Giant Vegetable Growers of Ontario

OVER THE TOP

Spring 2016

www.gvgo.ca 4376 Hwy 35N Cameron Ontario K0M 1G0

President's Message

By Phil Joynson

Another growing season will soon be upon us and every grower will be starting with a clean slate.

Hopefully everyone has **recharged** his/her **batteries** over the winter and had time to reflect upon the last growing season. What worked for me? What didn't? Why did this happen and how can I avoid making the same mistake? One pound of knowledge/wisdom is worth 100 pounds of the latest miracle product. BTW I hope Santa brought you at least a few growing products or garden toys.

The long range forecast for Ontario is for a **hotter than usual summer**. Now is the time for planning for this. Shade cloth, misters, irrigation systems and available topical stress relief products should be procured now rather than after the fact. One of the keys for growing massive fruits is to provide stress free environments.

A few things we need to talk about at this time are the annual **GVGO Spring Seminar**. The seminar will be in Solina again this year as we try to do a two year about location. This will be held on the **9th of April** at the local community centre. We once again will be trotting out a full program of awards, knowledge based talks and forums, club business and new contests. Lunch will be provided as usual and there will be time allotted for growers to pick up their growing supplies that they ordered ahead of time. (Please take note of the products available on the club website). We also have to discuss this year's patch tour and hopefully fill a few holes we have in the GVGO executive.

One amazing new contest that will be officially revealed is the **GVGO 1-Ton Challenge**. This contest awards up to $5500 to the GVGO Canadian member who gets a 2000 lbs. pumpkin to the scales. This is a Canada wide contest. This contest will run every year until we finally break that 2000 lbs, barrier in this country. We will discuss this contest at length during the seminar as to rules, the how and why and the benefits to the club.

At the time of me writing this (February the 24th) all the GVGO members who have paid their 2016 membership dues, have had their GVGO **seed package** sent to them. Let me know if you didn't get yours as gremlins sometimes snatch these things up in the mail. Please give the mail a few weeks to do their jobs. You have to expect a few packages to get pulled aside for inspection once in a while. Thanks go out to the GVGO growers that sent in their seeds and to the seed crew who put the packages together.

I hope to see you guys at the seminar in April!

Phil Joynson

Growing Tip:

If you don't have the money for expensive growing supplies, go for the Howard Dill Award!

GVGO SEMINAR

The GVGO annual seminar will be held on **Saturday April 9th** in Solina, Ontario.

Location: **Solina Community Hall**

Solina is about 17 km North West of Bowmanville's Waverly Rd Hwy#401 exit, just off of Hwy 57 on Concession 6. Travel 3.1 km west and the hall is on the North side. The address is 1964. If your GPS does not recognize Solina, try Clarington.

The seminar starts at **9:00 am** sharp but try and get there early to help set things up and pick up growing supplies.

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OVER THE TOP 10

By Phil Joynson

EXPECTED PUMPKIN NAMES FOR 2016

Every year the media publishes the top 10 most popular baby names for girls and boys for the last year. I know many of you folks are guilty of naming your pumpkins, (Come on… admit it.) I get asked this question at weigh offs all the time by the general public. Like baby names you can expect to see some old favorites as well as more trendy names assigned to our fruits. Here's my prognostication as to what the most popular names will be.

10. Mucho Grande
9. Big Mac
8. The Big Lebowski
7. Not-so-skinny Minnie
6. Fat Bastard
5. Large Marge
4. Big Bertha
3. Whatever your Mother-In-Law's name is.
2. Gourd (Gourdzilla)
1. Donald Trump (if bright orange)

The GVGO board is looking for new executives. If you think you have something to offer, please contact us.

If you don't think you have anything to offer, contact us and we will find something.

A lot of the work is done in the off-season, so give it a shot.

GVGO News

Seeing that the one-ton mark has been surpassed in Europe and the US, it's now time to see who can be the 1st person to break the 2,000 pound mark here in Canada.

The GVGO's Great Canadian ONE-TON CHALLENGE

☑ Open to all Canadians across this great country.

☑ 2016 Canadian GVGO membership is required.

☑ Pumpkin must be weighed at a Canadian official GPC sanctioned weigh off.

☑ Prize will be $5,000 for the 1st person or in case there are 2 weighed in over 2,000# in 2016, then the largest of the 2 will win the money.

☑ $500 extra prize money if grown off a Canadian seed.

☑ If no Canadians grow a 2,000# pumpkin in 2016, then there will be another $500 added to the prize each year until it's won.

☑ Winner must donate a percentage of the seeds to the GVGO and make the winning pumpkin (or pictures/videos) available to the GVGO for promotional purposes.

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN THE GVGO'S GREAT CANADIAN 1-TON CHALLENGE?

Visit gvgo.ca for all the details.

The Largest Increase Over Your Previous Personal Best Contest

The new contest added that will run hand in hand with the 1-Ton Challenge. The **Largest Increase Over Your Previous PB Contest** will run each year until the 1st 2,000# pumpkin is weighed it. It is for all current Canadian growers & the rules are pretty simple. This could turn into a yearly contest if our members like it.

a. You must be a **Canadian GVGO member in 2016 to qualify**. It doesn't matter if you were a GVGO member in 2015, as long you're a member in 2016.

b. Prize for the largest increase over your previous PB will win **$800.** It will increase to **$1,000 if it's grown off a GVGO seed**.

c. Grower will donate a percentage of their seeds (depending on seed count) to the GVGO.

d. **IMPORTANT!!!** Winner must CONTACT US to prove their win by providing details of where & when you grew your previous PB. **We will not search for the winner, you must contact us.**

e. Both the previous PB & the new PB Pumpkins must both be weighed at reputable sites & adhere to GPC rules.

f. Jane & Phil Hunt will not qualify for the 1-Ton challenge & this contest as they are the Challenge Coordinators.

g. Winner of the 1-Ton Challenge cannot qualify for this PB contest.

h. Deadline for joining the GVGO will be June 1st, 2016.

The GVGO Board

1-Ton Challenge

We really want to give out that $5000 this year and will do everything we can to make it happen. We've asked the Canadian 2015 pumpkin and squash champion **Todd Kline** to share his growing tips. But first a list of the top 10 Canadian pumpkins.

Weight	Grower	Year	Province
1818	Bryson	2011	QC
1813	Northrup	2013	NB
1811	Graham	2012	NS
1753	Bryson	2012	QC
1733	Kline	2015	QC
1727	Ansems	2012	NS
1684	Delaney	2012	ON
1683	Warner	2015	ON
1678	Hunt	2009	ON
1675	Timm	2014	ON

The competition is open to all GVGO members across the country. Unfortunately not all of the growers in the above list still grow, but there are a few growers in there that certainly have a chance. But as we have seen before, unheard of growers sometimes come out of nowhere, so the odds are even.

Interview Todd Kline

How many plants do you grow and what size are they?

This season I started with 10 pumpkins and 4 squash, along with a couple watermelons, field pumpkins, tomatoes, and long gourds. Plant size is around 900 square feet, some a little bigger and some a little smaller depending on their growing tendencies. As the season progresses I will cull plants pretty quickly if they develop serious problems or are not vigorous in growth. At seasons end I was down to two pumpkins and two squash.

When do you start your plants, set them out, and try to get them pollinated by?

Depending on weather conditions in the spring, I usually start on April 25-26 with several more started every few days until early May. I usually have more than 25 started and many are given out to other growers in the area. The early pollinations are usually started the third week of June, but factors like plant size and fruit location on the main come into play. Some years the early ones do better, other years the July ones do better. It really comes down to our spring weather.

During pollination time I use a variation I made of the "Jarvis Enviro Shield". This is made with 5 gallon pails cut lengthwise with 1"x1" legs. Two legs are fixed and two can pivot which helps with uneven surfaces. Foil is put over the top to reflect heat which can be a problem especially with squash. It keeps the hot day sun off the fruit and allows for air circulation. After 8 - 10 days I remove them and they will then be used to cover main vine tips. After that they are used as stump covers. Thanks to Joel for the great idea!

What kind of fall preparation do you do to your soil?

Fall usually comes early here. The average frost date is around mid-September. I am located about 100 kilometres northwest of

Ottawa. My main focus is on getting the patch cleaned up and tilled. If weather permits I'll put in fall rye/vetch. It's hard to get manure in the fall as the truckers are either too busy or hunting.

What kind of fertilizer do you use (before hand and during growth)? And how much approximately? Do you add any to each leaf node? Humic acid, mycorrhizae, amino acid, or any other such stuff?

