



Giant Pumpkin Growing Guide

Your pumpkin seedling is an Atlantic Giant Pumpkin Plant.

These have the potential to grow to weigh hundred of kilos during the 140-160 days of their growth cycle.

Planting your pumpkin seedling in late October will give you a pumpkin ready in late March/early April.

Where to Plant

Preferably a level location with full sunshine through the day, sheltered from the wind and close to a water supply. You will also need to consider how you can provide shade to the pumpkin later in the season and how you will access the site to move your (hopefully) massive pumpkin when it's time for weigh-in.

How to plant

Dig a hole up to a metre deep and fork in lots of compost and rotted manure. Pumpkins are heavy feeders and giant pumpkins even more so. Ideally you should end up with a mound of well-turned over soil and compost that will settle flat over time but initially will help keep the seedling above ground level during cooler temperatures and help with drainage and water run off. Dig a hole as deep and wide as the pot the seedling is in, place your pumpkin plant in, backfill with soil and water in well. Keep well watered to encourage root growth. If you are growing more than one pumpkin plant, you will need at least 3-4 metre spacing.

Taking Care of Your Growing Pumpkin Plant

As your pumpkin vine starts to grow and spread, you can bury the vine with soil so that only the leaf and half the leaf stalk are visible - this encourages root growth along the vine, increasing stability and the ability to take up nutrients and water.

Watering your giant pumpkin is incredibly important if you want to obtain as much size as possible. You want the soil to be moist, but not too wet. Give your plant a good drink at least twice a week and you will need to increase this as the size of your pumpkin increases towards the end of the growing season.

Water in the morning ideally, avoiding the leaves as much as possible as they are susceptible to fungal leaf diseases such as powdery mildew

Once your plant starts to set fruit, choose a single pumpkin, which could be the biggest or the most attractive shaped, and remove the rest.

Your pumpkin later in the summer season can grow up to 5kg a day, so make sure you increase your watering to everyday to ensure maximal growth. Place a thick layer of straw, or newspaper or cardboard under your pumpkin while it is small to avoid damage to the underside. Once your pumpkin is the size of a basketball, it is beneficial to provide some form of shade. This is to prevent sun scald and overheating of the pumpkin which can cause it to prematurely ripen and halt growth. Shade can be provided in a number of simple ways - an umbrella or a tarp held up by stakes. Be inventive!

So feed your soil to feed your pumpkin, water daily once it has really started to grow in size and watch the heat of the sun.

And soon you'll be having to think about how you are going to move this giant pumpkin for the weigh in!

There are a few tips here

<https://giantpumpkins.co.nz/how-to-page/moving-your-pumpkin/>

Have fun! See you at the weigh-in next year!

