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The Latest Dirt...

Attention Pumpkin Growers!!! Don't forget about the [Pumpkin Pledge](#) and give your pumpkin a *real* purpose by helping others with every added pound!

BECOME A PARTICIPANT OF THE PUMPKIN POSSE!

For more information on how to join in the fun and make family memories that will last a lifetime [click here](#).

PUMPKINFEST'S MOST WANTED...

'WATERPROOF' PADDLERS & BOATERS WANTED FOR THE PUMPKINBOAT REGATTA!

ever wondered what it would be like to paddle or motor a 600# gourd ? this just might be your year to find out !! at least three teams, each composed of five competitors (3 primary + 2 alternate paddlers/boaters) are needed; how about creating your own 'pumpkinboat regatta team' from where you work, or go to school, or play ? boats and safety gear will be provided, or you can furnish your own ... if interested in participating up close and personal in the pumpkinboat regatta on Sunday morning, October 9, email Ken Smith at : orr1957@gmail.com and we will get your nautical career underway...

also needed are a couple of dozen loaned outboard motors, both 3-5 HP and 5-7 HP for the various motorized heats of the pumpkinfest's regattathe loan of an outboard motor would be very much appreciated!! Please contact Ken Smith at orr1957@gmail.com and we will add your name to the list of generous volunteers and participants in the regatta !

CALLING ALL PUMPKIN ARTISTS AND SCULPTORS:

nancy mackinnon, pumpkin artists committee chairman, would love to hear from any of you who are intrigued with the idea of sculpting or painting or decorating a main street pumpkin (contact her directly at: GOWETHAFLO@aol.com) ... the giant pumpkins will be delivered downtown Thursday evening, October 6th on pallets, and will be available for carving immediately thereafter ... remember that these are giant pumpkins which, even hollowed-out, offer 'thickness' which can be sculpted for shading, depth and other artistic methods...

GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR NON PROFIT ORGANIZATONS: if you are associated with a local non-profit and would like to hand out literature to the thousands of damariscotta pumpkinfest visitors during columbus day weekend, please contact our InfoZone committee chairman, jeanne davis of the skidompha library at: devdir@MSLN.net... an InfoZone area (perhaps associated with the new 'food court' venue to increase your exposure to visitors) will again be available this year... also keep in mind the pumpkin pledge sheets which were distributed with the plantlets in May... see pumpkin pledge link above.

OTHER GREAT EVENTS ADDED TO THE PUMPKINFEST LINE UP:

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The Harvest Review (Castlebay and Van Reid) will perform Friday, October 7 at The Lincoln Theater.

The Peterson Project -which plays bluegrass music, will perform Saturday, October 8 at Schooner Landing Restaurant & Marina.

Moose Mountain Jazz Band - which plays dixieland jazz, will perform Sunday, October 9 at The Lincoln Theater.

Calling All Pumpkinheads...

Volunteering for Pumpkinfest is not only tons of fun, but it feels great to get involved in the wonderful community in which we live. There are many levels of participation, that cover a variety of different interests. Join us to find your niche and become a member of the Pumpkinfest family. Volunteer Opportunities Available:

Pumpkin Hurl/Catapult Event

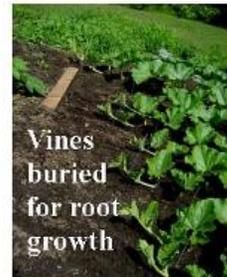
Immediate Opening

For more information about this volunteer position, please email jjork@tidewater.net

How Does Your Pumpkin Grow?

Ladies and Gentlemen... Nurture your Babies into adolescence!!!!

Here's the Dirt on how to make your plant flourish during the next month, according to our expert grower Bill Clark...



- Your pumpkin requires a lot of care if it is to have any chance to grow to a quarter ton or more in weight. Again, nobody ever said growing a big pumpkin was easy. You will need to place something under your pumpkin for it to grow on that allows for water to drain as well as prevent pests from tunneling into your fruit from below. Many people use a 3" or 4" bed of play sand while still others are now using belt material discarded by paper mills. As long as it allows drainage and prevents critters from destroying your fruit from below, you can use a number of different things. The most important characteristic of the material you use for a bed is that it allows the fruit to grow and expand, unrestricted and with minimal resistance. If a material such as styrofoam with holes in it is used, the chances of the friction between the fruit skin and the foam causing the fruit to grow concave on the bottom increases, and thereby increasing the risk of a bottom split.

- Shade is one of the most important items needed to protect your fruit. While your plant needs full sun, your fruit needs to be in complete shade to prevent it from ripening too early. The easiest way to erect a shade structure is to use 2 pieces of ½" PVC pipe or conduit crossed in the shape of a dome tent. Use dowels or rebar in the ends of the pipe to hold the ends to the ground and cover with an inexpensive blue plastic tarp. Use large binder clips to hold the tarp to the pipe allowing a secure attachment with ease of removal to tend to your pumpkin. Another method is to use 4 posts and a tarp pulled tightly across the top on a slope to allow water to drain off. The simplest method is to place a dry white sheet over your fruit, swapping it out when it gets wet.