I try to grow as organically as possible. No chemical fertilizers. It's a large patch, about 15,000 square feet in total. In the spring I broadcast a combination of coarse calcitic limestone, dolomite, and gypsum. Also kelp, alfalfa pellets, humic and crushed oyster shell. I make up a large barrel of dry ingredients to be used for vine burying amendments. It is equal parts gypsum, kelp, oyster shell, and humic. That is then added to a growing medium (pro mix or falfards) and other amendments are added. Several types of myco are added, I use them all, Hollands, Mykes, WOW, and Mark's Root Keeper. It ends up being 4 to 5 pounds per plant. All of this is then watered in with bud syrup, seaweed, fish, compost tea, root shield, liquid myco, and some liquid humic. Organic bloom fertilizer from Nature's Pride is also thrown in. A light covering of well- aged manure (this year was Jersey cow manure) along with homemade compost is added in spring.

The stump areas are pre-watered with a garlic juice mix that I make up. This is to help repel early season corn maggots. I think the smell throws them off and away from the plant. Of course I don't know that for sure but so far so good.

Products used for mildew and fighting disease problems were Rootshield, Companion, Actinovate, Recover Rx, and milk.

There are some great products becoming available to growers and I love trying many of them out. I lean towards trying a little of everything as opposed to a lot of anything. The new product that really impressed me the most this year was the Wallace WOW compost tea. I used it regularly 5 to 7 days all season long. I tweaked it with maple bud syrup, seaweed, and a few other goodies previously mentioned.

Can you tell us something about watering?

We live on a small but deep spring-fed lake teaming with speckled trout. Water is pumped to the patch from there. Watering and foliar feeding is done with two overhead sprinklers which I move around the patch. Mixes of compost tea and other liquid amendments are added through a syphon in a 5 gallon bucket. Early season I walk around with a hose with applicator for feeding.

Do you use early and/or late season protection for your plants? Wind/sun screens?

My patch is surrounded on three sides by various types of evergreen trees. This helps create a small micro-climate with a little less wind and warmer temperatures. The soil has become a dark sandy loam and the sun warms it up quickly.

Early plantings of buckwheat planted around the plants helps with wind and choking out weeds. The greens are scythed and added to the compost pile. The stubble is worked into the soil.

Anything you might do differently than other growers?

The stumps and vines are laid out and grown on elevated mounds. I build up instead of trenching. The main ends up sitting on a train track bed-shaped mound, about 6 to 8 inches above grade. Most of the tendrils are buried to pin down the vines and the tips of the vines are pinned with sticks. The dry mix is added ahead of the vines. There are some disease issues especially fusarium based in my soil. Keeping the vines above ground helps with warding off infection and also allows me to see and spray problem spots early on. Hydrogen peroxide is sprayed quite often here. Having the elevated area provides a nice bed of soft soil for fast rooting. It also helps with stem stress issues that can develop as the fruit grows.

Once the season has progressed to the point where I've decided on the keepers or hopefuls, I will very carefully start walking in the tripod to the fruits. This is usually early September and the nights are getting colder. I lift the fruit up just enough to get a pallet under it. I also weigh it while still attached to the vine using bungee cords and myself to counterbalance it. Posts are driven into the ground around the fruit to prevent any turning. This is a dangerous procedure so I gotta say right here, if anyone tries this and has a disaster - I don't want to hear about it!

The bottom of the fruit is checked out for any bad surprises. This really helps prevent those "heartbreakers" that sometimes occur when lifting the fruit for a contest. A small hole or split, or rot is better found earlier on. This also gives more time to get through the mourning process. That process seems to get shorter as the seasons roll on. Compost the dead and move on! The fruit is then lowered on the pallet and will finish the season on it. It is measured at this time also. A heater/fan blows air underneath through the pallet. The bottom of the fruit stays nice and dry and comfortably warm. The sides of the tarp roof structure are closed in with sheets. Lots of comforters/blankets are used as needed. The sheets can be raised and lowered easily to allow the sun in during the nicer days.

A couple of the best plants are covered with remay. 4 foot long posts are driven in and around the plants to keep it elevated over the leaves. It'll help until below -2°C usually.

Doing the early weighing and measuring will give me a good idea on late season weight gains compared to OTT inches. The fruit is not weighed again until at the contest. Seeing the variances of pounds per inch in late season gains of different fruit can be exciting when hitting the scales.

Thanks so much for your time. We really appreciate it.

Well I appreciate you wanting to know about what goes on here. I invite anyone wanting to come for a visit by all means contact me and I'd be happy to show you around. Good luck to everyone this season!

Congratulations to Jeff Ried, the new GPC coordinator for Eastern Canada.

If you haven't renewed your membership, you really should. Check out our website gvgo.ca for more information.

Ben Veitch is one of the new generation of Ontario growers.

Lie of the week: It's not about winning, it's about taking part.

It just isn't fair!

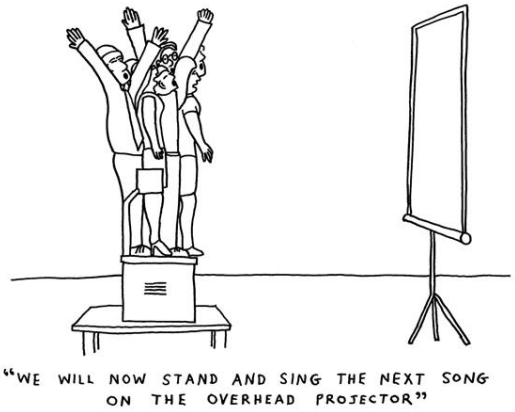
By Bradley Wursten

Some growers want a special category for people with a greenhouse, others want categories per climate type. What they really should be wanting is a category that excludes people with autism, because, like it or not, they seem to do a lot better than most "normal" people.

I won't bother giving you a detailed description of what autism is. Basically the brains of somebody with autism work differently. This especially effects language. Generally speaking people with autism cannot talk at all, cannot stop talking or talk very formally and intellectually. Because the language part of their brains are distorted, they usually think in images rather than words. This means they can think enormously quick and detailed. Usually they are also creative, think out of the box, are rational rather than emotional, need a clear structure and are a pain in the butt to get along with for "normal" people.

There are several types of autism and that goes along with various levels of intelligence. My adopted son is a so-called classic autist and has a non-testable intelligence seeing as he ate the test and ran away. On the other hand of the spectrum are those with Asperger. They can be so smart and think so differently that IQ-tests are unreliable.

Because Asperger has only been diagnosed in the past few decades, many older people don't know they have it. But if you do, you recognize it in other people, including other growers. There are many characteristics which together give the indication of Asperger, but all suffer from poor communication skills. Generally speaking people with Asperger (called *Aspies*) are honest, straight-to-the-point, factual, take things literally and lack empathy. And "normal" people don't like that. I bet everybody has come across them on the GVGO and BigPumpkin message boards. They seem arrogant, but that is an emotion they don't have (see tips in the next column).



Autists take things literally.

In the patch, Aspies have an enormous advantage. Because they work in images, they have an enormous eye for details and see the smallest changes. Their creativity helps them think of new ways of growing, create new types of structures, develop new pruning, watering and fertilization techniques.

Others spend much time keeping track of genetics and their history, giving them the possibility of picking the perfect seed. Thinking out of the box means they don't follow trends but set them. They do things others don't. They experiment and spread their chances. Thanks to them, record books are kept accurate. They have analytical minds and can figure out why something works or doesn't. They don't grow using their emotions, but with facts. When others stop, they continue because they tend to get obsessive.

Many of them grow for the sole purpose of growing a world record. If they can't grow one in their climate, they probably won't grow at all. If they have grown a world record, some of

them stop that category permanently or till it gets beaten. Aspies are often great organizers and have started many a weigh-off or club. Within a few years it will usually end in disharmony because the Aspie will disagree with the route taken by new board members. Generally speaking Aspies cannot understand why "normal" people can be so stupid. It is hard to explain that "normal" people don't have the capabilities of seeing, hearing, understanding or analysing things they do. In real life this leads to an extremely high rate of suicide. In the giant world it has led to some quitting completely.

I won't mention any names, but I can think of a number of (past) growers, let's say 4, here in Europe and North America that probably or certainly have Asperger. Together they have compiled about 30 world records, often the major and hard to break categories. So, let's ban them from growing. It just isn't fair!

PS. For people with autism, the last two sentences are what we call sarcasm. We say it like that, but we mean the opposite, namely, please keep on growing.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH AUTISTS…

…ON MESSAGE BOARDS

Autists easily feel attacked by people disagreeing with them. Before you respond, consider the fact that the person possibly knows (a lot) more than you (not always!). If you think you know more, ask it in question form, or consider not replying at all!

Don't feel attacked yourself. Autists write in a confronting, black-and-white style and cannot comprehend what effect it has on the receiver.

Be clear when you want to stop the discussion. Autists have few boundaries and will continue a discussion until they win or die, whichever is last.

Be thankful we have autists. Otherwise "no" computers (Bill Gates), science (Newton, Einstein, Edison), music (Mozart, Bach, Gould), art (van Gogh, Michelangelo), and some articles in this OTT (no names…).

