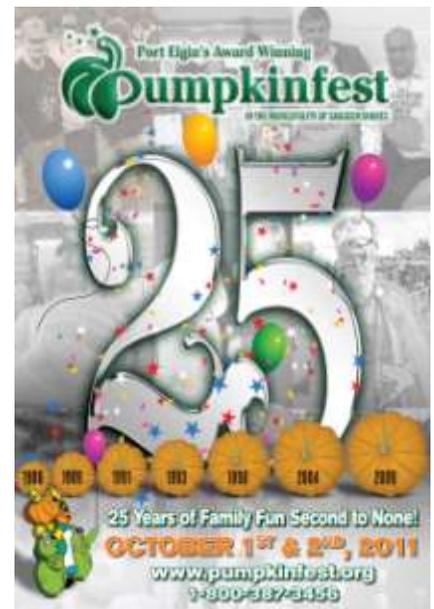
After 8:30 p.m. we will send the kiddies home to bed and the venue will become a licensed gala event with entertainment by the Jersey

Beat and catered food by the Grey Bruce Agricultural and Culinary Association. We hope you can join us for some nostalgic Frankie Valley tunes and awesome local food!

Anyways, back to the pumpkins!!! We would like to thank the GVGO for honouring one of our own by recognizing Doug Court into your Hall of Fame. Doug was a very humble inductee and our entire Board of Directors was sincerely pleased for him. If Doug hadn't filed that paperwork back in 1987 to become part of the WPC, who knows where our festival would be today. Doug has been a volunteer with the festival since it's inception in 1986 and has been an integral part of the planning process each and every year. His focus has remained on the weigh-off tent but he is pleased to have seen the growth of so many other exciting attractions at the festival and when asked his thoughts of Pumpkinfest, his reply is "I can only think of promoting and participating in the greatest contest in the world – Growing the Giants"!



You will find this year's festival prize structure later in this newsletter and please continue to check our website at [www.pumpkinfest.org](http://www.pumpkinfest.org) as we finalize and confirm more details regarding this year's event. We sure hope to see some monsters for our 25<sup>th</sup> and the most awesome birthday present of all would be a new World Record weighed at 2011 Port Elgin Pumpkinfest.



**SOUTHERN ONTARIO NEWS**

by John Butler

The spring started out cool and wet, accompanied by damaging winds. It is finally looking up and things are getting better. Most of the plants are finally in the garden and on schedule for late June or early July pollination.

As far as I know the **NORFOLK COUNTY FAIR** weigh off is Sunday Oct.2, 2011 , (the information is not yet available on their website). The Fair has competitions in most of the categories. They have in the past had different rules, so if you plan on attending you need to register a few weeks early, and get a competitor's booklet to check the rules. The fruit and vegetables must stay at the fair all week. This is a great local weigh off to support. You can check it out at <http://www.norfolkcountyfair.com/index.php> or call ( 519-426-7280 or fax 519-426-7286 ).

The prize structure last year was as follows;

Pumpkins - 1<sup>st</sup> place \$2000.00 and pays down to 10<sup>th</sup>

Squash - \$250.00 and pays down to 4<sup>th</sup> place

Tomato / Watermelon / Tallest Corn / Tallest Sunflower / Largest Head Sunflower / Cabbage - \$25.00 - pays down to 3<sup>rd</sup>

The **BLUEWATER GROWERS & THROWERS** weigh-off and other festivities are planned for Saturday September 24, 2011 starting around 12-1 pm with the weigh-off at 3 pm. The location is Bill & Gail Watson's residence 29652 St Clair Parkway Wallaceburg, Ontario. Pumpkins and Long Gourds are being judged. Nice trophies and bragging rights only. No prize money is handed out.

A spud gun target shooting competition will start around 2:00 with lots of practice time before the 3 shot competition begins. A trophy is awarded to the best shooter and the general public will be permitted to take shots throughout the afternoon. I hope to have a new double barrel spud gun launching two at a time. It should be quite entertaining to say the least!

Mike Carrol and Ron Fowler are scheduled to bring their Trebuchet and Cannon and will be launching pumpkins across the river throughout the day. A trophy will be awarded for the farthest shot.

A pumpkin carving contest is planned for the kids. Hot dogs, pop and bottled water will be available for a small fee. This is a BYOB event and please bring a lawn chair. If anyone has any questions they should contact any of the organizing committee consisting of

Mike DeMars; [mdevars@kent.net](mailto:mdevars@kent.net); Craig Balkwill; [balk@kent.net](mailto:balk@kent.net); or Bill Bechard; [bmbeschard@kent.net](mailto:bmbeschard@kent.net)

I went to this event last year and had a great time.