- As the plant grows throughout the season, older leaves and leaf stocks will die off and wilt. These dead leaves should be cut off, insuring that the cut is at a downward angle to prevent water from sitting inside the stub of the leaf stock. This will not harm the plant, as new leaves will continue to produce energy for the fruit and will in fact help to improve the health of your plant and fruit. Excessive die-off, however, indicates a problem. These issues range from insect problems to disease infecting the plant, soil or both.

- In order to grow a big pumpkin, your plant needs to be kept as stress free as possible. Excessive heat is an enemy in that temperatures above 85 degrees will cause your plant to wilt, slowing down the energy process and thereby fruit growth. Frequent, short intervals of misting water over the leaves cools the plant by evaporational cooling and helps combat stress on those hot days. Sprinkler systems with a fine spray work well if nobody will be home to do it by hand, as the plant needs to be cooled every couple hours on those hot summer days.

- Another form of stress mentioned briefly above is stem stress. Your pumpkin will grow at astonishing rates from mid-July to mid-August in some cases gaining 20 to 40 lbs. a day. This rapid growth can put tension on the pumpkin stem as the fruit grows in height and its shoulders grow toward the vine. Cutting the tap roots under the 3 leaves in either direction of the fruit will allow the vine to move upward as the pumpkin grows. Supporting the vine as it curves upward toward the stem is also a common practice. Insure the vine does not rub against the fruit itself. You can train the vine by carefully pulling it away from the fruit shoulders with cushioned pieces of cloth. This method takes practice to learn and can run the risk of popping the fruit off the vine so use extreme caution when performing this method and only pull what the vine will allow every few days. It may also be wise to have another experienced grower demonstrate the method before attempting it yourself. Cut off any leaves that impede access to the fruit or may be rubbing

against the skin of the pumpkin.

- Your pumpkin can gain such large amounts daily because the skin is very pliable early on. However cracks in both the skin and stem do occur. It's natural for the stem to develop splits and heal over as it grows in size, however deep splits are an issue. If a split or crack in the skin of the pumpkin goes deep enough to enter the inner cavity of your fruit, your season is over, as the fruit will begin to rot very quickly. If however a crack or split is superficial, it can be treated by applying a paste of either sulfur or a fungicide called Captan. Be aware that Captan is nasty stuff and you should avoid breathing the powder or getting it on your bare skin. Use common sense as with any chemical. Captan dries the moisture from the split area and prevents disease allowing the crack to heal. Many large pumpkins develop deep stem splits that do not go into the cavity, however if not cared for, they can continue to go deeper and ruin your season. The biggest asset a grower can have is early recognition of a problem and knowing how to react to it.

One Can Never Have Too Much Pumpkin Growing Knowledge... So Here's More!

Follow Don Langevin's blog at

http://www.giantpumpkin.com/email_7-12-2011.html

Pollination of the Atlantic Giant Pumpkin by Wayne Hackney
<http://www.bigpumpkins.com/nepga/ViewArticle.asp?id=20>

Weather patterns are a crucial element in growing a champion pumpkin which makes it critical to be informed of what's ahead. A great resource to do this is:

[http://radar.weather.gov/radar.php?
rid=GYX&product=N0R&overlay=11101111&loop=yes](http://radar.weather.gov/radar.php?rid=GYX&product=N0R&overlay=11101111&loop=yes)

The Great Pumpkins' Favorite Picks...

Round Pond Parade

4th of July

Fun was had by all at this years 4th of July parade in Round Pond.





The Pumpkin Store...

Purchasing merchandise from our Pumpkinfest collection is an excellent way to help promote and support the Event and Maine Artists alike. Not to mention the added benefit of sporting really cool gear!

OFFICIAL DAMARISCOTTA PUMPKINFEST CAPS/PINS/PRINTS:

If you still don't have your official 2011 Damariscotta Pumpkinfest & Regatta T-shirt, ball cap or pin, or you can stop by Supplies Unlimited (<http://suppliesunlimited.biz/contact.asp>), Pinkham's Plantation on Biscay Road in damariscotta, or King Eider's Pub (www.kingeiderspub.com), and get stocked up !! Remember that the black ball caps and 2011 Tee's cost \$15.00, the commemorative pins are \$5.00....all proceeds are used to produce Pumpkinfest, and the items are really cool !!!



Commemorative Caps, T-shirts & Pins are now available for purchase, as well as our NEW 2011 Tee's... For more information on how to purchase

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We couldn't do it without you!!!!

The Lincoln County News

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