

TOMATO- OHIO RECORD (7.18#)

Grown by: Nick Harp Massillon, Ohio

Nick Harp had a monster year in the tomato patch this year. His 7.18# tomato is the 4th largest of all time, the Ohio state record and the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth winner for 2009. Nick also grew a 5.416#er and three others over four pounds. The largest two tomatoes were grown using the Brant Timm (Ontario) 5.58# tomato seed.

The world record is still held by Gordon Graham of Oklahoma. His 7.75#er was grown in 1986.

The book "Giant Tomatoes" by Dr. Marvin Meisner is available at: www.giantpumpkin.com. Published by Don Langevin, it has a good deal of useful information.

Nick's tomato patch of 20 plants was part of the giant pumpkin patch and received the same program of drip irrigation, compost, fertilizers, mycorrhizae and spray program. Two of the plants were from the 5.58# Timm. The others were from Nick's previous four pounders or Big Zac seeds.

The seeds were started on June 1 and transplanted July 1. This timing seemed to work well for the early October weigh-offs. No mulch was used. The tomatoes pollinated themselves and most were "megablooms" except one 4#er (unibloom).

All suckers were removed leaving one main trunk. The plants only reached 48" tall (wooden stakes) with no dead-heading needed. The plants were very healthy due to the giant pumpkin regimen being used.

CONNECTICUT FIELD PUMPKIN

OHIO and WORLD RECORD (154.5#)

Grown by: Glenn Orr North Lima, Ohio

Glenn Orr is a 59 year old fabrication maintenance supervisor at General Extrusion. He and his wife Joan have five children and ten grandchildren. Lots of grandfathers grow Halloween pumpkins for the grandchildren- but a 154.5# world record- YIKES!

This pumpkin was exhibited at the Canfield Fair (non-GPC) in late August. A 137.5#er (same plant) is the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth champion for 2009 after winning at the OVGPG weigh-off.

The 101 Meier seed was used to grow these two pumpkins. The 101 Meier is a descendant of the 145 McInnis. Fenton McInnis of Hubbards, Nova Scotia held the world record with the 145#er.

The patch size for this field pumpkin plant was 25' x 30' (750 square feet). It was treated exactly like a giant pumpkin including vine burying, compost, fertility, spray program and irrigation. It was pollinated with the 109 Orr. More than 50 small pumpkins were thinned from this plant. Total 3-way measurements added up to 204".

George Bell and Dempsey Lanterman also exhibited field pumpkins over 100# at the OVGPG weigh-off.

DR. BOB LIGGETT'S 1636 REPORT
Circleville, Ohio

Congratulations to Dr. Bob and Jo Liggett who exhibited the 7th largest pumpkin of all time at the Circleville Pumpkin Show on October 21. This is also the 2nd heaviest ever grown in Ohio. Dr. Liggett is a 70 year old optometrist who has had remarkable success with just three plants. His 1636# pumpkin story is as follows:

It all starts with a soil test. My goal is to get a balance of elements but in the high to very high range. Almost annually, I have to add calcium in the form of gypsum. Ph goal is 6.9. Next is about two cubic yards of manure (fresh cow and alpaca) per 900 square feet, then three inches of crushed sugar maple leaves, then molasses. Early next spring I'll add molasses again, then till the patch as deeply as possible. Next, I'll add the other suggested elements recommended by the soil test along with some humic acid, alfalfa meal, Clearys 3336, Subdue, Grubex (Merit) and three pounds of fish meal in a three foot circle around the planting hole. I also use Rootshield and Bio Endo Plus.

My drip water system is designed to provide an inch of water per week, but I calculate it out and water on a daily basis. While I'm at the office examining eyes, the timer comes on at 11 a.m. and runs for a set amount of time. Fertilizer can be added to the drip when it seems appropriate. The drip lines are parallel to the main vines- about 18-20 inches apart with an emitter every four inches. Any defects due to injury or surface problems are treated with 6% H₂O₂ then puffed with Captan.

Using 3- 15 foot hoops made from 3/4 inch pvc pipe, a shade cover with a 6' x 8' silver colored tarp is positioned to prevent any rain from getting to the stem of the pumpkin and skewed slightly to give the fruit the maximum amount of shade. Keeping the stem dry has eliminated stem rot for me. Keeping the temperature even on a 24 hour basis is key to prevent splits caused by expansion and contraction.

I plan to have my plants out in the garden the first week of May. Each secondary vine is buried after the first leaf. No fruit set before ten feet from the stump. Plan to bend the main vine early so both the continuing main and secondary at the fruit can feed the pumpkin. I spray the pumpkins daily with a calcium solution (one day with Vigor Cal and the next day with Vigor Cal Phosphate). I use an electric fogger each evening, and rotate on a weekly basis: Biorepel (garlic), sea weed, fish emulsion, insecticide, fertilizer, fungicide, micronutrients etc.

