



GIANT PUMPKIN AND WATERMELON CONTEST

Eligibility

Only currently Enrolled 4-H'ers may participate in the Giant Pumpkin & Watermelon Contest. 4-H'ers must be between the ages of nine and nineteen by the first day of the Arkansas State Fair.

Registration

Seed Request: Seeds for the contest are \$2.00 per packet of Pumpkin seeds and \$2.00 per packet of Watermelon seeds. County Agents or Program Assistants request seeds via County Manager Registration in 4HOnline. Due date to request seeds is the first Monday in April.

Participation Report: A list of eligible participants must be submitted to the State 4-H Office by the first Monday in July. This can be via 4HOnline at the time of the seed request or by FAX or e-mail using the Participation Report (see attached). 4-H'ers not on the Participation Report submitted by July are not eligible to enter their Pumpkins and Watermelons at the State Fair for judging.

State Fair Registration: Counties must register for the State weigh-in via 4-H Day at the State Fair Registration in 4HOnline in September (unless announced otherwise). Only five entries per category (Pumpkin or Watermelon) will be allowed *from each county* for the State Fair Contest.

Weigh-In: Registrants must accompany their entries to the State Fair to be eligible for judging. The official weigh-in is from 9:00 am to 11:00 am on State 4-H Day at the State Fair. Location to be announced. Ribbons are awarded at 11:45 on the day of the weigh-in. Winning pumpkins and watermelons places 1-3 will be left on display for the week and can be picked up the following Saturday. Cash prizes may be awarded *contingent upon funding*.

State Fair Creative Arts Exhibitors: 4-H participants can also enter their pumpkin or watermelon in the Arkansas State Fair Creative Arts Exhibitors Competition. They still need to be present for the 4-H weigh-in. They need to follow the guidelines for each separate competition and be present at the official 4-H weigh-in. Check the current State Fair information.

Contest Rules

1. Only the Atlantic Giant variety of pumpkin can be grown in the Giant **Pumpkin** Contest.
2. Only the Carolina Cross variety of watermelon can be grown in the Giant **Watermelon** Contest.
3. The **Giant Watermelon Growing Contest** will be conducted from May 14-October 8. *The planting dates will be May 14-June 27.
4. The **Giant Pumpkin Growing Contest** will be conducted from May 14-October 8. *The planting dates will be May 14-June 27.



5. 4-H'ers will have about 135 days from planting to harvest for the watermelon activity. For example, if your county's usual watermelon planting date is May 18, then the cut-off date for harvest would be October 8.
6. 4-H'ers will have about 150 days from planting to harvest for the Giant Pumpkin Contest. For example, if your county's planting date is May 13, then the cut-off date for harvest would be October 8.
7. Pumpkins and watermelons that are damaged due to rots, punctures, etc., will not be eligible for state weigh-in.
8. County planting and cut-off dates for harvest should be established by the County Extension Office.
9. Each 4-H'er must be responsible for growing their own pumpkin or watermelon.
10. Participants can germinate their pumpkin and watermelon seeds in cups or other containers to produce transplants for later planting into the garden. Any container may be used to grow the transplants. *Follow the above dates for planting seeds in the garden or selected containers.

For further information, contact:

Clay Wingfield
Program Technician III
Southwest Research & Extension Center
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GIANT PUMPKIN AND WATERMELON GROWING
CONTEST
PARTICIPATION REPORT

RETURN BY 1st Mon in JULY

TO: State 4-H Office
 Cooperative Extension Service
 2301 South University Avenue
 Little Rock, Arkansas 72204
 or e-mail to lwooten@uaex.edu

COUNTY: _____

DATE: _____

AGENT SIGNATURE: _____

	First & Last Name	Gender	Pumpkin Participant	Watermelon Participant
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				

(Make copies of this form if needed.)

(Use this form if you did not supply participant names in 4HOnline when you ordered seeds.)

How to Grow Giant Pumpkins



SOIL SELECTION

Choose a location that is high in organic matter with some fine sand mixed in the soil. Red or black clay soils are not good for growing pumpkins. Add well-rotted manure, peat moss, or grass clippings to the place you plan to grow the pumpkin. The site must be well drained, not a location where water remains in puddles.

SOIL TEST

Obtain a soil sample and submit for analysis.

FERTILIZER

The soil test will explain how much plant food is needed (fertilizer, lime, etc.).

VARIETY SELECTION

Plant the kinds of seeds that will grow *Giant* pumpkins. Atlantic Giant seeds will grow pumpkins up

to 500 pounds. The growing period for this variety is 145 days from planting to harvest. Check with your county Extension agent for other seed varieties.