Crossword Puzzle

Words go in all directions. The solution is the ten remaining letters. Sorry if your name or weigh-off isn't in it, or if it is and you'd rather it wasn't. In that case I meant somebody else with the same name.

E	F	V	R	A	N	I	M	E	S	Q	U	A	S	H
T	K	A	R	E	C	O	R	D	N	H	O	J	S	U
E	I	E	I	E	Y	R	A	N	I	D	E	N	N	N
N	R	M	Z	R	H	A	F	O	K	P	I	S	O	T
I	A	I	M	G	P	N	F	T	P	O	G	L	Y	T
K	R	T	N	B	O	G	L	A	M	R	E	L	L	E
P	E	T	H	O	R	E	E	E	U	T	F	A	A	K
M	I	N	S	A	T	J	W	B	P	E	T	F	R	C
U	E	O	A	T	N	A	E	E	G	L	N	A	E	A
P	M	I	C	B	H	C	M	S	I	G	A	R	N	J
D	A	T	K	T	A	K	A	O	B	I	I	A	N	N
L	R	C	R	L	S	E	L	N	T	N	G	G	I	E
E	R	U	L	A	I	T	E	C	A	L	L	A	W	E
I	O	A	T	T	O	N	S	E	E	D	S	I	E	R
F	W	A	T	E	R	M	E	L	O	N	A	N	S	G

AUCTION	JEFF	SEEDS
BES	JOHN	SEMINAR
BIG PUMPKINS	KLINE	SQUASH
BOAT	LYONS	TASK
CANADA	MARROW	THAW
CASH	MEIER	TIMM
DILL	NATHAN	TOMATO
EATON	NIAGARA FALLS	TON (2X)
ERIN	ORANGE JACKET	TROPHY
FAIR	OTT	WALLACE
FIELD PUMPKIN	PORT ELGIN	WALLACEBURG
FOURTH	PRIZE	WATERMELON
GIANT	RAFFLE	WINNER
GREEN JACKET	RAIN	ZEKE
HUNT	RECORD	

Solution: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A Canadian invention: the giant pumpkin boat

Scientific Report

By Matthew DeBacco

Anthesis [an-**thee**-sis] **2015 Growing Season Review**

Through scientific literature research, I am trying to push the limits of giant pumpkin growing, and I am fortunate to have support from the community that are willing to try my ideas and also share their findings. Thanks to all who provided replies. Below is the data summary of my Anthesis for the 2015 growing season.

What I have developed from reading many scientific papers is a spray called "Anthesis" that, when applied 48 hrs. post-pollination, should help increase the rate and duration of cell division. Normally, cell division slows around day 20, meaning the total number of cells in a pumpkin around day 20 and at harvest would be the same. The goal of Anthesis is to add more cells, which should increase the final potential weight.

Initially, many growers complained that the Anthesis-applied pumpkins were slow growers during the first 20 days, which actually indicated the spray was working. The slower initial growth is potentially a result of the increase in time the pumpkin spends on cell division, which delays cell expansion that is associated with growth. Based on the data collected, for the first 35 days, Anthesis-treated pumpkins will be smaller than untreated (control) pumpkins. Around day 40, the estimated weights will be very similar, and then after day 45, the Anthesis-treated pumpkins outpace the growth of the untreated controls for the rest of the season (Fig. 1 + 2). The supporting science suggests an increase in the duration and frequency in cell division early on that can delay fruit expansion. Later in the season, the potentially greater cell number can be the reason for the continued growth that is more the result of cell expansion. Many growers reported growth of some kind right up to the weigh off, which they had never seen in the past. This could have helped growers obtain the numerous new personal best weights, as well as top weight for growers during the 2015 season. This data supports the intention of Anthesis, and it shows that all of the time spent researching and selecting the hormone types, ratios, concentrations, and timing came out as expected.

What separates Anthesis from other products is the highest grade of ingredients that are used and, as a result, there are special storage instructions and a limited shelf life. Many growers that did not report any effect did not follow all the directions. I cannot stress enough that the instructions must be followed *exactly*. Anthesis works on the internal cellular signal level and, as a result, there are some very specific directions to get the maximum effectiveness. My directions are easy to follow, and simply reading (and rereading) the instructions should ensure the proper steps are carried out by those using the product.

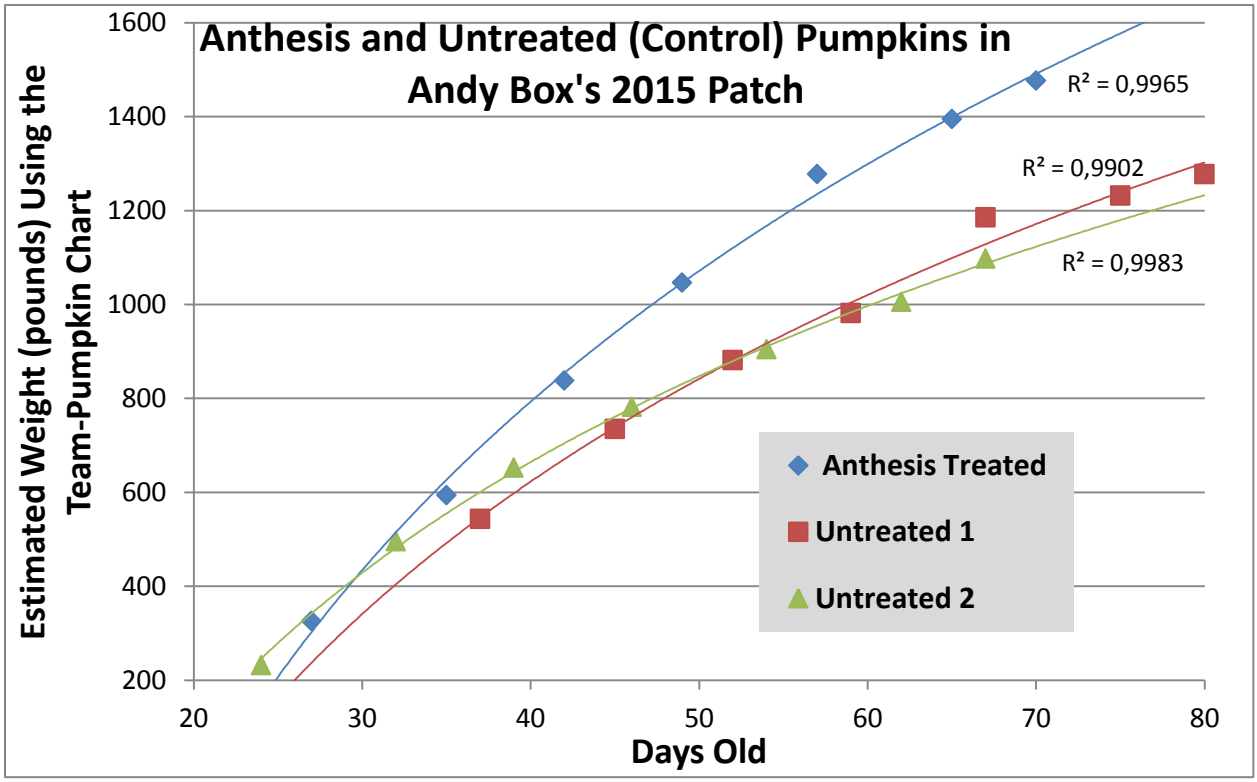


Figure 1: This graph uses the Team-Pumpkin estimated weights and compares one Anthesis-treated pumpkin to two untreated (control) pumpkins that were all grown by Andy Box with permission to share the results from his 2015 growing season. It is clearly evident that the Anthesis-treated pumpkin was of comparable size up to the critical day 35. After this time, the Anthesis-treated pumpkin had an increased growth rate that was sustained for the remainder of the season, resulting in his top producing pumpkin for the year. Both of the untreated control pumpkins have a very similar growth curve for the season and ended up within 4.9% of each other, while the Anthesis-treated is noticeably greater past day 40 and finished 13.0% greater than the average of the untreated pumpkins. This demonstrates the difference that an Anthesis treatment can make, and the graph supports the grower's comments that the Anthesis-treated pumpkin continued to grow while the other fruits decreased in growth rate. Trend lines use the Logarithmic Regression with R^2 values provided.

"I will say the Anthesis-applied pumpkin was still growing, where the other fruits slowed way down."
-Andy Box-

Will Anthesis-treated pumpkins favour going heavy? (Does enhanced cell division influence wall thickness?)

