

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

From Seed to Harvest: A beginner's guide to growing pumpkins

Pumpkins can be grown for decorative and edible purposes, with different varieties grown to make pumpkin pie, carving for Halloween, to be used in canning and more. Pumpkins range in sizes from small, gourd-like varieties to large options and differ in color and outside texture as well.

To plant:

Since pumpkins grow best in warmer climates, plant them outside after all chances of frost have passed. Pumpkins can be started indoors three weeks before the last frost date, but they do best when sowed directly into the garden. When planting in the garden, plant three to five seeds per mound about 1 inch deep. Planting in a mound keeps the soil warm and aids in germination, but pumpkins can also be planted in rows. If planting in a row, space seeds 6 to 12 inches apart. Plan accordingly, as pumpkins need lots of space to grow. If garden space is tight, pumpkins can be planted in 5- or 10-gallon buckets, or they can be planted along the edge of a garden where the vines can sprawl into the lawn or onto a sidewalk.

To grow:

Once pumpkins sprout, thin to two of the healthiest seedlings per mound. Make sure the pumpkins are in full sun and water them 1 inch per week, but don't let water get on the leaves or the fruit. Pumpkins do best in soil with a pH of 6.0 to 6.8. Once the pumpkin begins to form, pinch the fuzzy end off of the vine to direct more energy to the pumpkin. Turn pumpkins regularly to encourage equal size but do so gently so



[Halloween Pumpkin seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

you don't damage the vine.

To harvest:

Pumpkins are ready to harvest when the color they are supposed to become is deep and rich. This is typically orange, although there are white pumpkins and other colors as well. Another way to tell if a pumpkin is ripe is to press a fingernail against its skin. If the skin resists puncture, it is ready for harvest. The rind should be hard, and the pumpkin should sound hollow when tapped. Cut the pumpkin off the vine with pruners, leaving 3-4 inches of stem.

What pumpkins crave:

Pumpkins are heavy feeders with a long growing season. Prior to planting in the garden, add compost and aged manure to the soil. Add 1 cup of complete organic fertilizer below each plant prior to sowing and mix the fertilizer into the soil. Regularly treat pumpkins with compost and manure mixed with water or feed weekly with a



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fish or kelp-based fertilizer. Another option for fertilizing is to use a high-nitrogen fertilizer when plants are 1 foot tall and a high-phosphorous fertilizer before the blooming period starts.

Where to buy pumpkin seeds:

Urban Farmer sells pumpkins for carving, cannings, baking and decorative uses. Some are traditional orange, heirloom, white and more in large and small sizes. Check out pumpkin seeds on our website at ufseeds.com!



[Casper Pumpkin seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)



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