

Ekka

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ROYAL QUEENSLAND SHOW



GIANT PUMPKIN GROWING TIPS

What you need to know to grow an award-winning giant pumpkin

- Plant your Atlantic Giant Pumpkin seed by the end of December 2018 to ensure it has enough time to grow.
- Your pumpkin patch should be well drained, spacious and sunny, but in a wind protected area. Each seedling will grow into a large vine, so remember when selecting your site to allow enough room for it to grow where it won't have to compete for nutrients and water with other plants.
- Giant pumpkin seeds are larger than normal pumpkin seeds so before sowing, soak them for an hour or two in lukewarm water.
- Sow a couple of seeds pointy end down in a light, free-draining compost.
- Make sure you keep the soil moist, without overwatering it. The seed should germinate in about 3-7 days.
- For a longer growing season (and a bigger pumpkin) you can try hand pollination. This can be done by finding a female flower on the main vine as far away from the base of the plant as possible. You can hand pollinate by removing some male flowers and using them to dab the pollen onto the centre of newly-opened female flowers.
- Your pumpkin will grow all Summer. Be sure to fertilise and water regularly, but don't over water as it may rot. They have a lot of growth to do (3.5-5.5kg per day) so your pumpkins need weekly feeding with liquid manure or liquid compost.
- A giant pumpkin takes approximately four and a half months to grow – about 70 to 90 days before any fruit appears on the vine.
- Once established, prune back your vine to one fruit – less competition for the big fruit.
- The fruit matures in Autumn.
- Pumpkins get sunburnt too – so to help it achieve maximum size cover it with a sheet in the hotter parts of the day.
- A pumpkin is mature when the skin of the pumpkin hardens off and begins to look a bit rough. A giant pumpkin will only last approximately two months once cut off the vine. Never cut a giant pumpkin off the vine until it is ready for competition, unless you think rot or disease may kill the fruit early if left on the vine.