



Giant Pumpkin Growing Tips

Start with the gardening basics:

- Ideally, you will have a 10-12 diameter area in a sunny, well-drained spot with rich garden soil. The area should be protected from wind and receive 8 or more hours of sun daily.
- Spread 6 inches of compost and till it in. Build the growing area into a low, wide mound like a pitcher's mound.
- Start your seeds in a seedling pot and transfer to the garden when you are confident the last date of frost has passed. By this time, your most vigorous seedling should have several leaves.
- Check the soil moisture daily. The ground at all times needs to be moist - but not soggy. When watering, try to prevent moisture from getting on the leaves to prevent fungal growth (a drip method is one way to accomplish this)
- Fertilize weekly and keep the area weed free for the length of the growing season.
- Watch for any signs of pest activity and manage them early to avoid damage.

And don't forget the TLC:

1. If the growing area is exposed to wind, install a low fence around the pumpkin plant to prevent leaf damage and desiccation. You need the leaves to remain large and supple to provide maximum photosynthetic energy.
2. Pick off all flower buds until the pumpkin vine is about 10 feet long. This allows the plants to grow more and larger leaves, which will then support rapid growth of a single pumpkin.
3. After the vine's 10 feet long, allow several flowers to develop into pumpkins, but remove all but the largest fruit after several weeks of growth.
4. Spread a bed of sand under the chosen pumpkin to keep it out of contact with the moist earth below. This is essential for preventing rot.
5. Carefully adjust the chosen pumpkin so the stem is at a perpendicular orientation to the vine. The stems usually start out with an acute angle to the vine, but they are prone to breaking in this arrangement once they become brittle later in the season.
6. Build a shade area over your chosen pumpkin. In full sun, the skin of the fruit hardens earlier, restricting its ultimate size. Just remember not to shade any leaves!
7. Remove the rootlets that form along the vine for several feet on either side of the pumpkin as it develops. The vine needs to lift freely from the ground as the pumpkin grows.
8. Spread a couple inches of soil over roots that form along other parts of the vines to encourage a larger root system. Water and fertilize the soil under all the vines, not just the main root system, to encourage maximum uptake.
9. Prune the lateral vines that develop off the main vine once they reach about 8 feet in length. More leaves are good, however, more vine growth takes away from pumpkin growth. Many pumpkin growers recommend training the vines into a [Christmas tree format](#), where the longest lateral vines are closest to the planting location, becoming shorter as they move toward the growing tip.
10. If you can keep up the TLC regime until the first frost of fall (when the leaves will turn brown and die), you should end up with a massive pumpkin. At this point, clip the pumpkin from its stem.

Please do some research online to help you with growing tips. Here are a few suggestions:

- www.miracleagro.com
- www.gardenerspath.com
- www.dengarden.com

Good luck and good growing!