

Steve Daletas and his 2469 Q&A

Steve is an amazing grower from the Oregon, who has consistently placed with the top growers world wide. He was #2 in the world this year. He is a World Record Holder with his 1385, back in 2003, and a GPC HOF member. The Following is an in depth interview. Lets start with last year... Steve: What was done for Fall/Spring prep? amendments, cover crop, tilling etc. My fall prep for the last several years has been to clean the patch of vines, test the pH, apply lime as necessary to bring the pH up, plant a cover crop of rye grain and walk away. The last two years I have brought in roughly 1 1/2 yards of a mint straw compost per 1000 square feet. Other than that, I have really backed off bringing in large amounts of amendments.

What was the pollination date of the 2469? The 2469 was pollinated on June 16th. Our goal when we started the season was to pollinate one week earlier than we had done in the past, we succeeded on that goal.

Do you bury vines, if so, what do you add to your vine bury mix?

Yes, I bury both the main and the secondaries. Under each leaf node I bury a mix consisting of 4 parts WOW Mycos, 2 parts Rootshield, 1 part Actino Iron, 1 part Kelp meal, and 1/2 part WOW Azos.

Did you have to reposition the 2469 as it grew to relieve vine/stem stress? Funny you should ask. Every pumpkin in the patch got moved August 1st to relieve stem stress. As luck would have it the last pumpkin we moved, which happened to be the largest in the patch refused to move until our fourth try. The sound of a pumpkin stem snapping off the vine is one I won't forget for a while. So I probably needed to make a few more pumpkin repositions in August/September. But decided to just reposition and support the main vines instead.

When you pollinated the pumpkin, how many side vines before the pumpkin were already terminated? I had 3 secondaries each side of the Main Vine terminated by June 16th. The entire plant was fully terminated by September 7th, with the exception of three secondaries I let them grow until we picked the pumpkin mid-October.

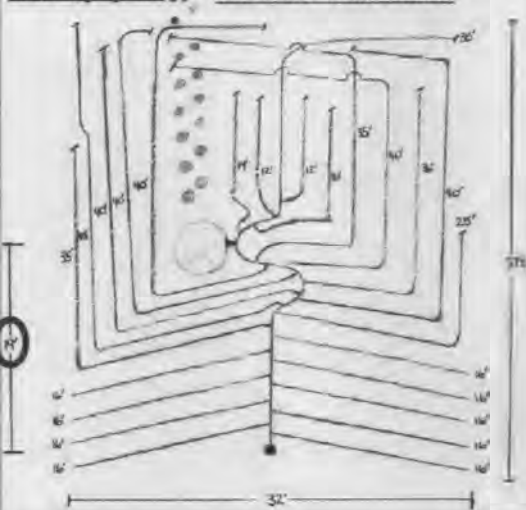
Do you max out Boron? I did amend the soil pre-season to 3ppm. But I say that with a word of caution. I dissolve and stir in boron in 4 gallons of hot water,

and use my mist blower to spray a light mist over the entire patch. Trying to spread boron any other way, especially at the high end, I would be worried about some areas receiving too much boron and creating a toxicity problem that could take out your plant.

How do you shield your pumpkin from the sun and do you do anything special to keep the stem dry?

Fortunately for us, come about July 4th, the rain stops and doesn't return until late September/early October. I use a bed sheet, day and night, from pollination date on. Comforters placed over the sheets become the norm, by mid-August through the end of the season as our nights are rarely above the low to mid 50's. If I'm on the road the comforters are left on day and night. If I'm home I will remove the comforters during the day. The stems get treated weekly with a light Zero Tol spray starting mid-July through the end of the season. I also use a small fan 24/7 on each stem until we pick the pumpkin in October. And if its going to rain, I place 10x10 tarps, zip tied to two pvc pipes over each pumpkin **Do you water overhead, Drip or by hand and how often?** Great question! I water once per day and use drip tape as my primary means of watering with over-

1200 sqft plant The 2469 Vine Pattern



head sprinklers on

standby as an archaic misting system. I did learn via my Moisture Probes this year, that the plant needs water at varying rates depending on

the age of the growth. I found that if I watered to the correct moisture level on the older growth mid to late season that I was severely underwatering the newer growth. I will correct this next year by watering the older growth possibly every other day and greatly increasing the amount of water applied to the newer end of the plant daily. I water once per day, everyday, from early June through mid-September. For the better part of August, I was using up to 210 gal/day, per plant or 185 gallons per 1000 square feet. I grow in what's classified as a Silty Loam. Get to know YOUR dirt and water accordingly.

Do you let the water warm up in tanks or barrels?

Yes and by applying warm (70-75 degree) water to the soil, logic says the soil biology and roots should be happier.

Can you think of any special reason the 2469# went 20% (or over 440#) over chart? That's the million-dollar question. We had a great summer, lots of sun, fairly consistent day time highs (approximately 30 days in the low to mid 90's but we never hit 100), nights seemed cooler than average but once again were very consistent. If I were to put my finger on one thing, I would have to say aside from the weather, I felt I was as dialed in on my watering as I have ever been. I did find areas I can still improve on but I pushed the water harder and was more consistent than previous years.

Do you use fungicide drenches? Early to mid-season I push the Biologicals hard. I use Rootshield, Actinovate, Companion and Cease. Mid-season I start alternating in a chemical drench every other week, then mid to late season I stop the biological drenches completely.

How was the seed count on the 2469 As luck would have it, the 2469 count was the lowest of all the pumpkins we grew this year. With that said, we should have enough seeds to support the OAF, Club auctions and hopefully most seed request.

Lets all grow a personnel best next year! -Steve Daletas

2469 Growth Chart

Day	OTT	Wt	lbs/day
35	263	419	
40	296	599	33
50	344.5	935	31
60	282	1250	26
70	410	1505	16
80	426	1660	12
90	438	1780	10
100	448	1878	6.5
110	454	1943	4
126	460	1999	3.5

2469 Soil Test 4/6/18

Western Laboratories
VH=Very High

Element	ppm	
Phosphorus	120	VH
Potassium	891	VH
Sulphur	885	VH
Calcium	3547	HI
Magnesium	379	HI
Sodium	121	OK
Zinc	12	VH
Copper	7.9	HI
Manganese	35	OK
Iron	68	OK
Boron	3	VH
Nitrates	48	OK

Organic Matter 13.2%
pH Water Extract 7.0
Base Saturation 101%
Cation Exchange CEC 24

Bases % CEC Ideal Yours

Calcium	65-80	77
Magnesium	10-20	12
Potassium	2-6	8.8
Sodium	<5	2
Hydrogen	<15	8%