While many growers thought increasing cell division would increase the odds for their pumpkins to go heavy, this was not the design of my product. Increasing cell division is part of density, but this product does also increase volume proportionally. What this translates to is more mass, but also more volume, so the density (which is defined as mass divided by volume) essentially does not change. I designed Anthesis to provide more cells and a longer duration of pumpkin growth with the added benefit of a ripening delay. In the end, more overall mass is what we are all looking for, and the percent over chart is nice but not going to be the "winner" in the long run. The slogan I developed is… **More Cells, More Weight, More Wins!**

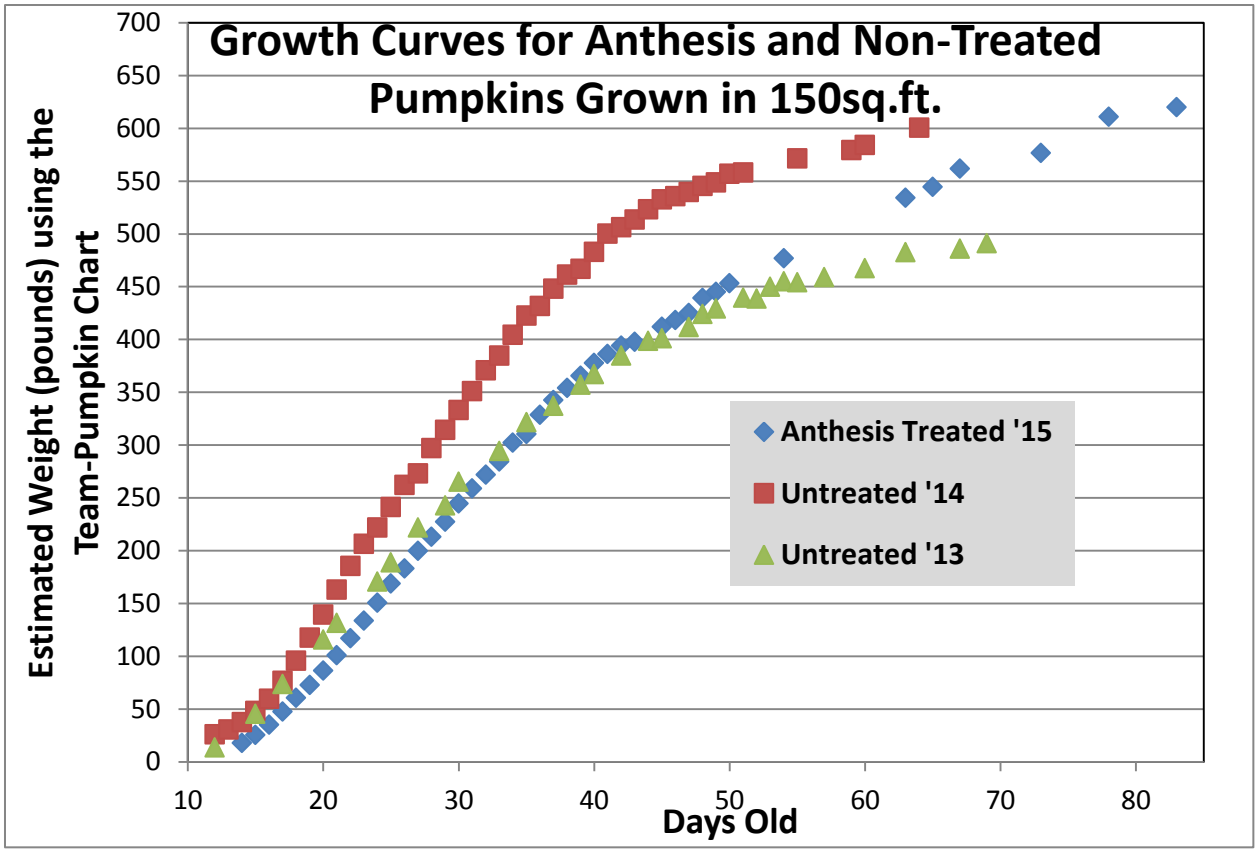


Figure 2: Growth curves for Anthesis-treated and untreated (control) pumpkins grown in the same 150 sq.ft. location by Bart Toftness during three different years with almost daily measurements taken. The Team-Pumpkin chart was used to generate the estimated weights plotted. The growth curve shows that the Anthesis-treated pumpkin (diamond shape) was smaller up to day 37 than the untreated ones, suggesting a delay in cell expansion. After this time, the growth rate is accelerated and continues for an extended period of time leading to an improvement in late season growth that increases final size of the pumpkin. Looking at the day 60 and beyond, there is a continual upward trend of growth with no indication of a plateau. Even though the Anthesis-treated pumpkin is the oldest, the delay in harvest was grower's choice, as it was still showing positive gains and was allowed to remain on the vine until a later weigh-off. The Anthesis-applied pumpkin grew the biggest pumpkin out of this space, even though, up to day 30, it was the smallest.

Anthesis 2015 Harvest Data Summary	
Top 10 Average for Anthesis Treated Pumpkins	**1819.85 lbs.**
Top 20 Average for Anthesis Treated Pumpkins	**1643.25 lbs.**
Total Number of Personal Best for growers using Anthesis	**8**
Total Number of Top 2015 pumpkins using Anthesis (not counting personal bests)	**6**
Pumpkins over 2,000 pounds	**2**
Pumpkins 1,900-2,000 pounds	**2**
Tomatoes grown over 5 pounds	**4**

Table 1: The overall success growers had during the 2015 season while having Anthesis as part of their program. This was the first year Anthesis was publically available to a wide variety of growers, and truly indicates the potential of this product.

These are just some of the examples that show the possible effectiveness of Anthesis (Table 1). I do plan on having Anthesis available for the 2016 growing season, but I will only be taking advanced orders due to the labor to prepare the samples. Watch for my advertisement on the homepage of bigpumpkins.com during the month of January. Also, the components have a shelf-life (about 4 months), so I have to wait until the early spring (mid-April) to ship them out to ensure everyone is getting a product of maximum effectiveness when they need it. Orders will only be accepted until March 15th, 2016. I do my best to offer this at a low cost with each application of both components costing the same as last year at only $6 plus shipping.

For those seeking more information:

Matthew DeBacco: **DeBacco@cox.net**

General Directions: **http://tinyurl.com/ox9sp2y**
The Science Behind Anthesis: **http://tinyurl.com/kgf78e6**

"The Anthesis-treated pumpkins that I had going grew better than anything I ever had"
-Allen Bradly-

Anthesis is targeting a physiological process that is basically going through a natural sequence that is minimally affected by temperature. It is based on the natural signals released by the seeds shortly after pollination. Anthesis essentially extends the "go" signal from the seeds that stage the growth and development process of the pumpkin.

Also, while temperature may affect the rate at which pollen and the corresponding pollen tube forms this impact is minimal. If the temperature is too far out of the needed range for a successful pollination the pumpkin will simply not take and Anthesis will have no signal to up-regulate. Many times only 48-hours after pollination you will not be able to tell if the pollination has taken yet, but if it aborts temperature could be a contributing factor.

Analytical Report

How does Ontario fare compared to other successful regions in the world? In 2015 we had just as many pumpkin entries as California, although we have 10 more growers. Ohio and Wisconsin have less inhabitants, but more growers and much higher weights. Beni Meier of Switzerland personally has a higher all-time top 10 than Ontario. It took him 6 years to end as 10th most successful "region".

Region	Population	Growers	Entries	2015 Top 10	All-time Top 10
Ontario	13,500,000	71	103	1398	1586
Ohio	11,500,000	87	117	1609	1868
California	39,000,000	61	102	1656	1959
Wisconsin	5,800,000	94	159	1919	1952
Switzerland	8,000,000	10	12	1083	1718

Featured Giant Vegetable

TALL CORN

First of all, corn is not a vegetable and secondly, corn isn't really the right name. To start with the latter, *corn* comes from the German word *Korn*, which means grain. The Saxons took the word to Britain where it still retains that meaning. When the British came to North America they decided to call this newly found food given to them by the indigenous people, corn.

The correct name is *maize*. The word *maize* originates from the now extinct Caribbean language *Taíno*, where they called corn *mahiz*. The Spanish changed it to *maíz* and it now exists in several languages as *maize* (British), *maïs* (French, German, Dutch) *mays* (Latin) and *majs* (Swedish).

To make matters more complicated, we North Americans called what was really *Korn*, grain, which is derived from the French word meaning *seed*. And our word *seed* comes from the German word *Saat*. So to keep everything straight, we will refer to the corn as we know it as maize, though popcorn remains popcorn.

And then onto what maize is. Simply put, it is basically a tropical grass. It belongs to the *Zea* genus, which in turn belongs to the *Andropogoneae* tribe, also known as the sorghum tribe. While most species of *Zea* are near extinction, *Zea mays* is one of the world's most planted crops.

To save you all the Latin names, there are basically six major types of maize: dent (field corn), flint (Indian corn), pod (wild corn), popcorn, flour and sweet.

In 1950 the tallest corn stalk was a bit more than 23.5 ft. By no means a world record.

Any type of corn is accepted for competition purposes. That being said, the tallest corn stalks in the world have all been grown from tropical strains, mostly from Mexico.