WHEN TO PLANT SEEDS

Plant seeds in hills after mid-May. Plant four to five seeds per hill at a depth of one inch. When the plants have put on four leaves, remove all but one plant. Allow 100 square feet for vines to run.

REMOVING SMALL PUMPKINS FROM THE VINES

Leave only one or two small pumpkins on the vine. When the small pumpkins weigh about one pound, leave the most attractive one on the vine and remove the other one. Cut off all little pumpkins throughout the growing season.

DISEASE AND INSECT CONTROL

Use a fungicide such as Daconil for disease control according to the rate and schedule on the bottle label. Use Thiodan or Sevin for control of squash vine borer and squash bug. Check the label for the rate and spray schedule needed. It is very important to follow all label directions carefully.

WEED CONTROL

Keep the weeds and grass under control throughout the growing season.

WATER

A high level of moisture should be present throughout the growing season. Two inches of water is needed every seven to ten days. Water should not remain in puddles on the soil surface for more than one day.



PUMPKINS CONTINUED

PROTECTION FROM WIND AND SUN

Protect pumpkins from wind damage until the vines are interwoven and well anchored. It's particularly critical during the first four or five weeks after pumpkins germinate. Protect pumpkins by placing them on a bed of straw and sand (see watermelon). Cover the top with more straw to protect from the sun.



LATE GROWING SEASON - WATCH FOR STINK BUG ATTACK

Late in the season pumpkins are attacked by stink bugs; use Sevin 50% wettable powder (WP) or Thiodan 50% WP. Follow the label directions carefully.

HARVEST

Harvest late in September or October when the pumpkin is a deep, solid color and the rind is hard.

HARVEST CARE

Leave a four to five inch stem attached to the pumpkin. If the stem is broken off at the base of the pumpkin. It will not keep well. Store in a dry building at 50-to-55 degrees Fahrenheit.

Use straw! Don't place on cement.

How To Grow Giant Watermelons



SOIL SELECTION

Choose a location that is high in organic matter with some fine sand mixed in the soil. Red or black clay soils are not good for growing watermelons. Be sure to add well-rotted manure, peat moss, or grass clipping to the place you plan to grow the melon. The site must be well drained, not where water remains in puddles.

SOIL TEST

Obtain a soil sample for analysis and give it to your county Extension agent.

FERTILIZER

The soil test will explain how much plant food is needed (fertilizer, lime, etc.).

VARIETY SELECTION

Plant the kind of seed that will develop into a *Big Watermelon*. Carolina Cross variety requires 130 days from planting to maturity. The melon will weigh up to 200 pounds. Check with your county extension agent for other varieties.

WHEN TO PLANT

Plant seeds in hills in late May. Plant four to five seeds per hill at a depth of one inch. When the plants have put on four leaves, remove all but one plant. Add water to keep the soil moist. Be sure there is adequate moisture when seeds are planted. Allow 100 square feet per each hill for vines to run.

MOISTURE

A high level of moisture should be present throughout the growing season. Two inches of water is needed every seven to ten days. Avoid having water remain in puddles on the soil surface for more than one day. Too much water may cause cracking.

INSECT AND DISEASE CONTROL

Watermelons have three or four common diseases. These diseases can be controlled by using a fungicide such as Daconil. Follow the label directions carefully.

REMOVING SMALL MELONS FROM THE PLANT

Allow the vine to grow about 15-feet long. The plant should be blooming at this time. Leave only two small, healthy melons on each hill. With scissors or a knife, cut off all new melons that set on the plant. When the melons are about a pound in weight, remove one, leaving only one melon throughout the growing season.

WEED CONTROL

Keep the weeds and grass under control throughout the growing season.



PROTECTION FROM THE SUN AND SOIL-BORNE DISEASE

The melon should be protected from the sun through the long growing period required to produce giant watermelons. Make a straw bed and carefully place the melon on it. Keep the straw dry by placing plastic, or better still, one inch of sand on the soil under the straw. This will prevent the spread of soil-borne disease. Then, cover the top of the melon with more straw. The straw will protect the melon from sunburn and rotting.



HARVEST

Watermelons are mature when the underside next to the ground is pale yellow. If this spot is vivid yellow, the melon is overripe and will decay more rapidly. If the melon is very hard or white or very pale green on the underside, it is probably immature and can be left on the vine.

HARVEST CARE

Cut the watermelon from the vine. Do not pull it off. Pulling can cause the melon to crack. Disease can enter through the crack and rot your giant.

Watermelons are sensitive to temperatures below 50°F. They will become pitted and rot faster when stored at temperatures below 50°F. Optimum storage is 50-60°F.