The Patch Tour will be in Central Ontario starting at Chris Delaney's Patch and ending at Phil Hunts for lunch. I hope to see everyone there.

## EASTERN REGION NEWS

by Phil Hunt

Well the warmer days of summer have finally arrived here in the central part of the Province. This is helping our plants get caught up from our late start. Cool, wet weather hampered much of our region in April & May. This caused many growers to delay transplanting their seedlings. The only plants that liked that weather were our giant cabbages.

This season we are planting 3 pumpkins (1080 Hunt, 901 Hunt & 1161 Rodonis), along with the 848 MacKenzie (our 1<sup>st</sup> ever squash plant). We also have 2 watermelons, 2 LGs, 1 field pumpkin & a ½ doz giant tomato plants. It will be a challenge to take care of everything, but my secret weapon (Jane) is up for the task (I hope). The pumpkin hotline here in Cameron has been busy so far this season. It's a real treat to talk shop with so many of our members. Hopefully we were able to help a few of you with your questions.

The 7<sup>th</sup> annual GVGO patch tour is slated for Aug 6<sup>th</sup> & this year we are featuring the growers from the central part of the province. Tour

locations include The Delaney's, The Joynsons, Bryan Mailey's & of course our place here in Cameron. There will be an added patch to visit during the lunch period. The good news is that you won't have to drive far to visit it. Hamburgers, hot dogs, sausage on a bun, along with salads & dessert will be on the menu for lunch. Cost will be \$5 per person. All growers & families are invited. There will be coffee & donuts at the first stop & water & pop will be available at each stop. All the drinks are free with admission. Please bring your own lawn chairs. We look forward to seeing you all there. Please email me at [pjhunt@i-zoom.net](mailto:pjhunt@i-zoom.net) to confirm your attendance.

Our 1<sup>st</sup> weigh off of the season will be at Hugli's Blueberry farm in Pembroke, Ont. It is a great place to start the weigh off season. It's a GPC sanctioned event that will be held on Sept 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Come up & enjoy what Brian has to offer other than the weigh off. Pumpkin Cannon, pig races, corn maze & more are there for all members of your family to enjoy. Brant Timm reports that it was a cold spring in the Pembroke region & that it also resulted in a slower than normal start. Don't let that fool you though as Brant & Brandon seem to always catch up & surprise us each year.

I emailed John Vincent (GPC Rep & GVGO executive) about how it was going & he said that the growers in his area were on schedule, but that there was a few that had a great start. The Wellington weigh off is Ontario's last GPC weigh off & is scheduled for Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011. It all starts with the Pumpkinfest parade through the Main St. of Wellington. This is always a big favourite with growers, as they get to parade their monsters to the

crowds before heading to the weigh off at the Local school.

The final weigh off of the year in the Eastern region is a non-GPC event in Keene, Ont. Bring those monster pumpkins back out & get your chance at winning some decent prizes. Date & details will be announced further in the newsletter.

On a final note, Jane & I would like to wish all GVGOer's all the best this season. See you at the scales. Good luck.....Phil

**NEWS FROM NORTH-  
WESTERN ONTARIO  
by Ben Johnson**

Northwestern Ontario pumpkin growers have had a pretty cool start to our pumpkin season which is not giving us any consistence in our temperatures. This is resulting in late starts for many of the growers. Many Gardeners say this is the latest start they have ever had. The individuals who put down soil warming cables seem to have an edge on the growing season this year. With that being said, I have read the posts on the GVGO message board and everyone seems to be in the same boat.

Some growers in our area lost their plants to heavy frost which seems to stick around for days. My plants were also touched by frost, but luckily I only lost a few leaves. We were able to find plants for those who lost theirs and I appreciate the generosity of all those who helped out, thank you again!

Now that we are into June and the vines are starting to run, hopefully we get some nice warm

temperatures to warm up our soil and get us to where we should be. Speaking of soil, one thing I would like to stress is the importance of a soil test! In order to have your plants growing their optimal best you need to have your soil tested in order to find out where your levels are. I test my soil twice a year. Once in the spring, and again in the fall, and then add my amendments accordingly such as manure and humic acid.

Humic acid has a higher cation exchange capacity, or CEC. A higher CEC means it is easier for soil nutrient particles to move within the soil, and thus to be absorbed by the plants. Soils treated with humic acid have a much better nutrient availability. Humic acid does not directly supply the plants with nutrients, but it does make what nutrients are in the soil easier for plants to access.