While *Jala Landrace* might have been used in the past and still is a good one to start with, it is no match for other strains such as *Montana* and especially *Tehua*. But be careful, there is an enormous variation within said strains. One type of *Tehua* will stop at 15ft and the other will go over 35ft. And in general, each time you cross them, they will lose one leaf in height, so fresh, original seed is needed each time. Other than *Jala*, none of the really tall original strains are available to the general public. Montana doesn't produce seeds here.

Like some other giant vegetable crops, the genetics are more important than anything else. Fertilizer is one of the least important

factors of growing tall corn, though of course they have a preference for nitrogen. But that's a whole story I won't go into.

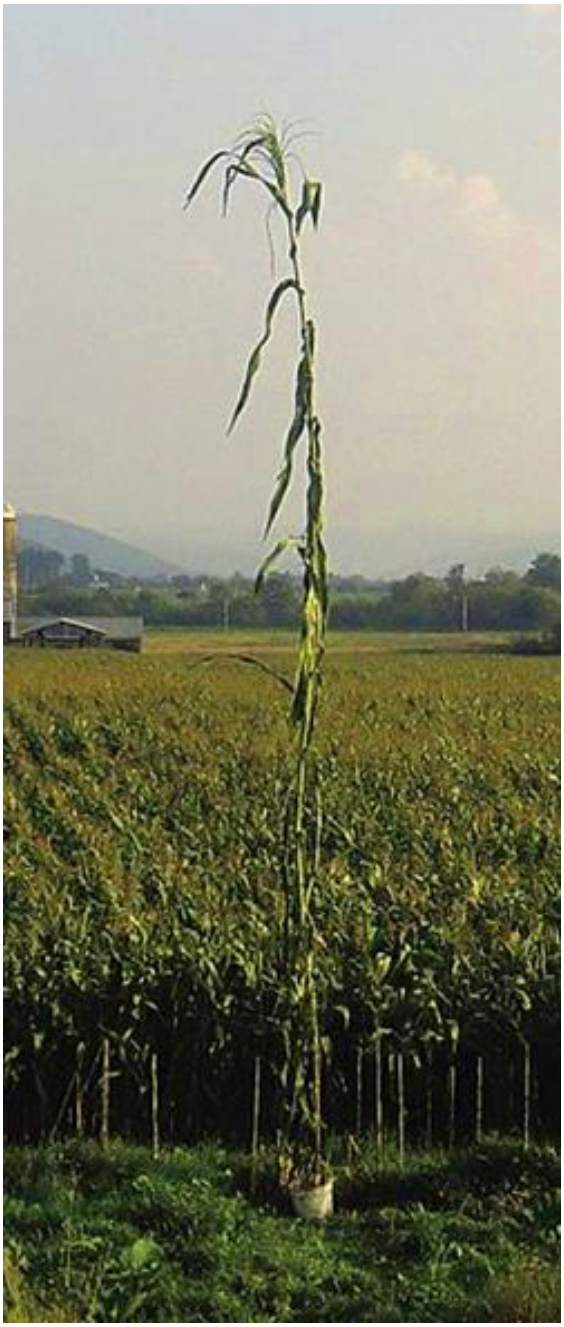
Tropical maize will grow taller to the north of Mexico than in Mexico itself. This is due to the number of sunlight hours. The further you go north, the taller they can potentially get, providing you can keep them warm.

Maize will grow in excess of 200 days. Reports have been made of 212 days without tasselling. In experiments it has been proven that the tallest strain (*Tehua*) will grow up to 3 meters after tasselling. Seeing as the world record of 12m had not even begun tasselling, it is expected that in perfect conditions, corn can get up to 15m tall (circa 50ft).

Maize needs lots of light, lots of heat and no wind. Early in spring and late in summer, light can be artificially added. Most growers use frames to keep the stalks from bending.

While this is essential, it would be much better to wrap the entire frame in plastic. Experiments suggest this can make a difference of several meters.

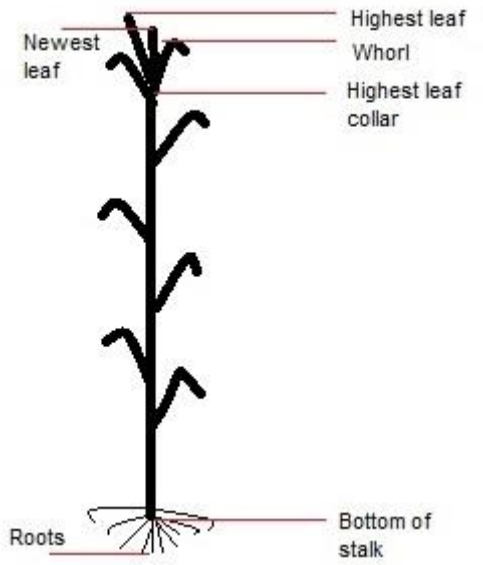
The world's tallest maize was grown by Jason Karl of New York and is over 35ft tall. In month 3 it grew 12ft.



Mr. Karl is a scientist specializing in tall maize and has published extensively on the subject and has shared his growing techniques of which the most important is how to build a structure for them.

First of all he built a 14m tall structure in the shape of a tepee. He wrapped the entire structure in plastic. The inside of the structure is a network of supporting wooden planks. The plant itself is wrapped in fleece when it is cold. At the bottom of the tepee is a heater. The plastic seems to have a positive effect on growth as it alters UV-light.

Even though tropical maize often doesn't tassel, there is a way to properly measure it.



If there is a tassel, you measure from the bottom of the stalk (which will be a few centimetres under the soil) to the top of the tassel. Otherwise you measure from the bottom of the stalk to the highest leaf. The newest leaf is usually shorter. The whorl is the height of the last leaves to bend and the highest leaf collar is the point that the new leaves emerge from.

Maize plants can have up to 65 leaves. The distance between the leaves will grow over time and then stop. So even if the plant tassels, the top of the stalk will continue to grow.

TOP TIPS:

*** Right seed ***

*** Right protection ***

Global Warming

First we had global warming. Now we have climate change. That's because it isn't warming up everywhere on our little planet. Climate change is better because not only are temperatures changing, so is the amount of precipitation and the severity of storms.

Not that this is anything new. It's being going on for as long as the planet has existed. Greenland is called so because it used to be green. If you believe in evolution, it was a few hundred thousand years ago, if you believe in creation it was 4000 years ago before the flood.

In any case, climate change in southern Ontario is not really an issue if you let statistics do the talking. Pro-climate change scientists will carefully compare today's temperatures to those from the period 1948 onwards. That is because in the late 30s and early 40s, we had a sharp increase in temperatures, similar to what we have now.

Temperatures in southern Ontario have increased between 0.2°C (Hamilton) to 0.4 and 0.6°C depending on how far north you go, since 1948. But compared to 1945, there is pretty much no change at all. There has been an increased level of precipitation though.

Climates fluctuate continuously. Melting glaciers cool down sea water which in turn cools down temperatures. Sure, mankind influences it and we need to take measures, but for us in the pumpkin patch, I doubt changing temperatures is going to be much of an issue in our lifetime. But be prepared for a bit more rain and heavy duty storms.

Windbreak on top of the plant that can be rolled back and forth will keep out most of the wind and hail and soften the rain and provide shade. Problem pretty much solved.

Weigh-off Results

Smoky Lake, Alberta

1	1,470.50	Beaudin, Ray
2	1,120.00	Crews, Donald
3	775.50	Lobay, John
4	749.00	Zaychkowsky, Eddy
5	695.50	Meyer, Rhonda
6	659.00	Murphy, Jake
7	637.00	Makarchuk, Alan
8	612.00	Caffett, Glen
9	469.00	Reckhard, Chris
10	373.00	Makarchuk, Alan

Langley, British Columbia

1	1,411.00	Carley, Scott
2	1,339.00	Chan, Dave
EXH	1,189.00	Carley, Scott
3	1,068.00	Dixon, Glenn
4	1,018.00	Pelletier, Jeff
5	990.00	Savage, Jim
6	803.00	Mumford, Kate
7	759.00	Carley, Marg
8	442.00	Budden, Andy
9	430.00	Johnson, Jeff
10	319.00	Perrault, Steve
11	316.00	Reid, Steve
12	310.00	Hoskins, Justin
13	298.00	Rose, Tammy
14	164.00	Camparmo, Maurizio
EXH	119.00	Budden, Andy
15	56.00	Armelini, Augustino

Noteable Long Gourds

1	149.25	Muis, Ron
2	139.38	Ansems, Fred
3	130.00	Ansems, Shirley
4	129.75	Ansems, Fred