DAVE and CAROL STELTS- 1662.5#
Interview by Alan Gibson
Ohio Valley Giant Pumpkin Growers

Dave and Carol Stelts of Edinburg, Pennsylvania grew the 4th largest pumpkin of all time in 2009. The 1662.5#er named "Karma III" is the Pennsylvania state record. Dave also set the world record in 2000 with his 1140#er grown in Leetonia, Ohio. He is a three time champion at the OVGPG weigh-off in Canfield, Ohio and served as a director of the Ohio Valley Giant Pumpkin Growers for many years.

Dave is currently serving his fifth year as president of the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth. The Great Pumpkin Commonwealth now has 75 weigh-off sites around the world. The group is also responsible for the educational and awards programs at the Niagara Falls seminar held in March. Dave is an avid promoter of the Great Pumpkin Cruises. This year he served as the organizer of the marlin fishing trip in Barbados.

Dave's educational visits to the Pacific Northwest, Ontario and New England helped inspire the OVGPG members to improve their growing practices. He has hosted such notable growers as Jack and Sherry LaRue, Joel Holland, Kirk Mombert, Steve Daletas and Ron and Dick Wallace at his home. Dave has opened his patch to many OVGPG patch tours and shared his ideas freely. Two Stelts innovations are the "Red Zone" (keeping the fruit at least 10-12' out on the main vine) and "Back to Back" (cutting down plant size to double the genetics in a patch).

Dave's seed crosses are legendary including the 801.5 that grew the famous 846 Calai. The 705 that grew his 1140# world record in 2000 and the current 904 that grew the 1662.5#er.

Dave has grown three of the all time 24 largest pumpkins. In 2007 he grew the 1537 (#20) and the 1527.5 (#24). This year's 1662.5 is #4.

Dave and Carol Stelts (2009- 7 plants)

1662.5#	+9.84%	2 nd - ovgpg
1421.5#	+12.06%	1 st - Longwood Gardens
1333.5#	+3.55%	3 rd - Oakwood Nursery
1276# (dmg)	-.16%	
1248#	+13.99%	1 st -New Bremen
1134#	+.36%	5 th - Chillicothe
1021#	+7.94%	6 th - Pumpkinville

Dave says the 1276 (dmg) was on its way to 1500#. This would have been the "Royal Flush +" of giant pumpkins (1 in each category 1000#- 1600#).

In 2010, Dave and Carol will plant the 904 Stelts, 985 Werner, 1421.5 Stelts, 1662.5 Stelts and 1678 Hunt. They will be crossing the 1662.5 Stelts x 1678 Hunt.

The patch is 40' x 120' (4800 sq. ft.). The 1662.5#er grew on 900 square feet while the other six had about 600 square feet each. The 6th year patch is on a terraced hill side (sandy soil). It has permanent underground water lines and a pump house.

Dave tried the organic approach the first three years but was stuck in the 1000-1100# range. He has done better with compost and organic fertilizers while using chemicals for insects, foliar and soil diseases.

The plants were grown back to back with very little space between the trunks. The 1662.5 was grown at 17' on the main vine. It was a six segment flower pollinated with

the 1350 Starr on June 30. Measurements were: 194"- circumference, 112" side to side and 111" long. Total inches were 417 with an estimated weight of 1514#.

Fall preparation included tillage, subsoiling and 30 cubic yards of manure and leaves.

Dave was in the Western Labs program this past year. Extensive testing was done with soil, tissue and fruit samples being submitted. Results will be analyzed at the Niagara Falls seminar by John Taberna (soil scientist and owner of Western Labs in Parma, Idaho).

Soil pH was 7.4. Soil amendments added were: 50# humic acid, 100# alfalfa pellets, 175# kelp and 120# gypsum. The only fertilizer added after this was a weekly spray of compost tea (brewed using worm castings- compost- molasses- humic acid- "soil soup mix"- seaweed- fish emulsion- calcium).

Five pounds of RTI's "Symbiosis Pumpkin Pro" mycorrhizae and five pounds of Rootshield granules were used mainly in the trenches when burying vines.

Seeds were started April 24th and set out in early May. Dave's huts are 4' x 7' with a double layer of Reemay and plastic. A 250 watt light provides night time heat.

Insect control consisted of 15# of granular Merit and a spray rotation of Scimitar and Merit. Foliar diseases were controlled rotating Daconil, Nova, Phyton 27 and Companion. Soil diseases are controlled spraying Aliette and using granular Subdue and Clearys 3336.

The Stelts have used drip irrigation the past two years. The drip tape has emitters 8" apart with 15" between the tapes. They had no frost problems in September so used no Reemay that month. The fruit are grown on 2-3" of sand with the white ground cover on top.

Congratulations to Dave and Carol Stelts on a great growing season and much success in the future.