The person who I recommend to speak to regarding humic acid is Rick Milliken from Winnipeg MB. Rick can be contacted at [lonstix@gmail.com](mailto:lonstix@gmail.com)

John Vincent & Phil Hunt are the two individuals I recommend to speak to regarding soil levels. John Vincent is a crop specialist and is always willing to help out. Phil hunt has also helped me with balancing my soil, so don't be shy to ask these two for help. Also, don't hesitate to ask me!

This spring, I put an ad on kijiji advertizing 'free giant pumpkin seeds' and the response I got was amazing. Many of the people I gave seeds to were quite appreciative and are looking forward to growing a giant pumpkin. I gave out growing instructions and also referred them to the GVGO growing instructions. The ad also included the GVGO

website address for people to check out, which in turn got the website a few more members.

We have taken the next step into the pumpkin world and joined the Giant pumpkin common wealth. Murillo pumpkinfest will now be a part of the GPC as a sanctioned weigh off site. Were moving on up! Hopefully to the big times! This change also means more work, but I know we can do it! This will be our fifth year for Murillo pumpkinfest and judging by the previous weights I think it's time we joined.

I wish you all the best this growing season and we will see you in the fall.

All the Best,

Ben Johnson.

**NEWS FROM THE EAST  
COAST  
by Dawn Northrup**

It has been a cold wet spring here in the Maritimes. On April 21<sup>st</sup> a storm moved in stirring up every form of precipitation possible. A combination of rain, freezing rain, snow, ice pellets hammered the region. Moncton got 7 hours of freezing rain. Record rainfall and cool temperatures were reported throughout much of the Maritimes during the month of May. After weeks of rainy weather, the skies finally cleared and temperatures skyrocketed the second week of June. The nice weather in June was short lived as Jack Frost came to visit parts of the Maritimes in June. Another low pressure system hit the Maritimes on June 19<sup>th</sup> blasting the region with rain

and gusting winds. Pea size hail hit the Sussex and Saint John area. Over 85mm of rain was recorded in Halifax, Nova Scotia in a two day period.

Many growers in our area were late getting their plants in the ground this spring due to the weather conditions.

The cucumber beetles came swarming in on May 25<sup>th</sup>. This is the earliest that I recall seeing them. They have come in swarms 4 different times so far this year to our patch.

I wish all pumpkin growers the best of luck this season. I hope you get a new personal best!

Dawn

**WESTERN REPORT**  
by Don Crews

Though it happens the same every year, I am always surprised how quick the weather out here changes from what seems hopelessly cold to very warm. The last couple of years winter wouldn't end soon enough but thankfully this time winter turned directly to summer. The north part of the province of Alberta has been sunny and warm and, if anything, too dry (as soon as I wrote that rain began to fall, six and a half inches in fact!). I think we may already have had more sun than we received all last season! My plants responded and I began pollinating fruit before the fathers day weekend. The south part of the province has faired poorly weather wise with rain and rain and then some more rain. Things always average out though and

come weigh off time I'm sure they will have caught up.



I thought I would share a couple of things that makes the pollinating season much easier for me. I struggled in my first couple of seasons getting males for pollinating. I used to go out at night to cover the selected males. The problem was that the weather may not cooperate and I could have cold damp males. Sometimes they were too cool to have their pollen tubes open. To counteract that, I started harvesting males the night before. I now take them in the house, put them on the table and wait till morning. To organize the males I bought some plastic spaghetti containers and a basket to put them in. I label the containers so I can keep the flowers separate all season long. I put a marker and plant markers in with the containers to make a self contained kit to take out to the patches.

The tool that I appreciate the most is my flower harvester. No more trudging through the plant to pick flowers for the next morning, just reach in with the telescoping handle, pull the trigger, pull the flower out and place in the container! So easy now I can't believe I did it the hard way for so long. I think more highly of it each time I use it. I got mine from Lee Valley but I think other places have them too. Make sure to get the long reach one.

The rest of the summer will be spent helping those baby fruit become monsters. I wish everyone the best of luck!

**NEWS FROM OVERSEAS**  
by Brad Wursten

Like the USA, there are large differences in climate from the north of Europe to the south. In general, landlocked countries have warmer summers than the coastal countries like Great Britain and Holland, which experience cooler summers with more than enough rain. But while large parts of Ontario experienced a very wet spring, the northern part of Europe was dry and warm. In the meantime that has changed and it is once again wet over here. The nice thing about different climates is that every year some country will experience near perfect conditions. Which country it will be this year is unknown of course, but some growers over here aren't complaining.