Roland, Manitoba

1	1,348.20	Lukes, Milan
2	1,283.40	Lukes, Richard
3	1,032.00	Banman, Henry
4	1,024.60	Banman, Cornie
5	998.80	Myslichuk, Scott
EXH	978.60	Bartel, Evan
6	842.00	Johnson, Juane
7	827.60	Whitehead, Doug
8	814.00	Cameron, Art
9	805.20	Winkler, Chloe
10	802.40	Hildebrandt, Ray
11	796.20	Johnson, Margie
12	791.00	Whitehead, Brenda
13	789.20	Bernstrom, Charlie
14	757.40	Enns, Wes
15	746.60	Hubatka, Jamie
16	721.00	Banman, Marge
17	714.40	Skoien, Leona
18	701.40	Myslichuk, Ken
19	699.60	Winkler, Ray
20	657.80	Downton, Lisa
21	652.40	Bartel, Lynn
22	642.00	Hubatka, Weronika
23	640.00	Banman, Helen
24	633.00	Terwin, Marlene
25	632.20	Terwin, Jason
26	576.20	Skoien, Dean
27	573.80	Whitehead, Halle
28	566.20	Banman, Jayden
29	422.40	Brasted, Bob
30	403.20	Wojciechowski, Laverne
31	305.20	Taylor, Ashley
32	268.00	Reimer, Sarah

Noteable Field Pumpkins

1	140.00	Crews, Donald
2	133.50	John, Kapelari
3	129.00	Ansems, Fred
4	119.00	Ansems, Shirley

Edmunston, New Brunswick

1	969.50	Ebbett, Charles
2	782.00	Tingley, Daryl
3	498.00	Plourde, Don
4	302.00	Thibeault, Jason
5	290.00	Pelletier, James
6	145.00	Haynes, Robin
7	119.50	Oulette, Monique

Millville, Nova Scotia

1	1,264.00	Naqvi, Mahmood
2	784.00	King, Joe
3	683.00	Naqvi, Rae
4	645.00	MacNeil, Lois
5	643.00	Head, Ray
EXH	379.00	Gordon, Mason
EXH	278.00	Eyking, Peter

Waterville, Nova Scotia

1	1,402.00	Ansems, Fred
2	1,209.00	Ansems, Gerard
3	1,194.00	Muis, Ron
4	1,171.00	Ansems, Catharina
5	1,047.00	Ward, Ed
6	1,038.00	Ferguson, Paul
7	954.00	Kenneally, Brian
8	947.00	Ansems, Andrew
9	832.00	Ansems, Frank
EXH	802.00	Ward, Ed
10	801.00	Reid, Jeff
11	750.00	Reid, Valerie
12	517.00	MacQuarrie, Kim
13	504.00	Ansems, Chris
14	277.00	Cameron, Paul

Notable Watermelons

1	161.50	Crews, Donald	Alberta
2	142.20	Bartel, Evan	Manitoba

Neguac, New Brunswick

1	1,237.00	Tingley, Daryl
2	1,107.00	Ebbett, Charles
3	1,103.00	Ebbett, Gail
4	831.00	LeBlanc, Iroi
5	741.00	LeBlanc, Roberte
6	678.00	Dupuis, Freddy
7	442.00	McLaughlin, Ernest
8	435.00	Dupuis, Therese
9	365.00	LeBlanc, Louise
10	332.00	Losier, Giselle
11	284.00	McLaughlin, Andre
11	284.00	Comeau, Pierre
13	272.00	McLaughlin, Caroline
14	270.00	Ferguson, Colinda
15	239.00	McLaughlin, Annique
16	238.00	Albert, Auriele
17	228.00	McLaughlin, Henri
18	182.00	Ferguson, Denis
19	151.00	Lapointe, Yvonne
20	138.00	Mariette, Paulin
21	35.00	Comeau, Patrice

Windsor, Nova Scotia

1	1,415.00	Ansems, Gerard
2	1,381.00	Tingley, Daryl
3	1,228.00	Reid, Jeff
4	1,160.00	Atkinson, Stephen
5	1,042.00	Kenneally, Brian
6	1,026.00	Ansems, Andrew
7	1,016.00	Swinimer, Leo
8	1,014.00	Ansems, Frank
9	985.00	Turner, Sean & Kodiak
10	955.00	Swim, Craig
11	861.00	Swinimer, Avis
12	834.00	Ward, Ed
13	833.00	Aten, Al
14	797.00	Dill, Danny
15	681.00	Dill-MacDonald, Diana
16	666.00	Ansems, Fred

17	662.00	Ferguson, Paul
18	650.00	Smeltzer, Bill
19	579.00	Smith, Morton
EXH	559.00	Turner, Sean
20	275.00	Swinamer, Brandon

Becancour, Québec

1	1,280.00	Tessier, David
2	1,277.00	Tessier, Gaston
3	1,261.00	Quatrouillettes, Les
4	1,221.00	Gagnon, Famille
5	1,197.00	Riopel, Gerard
6	1,124.00	Morin, Mario
7	1,107.00	Riopel, Jocelyn
8	1,074.00	Quatrouilles, Les
9	927.00	Denis, Raymond
10	879.00	Saffin, Jeff
11	874.00	Carignan Jano, Becotte Kathy
12	814.00	Guay Yvon, Tremblay Denis
13	767.00	Sutherland, Dave
14	760.00	Lambert, Andre
15	755.00	Bellavance Nicole, Gagnon Daniel
16	680.00	Perreault, Partick
17	636.00	Trotier, Mylene & Lysanne
18	545.00	Charlie-Auger, Chada
19	542.00	Deshaies, Dominic
20	490.00	Mercier, Jonathan
21	479.00	Sylvie Belley, Fernand Carignan
22	468.00	Guay Philippe, Houle MIchel
23	465.00	Liam, Aurelie
24	463.00	Allard, Les Kids
25	445.00	Alix, Julie
26	425.00	Bouvette, Hebert
27	396.00	Halfiger, Monica
EXH	385.00	Desilets, Chantal
28	352.00	Proulx, Jonathan
29	313.00	Horan, Turenne
30	302.00	Paradis Guy, Beaudet Jessica
31	288.00	Bouffard-Guillemette, Cindy
32	180.00	Bedard, Annie
33	90.00	Poirier, Benoit
34	43.00	Martel, Dave

The Elite Ancestors Of 2015 AGs

Alan Eaton

This article is to help answer the question: Where did these amazing Atlantic Giants come from this year? To start with I chose the top 40 official GPC specimens as listed on BP.com, this goes down to the "1749 Johnson 15". Next, for each of these 40, I looked at the mothers' parents and the 2 + 4 + 8 = 14 AGs going back 4 generations from the 2015 specimen. So for 40 AGs x 14 slots there could be potentially 560 ancestors. This of course, in reality, is not the case due to the many repeat situations.

For convenience I have dropped any decimal pounds and the few "dmg" designations. The number after the grower's name is for the number of occurrences. This figure shows the AGs relative importance versus the other survivors in each year. Note that this list goes back to the year 2003 and 4 generations. Thus, an AG may show up in generation 4,3 or 2. The single occurrences are noted but not identified.

2013		
Switz	2328 Meier	10
CT	220 DeBacco	6
CA	1985 Miller	4
WI	1057 Howell	4
WI	1338 Martin	2
CA	2032 Mathison	2
6 repeats, 9 singles		

2012		
RI	2009 Wallace	54
RI	1872 Wallace	3
PA	1730 Werner	3
OR	1676 Daletas	2
MA	1756 Lancaster	2
5 repeats, 3 singles		

2011		
RI	1789 Wallace	10
CA	1554 Mathison	7
CA	1494 Bordsen	4
PA	1807 Stelts	3
4 repeats, 3 singles		

2010		
CA	1409 Miller	61
PA	1495 Stelts	9
WI	1810 Stevens	8
PA	1381 Checkon	6
SD	1674 Marsh	6
PA	1596 Werner	4
OH	1622 Liggett	4
OH	1554 Rose	2
8 repeats, 3 singles		

2009		
OH	1725 Harp	74
IA	1658 Young	23
IA	1622 Young	23
PA	1421 Stelts	7
MN	1544 Revier	4
SD	1488 Marsh	4
OR	1462 Starr	4
MI	1303 Sweet	4
8 repeats, 1 single		

2008		
RI	1288 Wallace	12
IA	1026 Young	4
2 repeats, 2 singles		

2007		
RI	1385 Jutras	69
NH	1161 Rodonis	18
IA	1207 Young	4
3 repeats, 0 singles		

2006		
PA	904 Stelts	3
1 repeat, 1 single		

2005		
NY	998 Pukos	8
1 repeat, 1 single		

2003		
RI	1068 Wallace	9
1 repeat, 2 singles		

There are only **39 AGs** (and 25 singles) in this elite group.

Top growers of the 39 AGs -- Wallace 5, Stelts 4, Young 4, Mathison 2, Miller 2, Werner 2, Marsh 2

Top States of the 39 AGs -- PA-7, RI-6, CA-5, IA-4, WI-3, OH-3, OR-2, SD-2

To appreciate the success of the above survivors, let's take a look at just one year: 2010. The GPC list shows 1850 AGs and **450 above 1000 pounds**. Of all those, **only 8** have passed on their genes to the 2015 top 40, in any significant number.

