



## **MID-JULY GROWING TIPS: NOW IS THE TIME TO WATER & POLLINATE YOUR PUMPKIN PLANT !**



- Water & mist your plant liberally this month, especially if temperatures rise above 80' .
- Pollinate your plant by following the following step-by-step instructions & photographs  
[Click and scroll down to "Pollination" on this web link](#)
- Feed your plants generously, and bury the vines daily to start growing roots all along the vines.
- Establish a "Christmas Tree"-like growing pattern for the plant's main and secondary vines (eg: the main vine is the "Christmas tree's trunk" and the secondary vines are branches which are trained to be generally perpendicular to the trunk).
- Pinch off tertiary-sucker vines as they appear, to retain valuable nutrients for the primary fruit.

### **Pollination Tips:**

- Pumpkins produce both male and female flowers, males having longer stems and females having a shorter stem with a bulb or baby pumpkin under the blossom. The ideal growing position for a pumpkin is at least 10 feet from the stump along the main vine on a small outward curve of your vine so the baby pumpkin will be on the outside of this curve. (GENTLY train the curve over the course of a few days so as to not snap the vine.)
- To increase your odds of a successful fruit set, you need to hand pollinate your female flowers.
- When the female is ready to open, the blossom will be about 3 inches long and get an orange hue. The same goes for the male flowers. This means the flower will open the next morning.
- First ensure you will have three male flowers available for the next morning. The evening before, take a gallon zip lock bag and carefully cover the female and the three males,

sealing the bottom to the stem. Try to inflate the bag so the petals don't touch the plastic. Tie-wraps placed gently around the top of each blossom works well also.

- Early the next morning, between 6 and 8 a.m., the flowers will open. Have a piece of soft yarn about 8" long with you, you'll need it later. Cut the males off the plant first, keeping them covered and watching out for aggressive bees. One by one remove the bag or tie-wrap from the males and carefully peel away the petals to the stem, trying not to jar or shake the flower as you do. You will see the stamen left on the stem, covered in pollen. Don't touch them or rub them on anything. Go to your covered female after it opens and carefully remove the bag or tie-wrap. Using the three males as a paintbrush, one at a time, carefully 'paint' and roll the pollen from the males over the segments in the center of the female flower, making sure the pollen covers as much of the segments as you can.

- Next, gently pull the petals of the female back up together, closing it off like it was before it opened and tie it closed with the 8" piece of soft yarn. Remove the yarn the next day. Good luck !!

#### **Damariscotta Pumpkinfest & Regatta**

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