Because the hobby is rather new in Europe, it is very difficult to predict who will come out on top this year. Every year some little known grower just pops up and takes the prize. Of course all eyes are on the Paton twins from England who perform well year in year out. Jos Ghaye from Belgium is always a serious contender as well, but lately it has been the Germans with their moderate climate that have come with the surprises.

In comparison to the pumpkin world, the giant vegetable world is much more predictable. There are a number of established growers that have refined their techniques so well, that weather hardly plays a

role anymore. It will be interesting to see who grabs the title of EGVGA grower-of-the-year. We have a few good candidates, most of them from England, but a few growers from the continent will give them a run for their money.

Bradley Wursten

**INTERNATIONAL GIANT VEGETABLE GROWERS CONFERENCE - 2011**  
by Sally Hunt



Back in March, many attended the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual IGVGC hosted by Port Elgin Pumpkinfest and the GPC in Niagara Falls, Ontario Canada

Lots of fun was had and information from the sessions was readily absorbed by all growers in attendance. From the feedback sheets it appears Joe Ailts and his presentation on "The Science Behind the Giants" was the favorite informational session.

We also learned that you are looking for lower costs and would like to have your meals included.

Well... you spoke and we listened! The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual IGVGC will take place the weekend of March 9 through to March 11, 2012 and will still be held in Niagara Falls, but we will be returning to the Americana resort and the package deal will include:

- Seminar Registration
- Luxurious Accommodations – Friday and Saturday
- Breakfast – Saturday and Sunday
- Lunch – Saturday and Sunday
- Dinner – Friday and Saturday
- Continuous Coffee Breaks from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. daily outfitted with an assortment of refreshments and nourishing snacks.

You will also be able to purchase a day meeting package (no accommodations) which will still include your breakfast and lunch and coffee breaks – dinner will be offered as an upgrade to this day meeting package.

Exact costs will be negotiated at a later date, after the busy weigh-off season but it will be very reasonably priced for all to attend. You can check out this resort at [www.americananiagara.com](http://www.americananiagara.com) – we sure hope to see lots of you there.



While in Niagara in 2011, Chris Stevens was awarded the orange jacket for his 1810.5 WR pumpkin and lots of GPC awards were distributed as well. Ron Wallace was inducted into the GPC Hall of Fame and all previous Hall of Fame members were presented with new black blazers.



We want to congratulate GVGO member Chris Lyons on winning the GPC's Master Grower Award –atta go Chris!



Jim Beauchemin regaled the crowd with his emcee talents and even the girls got to be part of the act!



There was lots of fun to be had by everyone and some of us even got to try some new things – it doesn't look like GVGO member John Butler is too enthused about trying the East Coast oysters!



Yet More Top 10 Things Heard at This Year's Seminars.

(Aren't you thinking that this dead horse has been flogged enough?)

By Phil Joynson

10. The most expensive growing supply I buy is beer.
9. Our wives have been complaining that they never get to go on summer vacation so we're spending the summer in Bob's back yard and taking care of his pumpkins and Bob's spending the summer in my back yard and taking care of my pumpkins.
8. I never attend any function that I can't wear a GVGO ball cap.
7. My wife says she'll take the kids and leave me if I don't stop growing pumpkins. Hey... a win, win situation.
6. My accountant says it would be cheaper if I pay somebody to grow pumpkins for me.
5. If you can't stand the heat... go inside for a cold beer.
4. I'm using my teenaged son's socks to make compost tea. Anything that smells that bad has to be full of bacteria.
3. My patch was so wet this spring that I rototilled with an Evinrude.
2. I'm saving time this year and growing in shredded 20 dollar bills.
1. The only record ever to come out of my patch was a SVB larva the size of a guinea pig.





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## WELCOME TO BRASS TAX

By Russ Landry

Well now as we approach Day 30 to 40 of the 2011 season, I thought it was about time to get down to the "Brass Tax". That's right I mean lets "get down to the nitty, gritty of it all." Let's clear out the garbage and get down to the "facts Jack!" I want to dissect and examine this crazy hobby of ours.

I encounter on a regular basis so many folks that find this hobby amazing but kind of silly. Ah! If they only knew our labour of Love?

Hall & Oates referred to it as a "Method to Modern Love" in a song many years ago. Modern, yah sure....Love, yup. I'll buy into that as we all seem to be pretty hip growers and we love what we do. Method well I think we've got this down too.

Hands up, if when you started this emotionally emaciating hobby you though it could be so friggen complicated. Methods, OOH! Man we have a million of them. From Kelp to Fish and Biota Max and Beyond. This gorilla gardening adventure often turn us into Morons.