As growers are looking ahead this winter and carefully choosing what to plant, this little study is looking back to see where the recent best came from. The top growers of 2016 will be standing on the shoulders of the growers of the top 39 AGs listed above.

Here's to another great AG year.
Al Eaton, Ontario. Dec/2015

Flashback

Bradley Wursten

A world record pumpkin in St. Catharines, Ontario? Huh?

For you young ones out there, it's true. It happened. In 2003. The grower's name was Bryan Dueck. It didn't last long, but still.


LOCAL NEWS

A record-smashing pumpkin

It took a St. Catharines man five months to grow his gigantic 1,373-pound pumpkin for a world record

BY JOSH BROWN

Brian Dueck carted his 1,373-pound pumpkin to the Howell Family Pumpkin Farm in Fonthill where his giant pumpkin won top prize.

I was in Canada for business when my dad slipped me a copy of the Hamilton Spectator on October 8, 2003. It was this article that got me growing pumpkins again after a more than 15-year break.

Bryan Dueck knew he had a monster when a small tractor couldn't lift his pumpkin.

"We had a 50-horsepower tractor," the St. Catharines resident said. "We had to go to 100-horsepower to get it into the cube van."

Luckily, the forklift didn't have any problems placing the orange beast on the scale when he arrived at the Howell Family Pumpkin Farm in Fonthill on the weekend for the annual pumpkin weigh-off.

That's when the construction worker realized just how big his baby had grown. In five months, the seedling had transformed into a new world record-setter. At 1373 pounds, it smashed the previous mark set by New Hampshire's Charles Houghton by 46 pounds.
….

Results are still trickling in so Dueck is hesitant to officially bask in the glory. Rumours of a 1380-pounder were circulating but for now Dueck is still in the lead.
…

Dueck has worked on his record-setter since last spring. He said he started to get excited by mid-August when his pumpkin began overtaking the back yard of his city lot.
"I could see the rate it was growing," he said. "I knew it was going to be a good size."

But he had some reservations. For the last three years, he watched his son slave over the patch only to see the pumpkins split. With his son's interest waning, he decided to try his hand in the garden. He switched to a new seed (805 Pukos – editor) *and watered the sucker for half-an-hour every day – and it paid off.*

"I'll do it again next year," he said.
"I have to prove to the other growers that this wasn't a one-time thing." (He grew 1327.5 in 2005 – editor)

Dueck plans to use his winnings ($5000 – editor) *to pay off his water bill, among other things. For now, his pumpkin is on display at the Howell Family Farm. If it doesn't sell, he'll gut it for seeds, carve it and put it out for Halloween.*

Josh Brown – Hamilton Spectator

Unfortunately for Bryan, the rumour about a 1380-pounder turned out to be true. Steve Daletas later turned up at Hoffman Dairy Farms in Canby, Oregon with a 1385 lb orange monster.

But for a few days, Bryan Dueck from St. Catharines held the world record.

Squash Top-10

Here are the lists of the heaviest 10 squash ever grown per region.

WORLD

Average: 1382 lbs

#	Weight	Grower	Year
1	1578	Holub	14
2	1533	Kline	15
3	1486	Jarvis	11
4	1421	Jutras	14
5	1362	Pugh	14
6	1349	Oliver	15
7	1285	Boonen	14
7	1279	Kline	14
9	1264	Pierpont	13
10	1263	Team Heavy East	11

CANADA

Average: 1271 lbs

#	Weight	Grower	Year
1	1533	Kline	15
2	1486	Jarvis	11
3	1279	Kline	14
4	1246	Vincent	11
5	1236	Vincent	09
6	1233	Hunt	13
7	1203	Jarvis	14
7	1202	Kline	15
9	1159	Kline	13
10	1131	Timm	06

EUROPE

Average: 1167 lbs

#	Weight	Grower	Year
1	1285	Boonen, H	14
2	1263	Team Heavy East	11
3	1239	Berrens	14
4	1234	Wursten	07
5	1196	Ghaye	11
6	1142	Wursten	14
7	1118	Boonen, PJ	15
7	1106	Horde, A	10
9	1047	Cuypers	09
10	1040	Van Rompaey	06

USA

Average: 1288 lbs

#	Weight	Grower	Year
1	1578	Holub	14
2	1421	Jutras	14
3	1362	Pugh	14
4	1264	Pierpont	13
5	1262	Jutras	15
6	1221	Robinson	12
7	1218	Morris	14
7	1195	Holub	14
9	1183	Williamson	15
10	1177	Haist	08

ONTARIO

Average: 1187 lbs

#	Weight	Grower	Year
1	1486	Jarvis	11
2	1246	Vincent	11
3	1236	Vincent	09
4	1233	Hunt	13
5	1203	Jarvis	14
6	1131	Timm	06
7	1094	Sundin	13
7	1094	Butler	14
9	1080	Leonard	06
10	1065	Timm	08

Here are the top 10 squash growers based on their heaviest two squash.

#	Ave.	Grower	Country
1	1406	Todd Kline	Canada
2	1386	Scott Holub	USA
3	1345	Joel Jarvis	Canada
4	1342	Joe Jutras	USA
5	1241	John Vincent	Canada
6	1208	Edwin Pierpont	USA
7	1194	Russ Pugh	USA
8	1188	Bradley Wursten	Holland
9	1175	Karl Haist	USA
10	1132	Jim Sherwood	USA

Cheap Gardening Aids

Bradley Wursten

The chance is if your gardening budget is close to zero dollars, you probably aren't going to grow a record any day soon. But if you have a limited budget or can't get certain products in your area, here are four cheap, even free products that can help you out and all of them are environmentally friendly too, in comparison to some of their commercial counterparts.

1. Baby powder

I introduced this one to European growers seeing as we can't get Captan or similar products here.

Years ago I was changing my son's diaper at the same time cracks were appearing in my AG.

Baby powder has drying and healing powers and the move to the field was simple, and no, my son didn't suffer a red butt till the weigh-offs were over. It costs very little, is readily available, works wonders on cracks (both kinds) and even doesn't smell bad.

2. Bras

This isn't one I have introduced or tried. Do go for the second-hand type, seeing as recycling is environmentally friendly and you can always say you found it in a dumpster, should the missus not give her approval.

Bras are used for supporting tomatoes. Shove two stakes in the ground on either side of the tomato. Hang the bra between them and your tomato has its own hammock. It stretches as the tomato grows.

Make sure the size of the bra matches the size of the tomato. Ask around for the right size…

3. Milk

Basically milk is the poor man's powdery mildew prevention system. One part 2% milk to nine parts of water. Spray any plants that suffer from PM preventively starting around June.

Once the plant has contracted PM, milk will not help.

4. Nylons

I use nylons extensively in the garden. So much that my wife is getting suspicious that I purposely tear them.

It can be used to keep bees out while pollinating. It lets air through so the flower doesn't get too warm.

It is great for tying plants up and supporting fruit as it is flexible. I tie up corn and support tomatoes, long gourds and cucumbers with them.

You can also make a hammock out of them for melons or actually grow the cucumbers inside one of the legs. Helps against hail too.

Featured Grower

The Veitch Family

Nathan, Jennifer and the ABLE kids are a family of growers. In 2015 they grew Canada's largest tomato. So time to see how they did it.

Can you tell us something about yourself and how you got involved in growing giants?

Mr. Monty (aka Greg Montgomery our neighbour). We took our 4 kids (ABLE: Ashley, Ben, Lily, Emma) to see Mr. Monty's giant pumpkins in 2010 and the kids were in awe at the size of them. Then one of them said, "Dad you could never grow something like this." At that moment Jenn looked to the kids and said, "oh boy, here we go" and the next year we grew our first Giant - 924.5 Veitch 2011.

Port Carling, Ontario is where we call home and growing giants is a great hobby for us involving our children to whatever aspect we can, whether it is helping make our own Biochar, weeding, sub soiling, cleaning out the chicken coop, travelling to fairs or just bringing us a cold drink to the gardens. We all have some kind of role at home. The kids even go get the snowshoes at tilling time, yet they still laugh when we put them on (thanks Jim Bryson).

What do you grow besides giant tomatoes? Also normal vegetables?

We grow a variety of giants such as pumpkins, sunflowers, field pumpkins, long gourds and a few root veggies.

Our salad garden has peas, 5-6 types of lettuce, eating tomatoes, zucchinis, carrots, cucumbers and herbs borders, a 30ft long trellis/tunnel which is double sided and covered in vines with decorative gourds, spaghetti squash, pie pumpkins and clematis.

Along with our giant and veggie gardens we have extensive perennial gardens that border our property. Some 1500 sq ft of perennials! Oh, did we mention we make our own maple bud syrup, have laying chickens/ducks and raise our own 30+ meat birds while having children in 3 different schools as well as sports and other events? Yep, we are busy in the spring…

How big was your plant? How many plants did you grow?

