



Anyone interested in growing giant pumpkins can check out a "how-to" website provided by the Atlantic Giant Genetics Cooperative. Pumpkin shown weighed 1,689 lbs.

How To Grow A Giant Pumpkin

Want to grow a 1,725-lb. pumpkin? A great place to start is the Atlantic Giant Genetics Cooperative (AGGC) website. It's a great "how-to" site for anyone interested in growing a garden giant.

"The website offers complete information on more than 9,000 giant pumpkins that have been grown," says Mike Nepereny, founder of AGGC. "It focuses on the Atlantic Giant variety, its weight gains and the genetics behind it. It also tracks some qualities such as disease and environmental resistance, color, shape and genetic stability. But the emphasis has always been on weight."

Non-members get limited access to the website, but can enter information on the pumpkins they have grown. They can check out the largest pumpkins grown in the past five years and find out where and how they were grown, as well as the parent lines that produced them. Select this year's largest pumpkin, the 1,725-lb. giant grown by Christy Harp of Canfield, Ohio, and the info page says it had four lobes and grew from the primary main vine. It was germinated on April 29th, set out on May 8th, pollinated on June 26th and harvested on October 1st. You can learn what the weather was like during the growing season, see pictures of it, and find out the origin of the seed. Other pages give a genetic record of its ancestors and information on each of them.

"Those who pay the \$20 member fee have complete access to the database, advanced querying capabilities, reports, graphs, articles, photos and more," says Nepereny. "They can specify favorites and be notified when new data is entered on pumpkins

grown or pollinated from a favorite."

Nepereny, a software developer by trade, created the website a few years after starting to grow Atlantic Giants himself. Another grower had been tracking the pumpkin's development over the years, but Nepereny realized a database approach was needed to handle the volume of data.

Today the AGGC website handles information submitted by more than 300 members worldwide. Entries are limited to pumpkins that are 300 lbs. and larger. Nepereny says the information is invaluable to serious growers.

"The site allows them to select seed based on complete information on each pumpkin in the database," he says. "They can explore the genetic hierarchies and examine the offspring those pumpkins have produced."

Nepereny adds that the site also makes it easy for growers to store and access their own information as well as view that of others.

"Growers are constantly cross-pollinating, hoping to breed a larger pumpkin," says Nepereny. "There is a lot of seed trading that goes on between growers. By putting their data on the site, it makes it visible to others."

He hopes to expand the website to help develop some new hybrids. He is also looking for commercial breeders or seed houses that he can collaborate with to create new pumpkin varieties.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mike Nepereny, Atlantic Giant Genetics Cooperative (webmaster@aggc.org; www.aggc.org).

"Sledge Hammer" Log Splitter

"It's a safe, simple way to split wood," says Rex Gogerty, who uses a sledge hammer and an old "sliding wedge" to split firewood.

The wedge is welded to a steel bracket that's free to slide up or down over a length of 2-in. sq. tubing, which is anchored 18 in. deep in the ground and also attached to the top rail on a chain link fence for stability. A flat stump serves as a solid base for placing the firewood to be split.

"It's probably not something you'd want to stand there and do all day, but it comes in handy for splitting wood we use to heat our shop," says Gogerty. "Unlike with a powered splitter there's virtually no way to get hurt when using it, because the bracket raises and holds the splitting wedge until it's needed. A couple of blows with the sledge hammer is all it takes to split wood up to 18 in. long.

"The top of the sq. tubing is removable, allowing me to remove the wedge and



A couple of blows with a sledge hammer is all it takes for Rex Gogerty to split wood.

sharpen it as needed. We already had the wedge, which is quite old."

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A flash photo of a storage bin shows a few potatoes beginning to rot.

Flash Photo Helps Spot Rotten Potatoes

Damian Lakatos, Johnstown, Penn., uses a camera as a simple way to find rotten potatoes in dim-lit storage areas.

The camera's flash causes potatoes with rotten spots to show up darker than the other potatoes.

"The rotten potatoes look fine to the eye in a dim-lit cellar, and they don't show up in photos taken without a flash. But the flash picks them out," says Lakatos. "It lets me remove the rotten potatoes before they can spoil the entire bin."

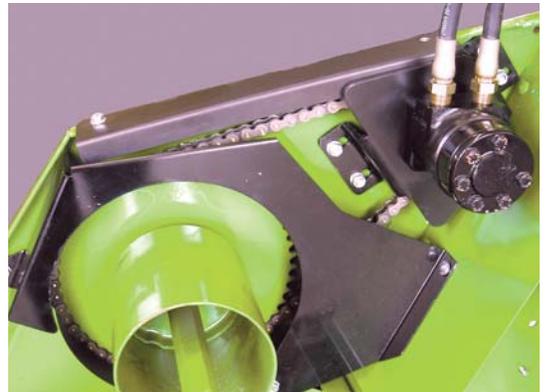
"I discovered this method by accident," he told FARM SHOW. "I wanted to send my sister some photos of the potatoes I was

storing in a dim-lit bin so I took a few shots. I forgot to turn on the flash in the first photo so I took another photo, this time using the flash."

After downloading the photos from the camera, Lakatos noticed that a few of the potatoes showed up darker in the flash photo. "As it turns out, the darker potatoes were just starting to rot, and I was able to pick them out before they made a mess. In the non-flash photo, all the potatoes look fine."

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Kit allows you to operate header's cross auger using the variable speed of the combine's hydraulic system. Hydraulic motor bolts inside header's end panel.



Hydraulic Auger Drive Kit For Deere Combines

If you're tired of watching corn ears fly out of your combine's header, you'll be interested in this new hydraulic motor auger drive kit designed for Deere 40 and 90 series, 6 and 8-row corn headers. It allows you to operate the header's cross auger using the variable speed of the combine's hydraulic system.

The kit consists of a hydraulic motor that bolts on inside the header's end panel using supplied mounting brackets. You drill four holes in the panel and reroute the chain from the header's mechanical slip clutch to the motor.

"It solves a problem that has been getting worse in recent years," says Dave Clarke, Clarke Machine, Howard, S. Dak. "The new BT corn hybrids hold the ears tighter to the stalk, which causes the header auger to throw too many ears before they reach the feederhouse.

"Slowing the auger down helps, but

there's a limit to how slow you can go, even when using an auger slow-down kit. The hydraulic motor can be operated at an infinite speed from 0 to 150 rpm's, allowing you to pick exactly the speed you want. If you want to sell the header but keep the hydraulic motor, you can easily convert back to mechanical drive."

The kit includes the motor, mounting bracket, and hydraulic hose couplers that plug into the combine.

Clarke says the company plans to soon offer the hydraulic motor auger drive kit for other combine brands.

The hydraulic motor auger drive kit for a Deere 40 series corn header sells for \$730; for a 90 series header, \$920.

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