That is a straight up fact. Jack is a Moron. Freshly sequestered deep in the depth of his soil is stashed away a "#hashtag" brew. Far exceeding any normal condition, Jacks soils are brimming with critters blooming in summer's warmth.

Fact; summer is definitely the time to shine if you're a Pumpkin or for

that matter if you're a grower too. Everything seems to bloom... or blow up...

Yikes, we can't have that happen. Hurry up Jack, Open up the JUGS! "What" said Jack! "I mean Jugs, of Calcium and Acid, Jack". There you go. Shame on you. Thinking I was hitting the bottle again. I was clearly back on the wagon, hauling all that crappy manure back and forth.

This hobby can really register high on anyone's idiot or manure meter. Case in point. These plants they take so much time, effort and delicate positioning work. Ya'all, think a grower would be extra cautious when handling a main vine.

OK, hands up again! All those who have broken this most vital life giving artery. You know who you are. Now is that not downright dumb! "I just touched it" tisk, tisk "it happened so fast". The attrition rate so is high the poor grower is stupidly left dumbfounded.

Sadly as Forest Gump often said "Moma always told me, Stupid is as stupid does". Funny that notion can be translated today as a message from the heavens. "By their fruits ye shall know them!". Hmm, I'm asking only this. If that's true then I'd like to see God grow fruits in my patch because I don't think it's possible for a human. That my friends is the "Brass Tax...."

## TWENTY QUESTIONS FOR THE FEATURED GROWER

Pat Watson

**Occupation:** Partner in family owned fire protection company.

**Family:** Married to Karen since April 2002. Two children: Amanda (7), Ben (5)

**Town/City that you reside:** Komoka, Ontario

### 1. How many years have you been growing and what or who got you growing?

This is my 2<sup>nd</sup> year growing giant pumpkins but this is really my first full year because I didn't get started until late May last year. My first exposure to giant pumpkins was in 2008 and again in 2009 at the Bluewater Growers and Throwers weigh-off near Wallaceburg. This experience definitely got me thinking that I would love to try growing a huge pumpkin. In the winter of 2010 my father in law just happened to be curling with John Butler and he asked John if he could spare any seeds. John was happy to provide a bunch of seeds and an instruction sheet with his phone number on it. He wrote a note on the instructions stating to give him a call if the seeds don't come up, he may have extra plants. Well sure enough I drowned all the seeds he gave me and I had to call with my tail between my legs begging for backup plants. Art and John where generous enough to supply me with a very nice squash and pumpkin plant and the rest is history.

**2. What is the largest pumpkin that you've grown and on which seed did you grow it on?**

I grew 398lbs in 2010 grown from the 776 Hain (2003) seed.

**3. Do you grow any other giant vegetables besides pumpkins and if so what are they?**

I grew the squash plant last year but the vine borers got all my fruit before they reached 50lbs. I am experimenting with a few things this year but not expecting much at the weigh off.

**4. What did you plant last year and what did you plant this season?**

Last year I had one pumpkin and one squash. This year I have three pumpkin plants going: the 786 DeMars (1084 Lyons x 1330.5 Johnston/Butler), 948.5 Lyons (985 Werner x 1161 Rodonis) and the 1544.5 Revier (1385.5 Jutras x 1161 Rodonis).

**5. Is there anything you plan on doing differently in the patch this year?**

I am doing pretty much everything differently. The layout of my plants is much better than last year. My fertilizing schedule is vastly improved. My gardening space is almost double per plant. Plant maintenance and vine burying is a high priority this year.

**6. Do you have any other hobbies other than giant vegetable growing?**

I have always loved fishing. Many weekends I can be found in Long Point Bay or on Mitchell's Bay in Lake St. Clair fishing for Bass or Perch. I also love spending time at

my parents place near Wallaceburg trolling for pickerel (walleye) on the Snye River. I also love being a soccer and hockey Dad.

**7. What was your soil's PH & what % of organic matter was your patch at the start of the season? What type of soil do you have (sandy loam, clay loam, etc.) What are your Base Saturation numbers (K, Mg & Ca)?**

I have two patches in my backyard. The first is called "the compound" and this is the patch where I grew the 398 last year. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is called "the backyard" and 2011 is my first year growing in this patch. I had a separate soil test done for each area because the soil was trucked in for the compound last year. My results are as follows: The compound- PH 8.1, OM 7.8, sandy loam soil, K 9.1, Mg 13.1, Ca 77.1. The backyard- PH 8.1, OM 3.9, sandy loam soil, K 7.7, Mg 12.0, Ca 80.1

**8. Besides getting a Soil Report done, what do you think are the most important things a grower can do in the fall to prepare for the next season? How much organic material would you add to each plot?**

Load up on manure or whatever OM you have in the fall. I added 6 yards of horse manure per 1000 sq ft and mulched a lot of maple leaves with the lawn mower and spread them evenly over the patch. I believe the fall is the time to do the heavy grunt work. In the winter attend the grower's seminars and study up on the latest techniques and products available. It's crucial to be ready for the start of the growing season

considering the quality of the competition in the GVGO!