We used to grow giant tomato plants but it seems we have changed to smaller plants. The plant that we grew our 6.30lbs mater on was about 38" tall with lots of spacing from other plants (thank you Chris Lyons).

We started off with 14 giant plants and the culled the weak plants or the plants that didn't have megablooms. This allows us to concentrate on our better producers and frees up a bit of time and amendments (thank you Chris Delaney).

Plant size will change for this year after lengthy conversation with master grower Fabrice Boudyo of France. It helps that Jenn

speaks French 👍. Social media is a great way to chat with growers from all over the world.

Which bloom do you choose to pollinate and how do you pollinate it? Which truss, how far off the ground, etc?

We pollinate megablooms and extra-large singles that show up within the first few clusters. Pollinating by hand, though we feel this isn't the best way, flicking the blossom 4-6 times a day. This year the real/fake birds and the bees will come out with a trip to a sex shop to vibrate the blossoms.

Can you tell us something about how often you water and how much? And about the fertilizer you use, how often, how it is applied, etc?

Keeping the soil moist is very important as fluctuations will cause splits in the fruit so we water as needed and with warm water (thank you Chris Lyons) so it doesn't startle the plant. We also use straw mulch to retain moisture.

We use fertilizer in low dosages (thank you Paul Detweiller) when the plant is young and increase the intensity as the plant matures. That said, we use maple syrup, liquid fish weekly and *Mykes WP*, *Ignite 1-0-1* and *TKO* bi-weekly in the early stages and all through the plant's life. After fruit set, and the dangers of aborting are gone, we add liquid seaweed bi-weekly (Cytokines, thank you Russ Landry) to the mix and step up to full strength and all of these are drench only. The only foliar feeding is done for disease and insect control. We believe this helps to keep the plant dry and healthy.

Did you do a soil test? What type of soil do you have. PH? Was your plant grown inside or outside? How do you protect it from the elements (wind/rain)?

Soil test was done the year before with a pH of 7.1. We grow everything in the great outdoors. No greenhouse (yet) at our place.

Our property is in a valley surrounded by a high rock bluff and tall trees, as well we wrap our garden with black construction material, the kind you see along highways (thanks Mr. Monty).

We start our plant protection really before planting time. We harden off our plants for 10-14 days protected from wind/sun. Next is the planting time: after sunset so they get the first 8-10 hours in the dark and then we burlap shade it for 3-5 days, increasing sunlight each day (feels like forever).

A visit to the Howard Dill farm.

Did the plant get any diseases? Did you apply insecticides/fungicides? Which type(s)? How often?

Spacing, spacing, spacing... The more room we give between our tomato plants the healthier they are and don't be afraid to pull a plant if it looks sick. We space them 4-5' apart and don't

plant them in the same spot each year as plant disease can winter over.

TKO with phosphates build the tolerance up in the plant but the real disease prevention comes from the multiple types and abundance of organics in the soil (thank you Todd Kline). Organic soils just grow stronger and heartier plants. We use a mix of cattle/horse/chicken/ *Pagonis Worm Castings* and our own *Biochar* mixture (wood ash and char mixed with liquid fish/maple syrup/humic acid).

Actinovate is our go to for all of our plants (thank you Larry Checkon tbt Niagara Seminar 2012) foliar and drench bi-weekly. *Bug-B-Gone*, *Slug-B-Gone* and when it gets tough *Sevin*, but only hit it with *Sevin* 3 times in 2015.

We believe that all of these are a big contributor factor to a healthy plant.

What will you be growing this year?

We are thinking Atlantic Howard Dill Award Orange, something big and ugly in AG, field pumpkins, tomatoes (we have a few more tricks to try), long gourds and whatever else we can fit in.

We would like to thank ALL of the growers that we mentioned here along with the others we didn't mention. Growers share so much information with us all. That is invaluable.

Nathan, Jennifer and the ABLE kids

GVGO Products For Sale

Premier Tech has changed its labelling to **AGTIV** (formally MYKE PRO).

Same great Canadian products selling for Canadian dollars as before just with a new label!

We will be supplying growers with 3 fresh Mycorrhizal products this year. Beware of the best before date on products you may find elsewhere as mycorrhizal does have a best before date.

These orders must be in **NO LATER than March 19th** to ensure we have fresh Mycorrhizal.

We will be bringing the AGTIV to the GVGO meeting.

Payment in cash only.

AGTIV SPECIALTY CROPS POWDER (formally MYKE PRO Specialty Crop P)
6000 spores/gram
$50/100grams or $450/1kg

AGTIV FIELD CROPS (formally MYKE PRO PS3)
3200 spores/gram
$100/300grams or $180/600grams

AGTIV SPECIALTY CROPS - G (formally Myke Pro Specialty Crop G)
142 spores/gram
$15/lbs or $240/22lbs

PAGONIS WORM CASTINGS
Cost of 20liter bags of this black gold is
$12.00/bag

For bulk orders contact us about shipping.
Order by email at ablefarmsgiants@gmail.com

Thank You!
Nathan and Jennifer Veitch

PLEASE NOTE - these will be available at the GVGO spring seminar **BUT YOU MUST PLACE YOUR ORDER BEFORE** as I usually do not carry any extra except for the ones for the raffle table. The products can also be shipped to most areas within Canada for $20 for four 1 Litre bottles. They can also be picked up at my place in Georgetown. Check out the following **link** for all the products available and ordering instructions:
http://eringiantpumpkingrowers.weebly.com/products-for-sale.html

FOLIAR APPLIED PRODUCTS

SiTKO— 0-7-17— A Silicate, Phosphite, and Salicylic Acid combination product.
Cost—$17 for 1 Litre bottle.

TKO Phosphite—0-29-26—Source of P from 100% Phosphite.
Cost—$25 for 1 Litre bottle.

Recover Rx—3-18-18—Contains Phosphite and Salicylic Acid (Trigger SA).
Cost—$12 for 1 Litre bottle.

Nitro 30 SRN - 30-0-0
Cost - $12 for 1 Litre bottle.

Micrel Total 5-0-0 Micronutient Package
Cost - $12 for 1 Litre bottle

SOIL APPLIED PRODUCTS

Essential Plus - 1-0-1 - Natural organic soil amendment and root stimulator with 21 L-Amino Acids. Contains humic acid, kelp, gibberellic acid, fish hydrolylsate, plant extracts, sugars, wetting agent and lots more.
Cost - $25 for 1 Litre bottle.

Potassium Carbonate 0-0-25 - Foliar and Root uptake.
Cost - $17 for 1 Litre bottle.

Soil Restore Plus—3-0-2—Contains 10% Humic Acid, L-Amino Acids, and food for soil microbes.
Cost—$22 for 1 Litre bottle

Soil Life—A blend of seaweed, carbon, yucca extract, etc.

Cost—$22 for 1 Litre bottle

MYKE PRO TURF-G -Granular Glomus intraradices mycorrhizae with a spore count of 6810 spores per pound.
Cost—$20 for 5 pound bag (lots for a couple plants)

MYKE PRO WP (wettable powder) - High concentration mycorrhizae powder.
Cost - $15 for 100 gram bag

Granulated Compost - This easy to spread granulated compost is made from a mixture of shrimp compost, humic acid, and kelp meal.
Cost - $25 for an 18KG bag

Thank you!
John Nieuwenhoff

Black Earth Humic Products

Mini granule dry carbon
50 lb bag $20.00
Organo liquid hume humic & fulvic acid
$5.00/L
Liquid fulvic
$5.00/L

Organic Gem liquid fish

$4.00/L

Agrigro products bio-stimulants

Ignites2 soil and starter supplement
$14.00/L
Foliar Blend foliar treatment
$14.00/L

Monty's liquid plant food

8-16-8 growth formula
$14.00/L
2-15-15 root and bloom
$14.00/L

Liquid calcium nitrate &corn sugar 8-0-0-10ca

$3.00/L

Email order to be delivered to Spring Seminar.
pcdettweiler@hotmail.com

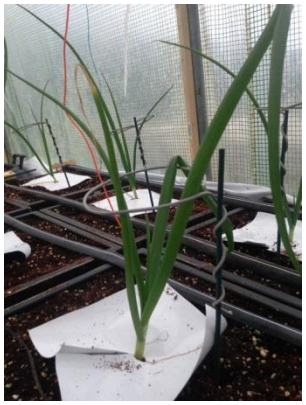
Thank you!
Paul Dettweiler

UK Onions

Giant onions are big business in the United Kingdom. Some growers grow nothing else, others grow them alongside all kinds of other giant veg including pumpkins.

Three big competitors are Ian and Stuart Paton, David Thomas and Peter Glazebrook. The latter held the world record, but has since lost is and really wants it back. Here is how their onions were doing in the first week of February.

Above: The Patons



Left: David Thomas

Below: Glazebrook