

Damariscotta



Pumpkinfest & Regatta™

Ladies and Gentlemen... Start your Plantlets!!!

Here's the Dirt on how to make your plant continue to flourish during the months of July/August according to our expert grower Bill Clark...



Pumpkin plants do not like extreme heat and will not tolerate the cold. Therefore you need to do everything you can to keep the plant happy. At night, place a bucket or a box over your plant and cover with a blanket to retain as much of the day's warmth as possible. Uncover in the morning when the temperature is above 45.

- Water your seedling as needed to keep the soil moist but not wet. Lukewarm water is better than cold for watering.

- Your plant should start to vine in about 2-3 weeks, depending on the temperature and soil moisture. If your plant decides it wants to vine in the wrong direction, you can turn it in the right direction over the course of a couple of weeks using a few stakes and moving the vine a little bit each day during the heat of the day, starting when the vine is about 12' to 18' long. At around 5

weeks old, your plant vine will grow up to 1 foot a day so be prepared to stay on top of it from this point on.

- Running a sprinkler for just a few minutes in the heat of the day will help prevent your plant from becoming stressed.

- 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.

- At this stage it is important to feed your young plantlets generously for the next month or so and bury the vines so that they start growing roots all along the vines, acting like a huge feeding system.

- As your vine grows, it will sprout what are known as secondary vines off of the main vine. These secondaries are where the plant gets much of its energy and should be nurtured as the main vine is. However, off these secondaries will grow more vines known as tertiary vines or sucker vines. These vines rob the plant of valuable nutrients and should be pinched off before they appear.

- Your plant can cover up more than 1000 square feet if left to grow unbridled so things need to be done so your plant doesn't become a 'jungle' of vines running every which way. Establishing a growing pattern for your plant is first. There are several growing patterns that growers use but the most widely used pattern is the so-called 'Christmas Tree'. Think of your plant as a christmas tree, where the main vine is the trunk and the secondaries are branches. Train your vines so that the main vine runs generally straight out from the stump and the secondaries grow perpendicular to the main stem.

Check out: <http://www.damariscottapumpkinfest.com/Event%20Pages/PEvents%20-%20Plantlet%20Give-Away.html> and scroll down the page to "Giant Pumpkin Growing Guidelines and Tips" for more detailed tips on growing your giant pumpkins, and enjoy the process as a family ! Contact bill@damariscottapumpkinfest.com if you have further questions about your pumpkin in particular.

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