**9. What are the most important things a grower should do in the spring to prepare for the season ahead? What do you add to your soil in the spring to prepare for the season? Also, do you grow in the same plots each year or do you have another patch that you can rotate back & forth? If so, how often would you rotate from one patch to another (every 2 or 3 years or every year)?**

Spring soil amendments should be focused at resolving any problems identified in the spring soil test. For example, I added elemental sulphur and aluminum sulfate to help reduce PH. Adding nitrogen is a great idea early in the spring as well to promote early season growth. I still have not decided if I should be using heating cables yet?

**10. What date do you start your seeds, put your plants outside & what do you use for protection from weather & cold temps?**

I filed and soaked my first round of seeds on April 20 and set them out May 5. I built cold frames with 2x4's and covered them with 6 mil plastic. On warm days I propped one side of the frame up to allow air flow and still provide some good wind protection. I had 1500W heaters with thermostats going in all the houses during May and early June.

**11. Were any fertilizers used in the 1st stage of the plants life (1st true leaf stage to just before pollination) & how were they applied?**

Oh yeah....this is one of the early mistakes I made! Too much fish too soon! I burnt some of my first

plants and had to replant some backups. I applied fish via soil drench after the plants had about 4 true leaves before they were set out. I should have listened to Phil Hunt at the spring seminar and watered the fish into the planting sites really well. Oh well...another lesson I learned the hard way!

**12. Do you use Mycorrhizal Fungi on your plant's roots? If so, only on the stump area or do you use it at each leaf node as well?**

Yes, I worked in about 3 cups of Mykes Inoculant into each planting site and 2 cups per wheelbarrow load of my vine burying recipe.

**13. What fertilizers do you use after the pumpkin is pollinated? How often and at what rates? How are they applied, through the soil or as a foliar application?**

Lithovit was applied at half strength June 9 on the mature leaves before pollinating. I went to 2/3 strength on the 2<sup>nd</sup> application July 8. I plan on full strength now that I'm done pollinating starting July 18 using the foliar spray method. Fish was diluted ¼ cup to 55 gallons water and applied through a soil drench through June but I stopped just before pollinating. I added 3 tbsp of liquid Humic and Fulvic every Sunday. A Soilsoup compost tea is applied twice a week so far. After pollinating I switched to seaweed added to my 55 gal barrels applied with an overhead foliar spray/soil drench. No more fish has been applied after pollinating and fruit set.

**14. How do you water your plants (by hand, sprinkler system, underground or misting**

**system) & how much water per plant per day do you use when the pumpkin is at around 400#, 700# & 1000#? This is something that many newer growers struggle with.**

I water overhead using a garden hose connected to a submersible pump every morning before I go to work. July has been extremely dry and I am currently pumping 2 barrels (110 gal) per plant per day.

**15. How many SQ FT do you grow your plants? Do you bury all the main & secondary vines & at what lengths do you terminate the Main & Secondary vines? Do you allow all the secondary vines to grow or do you trim every second or third vine to allow for better airflow around the plant? What vine pattern do you prefer best?**

In the backyard my 2 patches are 720 sq ft each. The compound is 760 sq ft. I bury the leaf nodes on the main vine and 100% of the secondary vines. My mains can run 25-35 sq ft but I might try to keep one running all summer based on the presentation by Joe Ailts at Niagara in March. I have allowed all the secondaries to grow so far but I'm starting to think I might trim out a few. I am finding it difficult to move around in the patches.

**16. Tell us what you use as a pesticide and fungicide during the season?**

Matador and Bravo 500. We are also trying some organic recipes I found in a book my Mom has. I would like to move away from the chemical stuff but this year I need some insurance beyond the organic stuff!

**17. Do you use a mulch at all to help suppress the weeds or do**

**you weed the old fashion way, by hand & hoe? Any tips on weed control?**

No I don't use mulch. I get down and dirty way too often. No more horse manure for a while...too many weeds. I think I'll try cow manure or mushroom compost next year.

**18. Could you give us some late season (month of September) advice to help our growers get the maximum growth from our pumpkins?**

Sorry, I am definitely not qualified to advise growers in this area considering my 398 stopped growing in early August last year. I do think though that closing in the patch and staying warmer longer is key to late season growth.

**19. What were the 2 most important factors that help you grow monster pumpkins each year?**

The love for the hobby and the mentors I have through the GVGO and BWG&T.

**20. Is there any one piece of advice you would give to new growers?**

Make sure the beer fridge is stocked, it's a long season. Cheers!



# PRIZE STRUCTURE

Registration is \$30 per grower no matter how many classes entered!

Saturday Weigh-Off... Saturday October 1, 2011

Category	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th
<b>Heaviest Pumpkin</b>	\$5,000	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$500	\$300	\$250	\$200	\$175	\$150	\$125	\$100	\$75	\$50	\$40	\$30
<b>2 Bonus draws for \$1000 for the 1000+ lb pumpkins/squash weighed in!</b>															
<b>Heaviest Squash</b> <small>100% green, grey, blue and/or combination. Stripes allowed, no blotches. All others will be deemed a pumpkin</small>	\$2,000	\$500	\$400	\$250	\$200										
<b>Heaviest Watermelon</b>	\$500	\$300	\$250	\$200	\$150										
<b>Heaviest Cabbage</b>	\$300	\$175	\$100	\$75	\$50	<b>2011 Feature Vegetable!!</b>									
<b>Longest Gourd</b>	\$200	\$100	\$75	\$50	\$25										
<b>Heaviest Tomato</b>	\$100	\$75	\$50												
<b>Tallest Sunflower</b>	\$100	\$75	\$50												
<b>Tallest Cornstalk</b>	\$100	\$75	\$50												
<b>Other Heaviest*</b>	\$100														
<b>Other Longest</b>	\$100														
<b>Howard Dill Award</b>	\$100														
<b>Closest to Hidden Weight (Pumpkin)</b>	Niagara convention 2012 registration and 2 nights accommodation for 2!														

Check out Sunday 's Weigh Off as well... Now Open to All Growers!!!



Additional \$500 for any New World Record Vegetable!  
 (not including other heaviest or other longest)  
 Prize to be paid after the completion of all 2011 weigh-offs and it is determined that this entry is the official standing World Record

\* Other Heaviest category will include field pumpkins. It is important to remember that the other heaviest and other longest categories are awarded by the judges' discretion and the most spectacular entry will be awarded first prize, which will not necessarily be the longest or the heaviest.

# PRIZE STRUCTURE

Sunday Weigh-Off... Sunday October 2, 2011

Category	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<b>Heaviest Pumpkin</b>	1000*	\$500	\$300	\$200	\$100
*First Place Pumpkin will also receive a Niagara convention 2012 registration package and 2 nights accommodation for 2!					
<b>Heaviest Squash</b> <small>100% green, grey, blue and/or combination. Stripes allowed, no blotches. All others will be deemed a pumpkin.</small>	\$250	\$150	\$100		
<b>Heaviest Watermelon</b>	\$250	\$150	\$100		
<b>Heaviest Cabbage</b>	\$225	\$100	\$85		
<b>2011 Feature Vegetable!!</b>					
<b>Longest Gourd</b>	\$125	\$75	\$50		
<b>Tallest Sunflower</b>	\$100	\$50	\$35		
<b>Heaviest Tomato</b>	\$100	\$50	\$35		
<b>Tallest Cornstalk</b>	\$100	\$50	\$35		
<b>Biggest Sunflower Face</b>	\$100	\$50	\$35		
<b>Most Unusual/ Weirdest Vegetable</b>	\$100	\$50	\$35		
<b>Other Heaviest*</b>	\$100				
<b>Howard Dill Award</b>	\$100				



Registration is \$30 per grower no matter how many classes entered!



Rules available on  
[www.pumpkinfest.org](http://www.pumpkinfest.org)

ONLY ON SUNDAY!

<b>Closest to Hidden Weight (Pumpkin)</b>	TBA
<b>Novice Grower Bonus*</b>	\$500
<b>Fred Wuerth Memorial Tri-County Growers Award**</b>	\$500

\* Awarded to the Novice Grower (under 3 years growing experience) with the largest pumpkin.

\*\* Awarded to the grower from the Tri-County Area (Bruce/Grey/Huron) with the largest pumpkin.

Additional \$500 for any New World Record Vegetable!  
(Biggest Sunflower Face, Most Unusual/Weirdest Vegetable and Other Heaviest not included)  
Prize to be paid after the completion of all 2011 weigh-offs and it is determined that this entry is the official standing World Record

\* Other Heaviest category will include field pumpkins. It is important to remember that the other heaviest and other longest categories are awarded by the Judges' discretion and the most spectacular entry will be awarded first prize, which will not necessarily be the longest or the heaviest.

Port Elgin Pumpkinfest 559 Goderich Street, Port Elgin, ON. N0H 2C4 [www.pumpkinfest.org](http://www.pumpkinfest.org) 1-800-387-3456 Fax: 519-389-3725 This prize structure is subject to change. Visit [www.pumpkinfest.org](http://www.pumpkinfest.org) for rules & regulations. All monies are in Canadian Funds

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2nd. 500

3rd. 300

4th. 200

5th. 100

6th thru 15th 50

Hidden weight 300 to over 3rd place only

### Squash True Green

1st. 500

2nd 300

3rd. 100

### Tomatoes

1st 100

2nd 75

3rd. 50

### Watermelon

1st 150

2nd 100

3rd. 50

### Field Pumpkins

1st. 150

2nd 100

3rd. 50

### Long Gourds

1st 150

2nd 100

3rd. 50

## 2011 GVGO Summer patch Tour Directions

Date: August the 6<sup>th</sup> Starting at 8:30

1) Chris Delaney  
1916 Glengrove Rd  
Pickering, ON  
L1V 1W9

Directions to 2) Phil Joynson  
Starting from Glengrove Rd

- 1 Head **north** on **Glengrove Rd** toward **Glenview Rd**
  - 2 Turn **left** onto **Glenview Rd**
  - 3 Turn **right** onto **Fieldlight Blvd**
  - 4 Turn **left** onto **Valley Farm Rd**
  - 5 Turn **right** onto **Concession Road 3**
  - 6 Take the 1st **left** onto **Brock Rd/Regional Road 1**
  - 7 Turn **right** onto **ON-7 E**
  - 8 Turn **left** to stay on **ON-7 E**
  - 9 Continue onto **Winchester Rd E/Regional Road 3**  
Continue to follow Winchester Rd E
  - 10 **Winchester Rd E** ends and becomes **Concession Road 7**
  - 11 Turn **left** onto **Old Scugog Rd**
  - 12 Take the 1st **right** onto **Potters Ln**
- Arriving at Potters Ln  
Total: **41.2 km** - abo

) Phil Joynson  
23 Potters Ln  
Enniskillen, ON  
L0B 1J0

Directions to 3) Bryan Mailey  
Starting from Potters Ln

- 1 Head **northeast** on **Potters Ln** toward **Regional Road 3**
  - 2 Turn **right** onto **Regional Road 3**
  - 3 Take the 1st **left** onto **Regional Road 57**
  - 4 Turn **left** onto **ON-7A W**
  - 5 Turn **left** to stay on **ON-7A W** (signs for **Ontario 7 Alternate W**)
  - 6 Continue onto **Regional Road 21**
  - 7 Turn **right** onto **Lake Ridge Rd/Regional Road 23** (signs for **Lake Ridge Road/Uxbridge**)
  - 8 Turn **left** onto **Regional Road 13** (signs for **Durham Road/Leaskdale**)
  - 9 Turn **right** onto **Concession Road 7/Regional Road 1**
- Arriving at Concession Road 7/Regional Road 1

Total: **61.6 km** - about  
3) Bryan Mailey  
14949 Concession Road 7  
Uxbridge, ON  
L9P 1R2

Directions to 4) Phil & Jane Hunt

Starting from Concession Road 7/Regional Road 1

1 Head **north** on **Concession Road 7/Regional Road 1** toward **Ravenshoe Rd/Regional Road 32**

2 Take the 1st **right** onto **Ravenshoe Rd/Regional Road 32**

3 Turn **right** onto **Lake Ridge Rd/Regional Road 23** (signs for **Lake Ridge Road**)

Continue to follow Lake Ridge Rd

4 Continue onto **Concession Road 7**

5 Turn **left** onto **ON-12 N/ON-7 E**

6 Take the 1st **right** onto **Trans-Canada Hwy/ON-7 E** (signs for **Lindsay**)

7 Turn **left** onto **Elm Tree Rd/County Road 18** (signs for **Elm Tree Road/Cambray**)

8 Turn **right** onto **Cambray Rd/County Road 9**

9 Turn **left** onto **ON-35 N**

Arriving at ON-35 N

Total: **50.3 km** - about **1 ho**

4) Phil & Jane Hunt

4376 Hwy 35

Cameron, ON

K0M 1G0



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