

# How to grow a giant pumpkin

By Erica Quinlan  
AGRINEWS PUBLICATIONS

GREENFIELD, Ind. — If you've ever considered growing giant pumpkins, now is the time to start planning.

First-time growers can

realistically grow a 500-pound pumpkin, depending on their gardening prowess, said Mark Seest, member of Indiana Pumpkin Growers Association.

The key is to start the process sooner rather than later.

"If you want to grow a giant pumpkin, one of the first things you should do is join Indiana Pumpkin Growers after the first of the year via the website," Seest said.

"We will send you quite a few pumpkin seeds that will be the correct variety: Dill's Atlantic Giants. If you want to grow a big pumpkin, you have to get the right seeds. Then you have to get it started early."

The pumpkins take anywhere from 120 to 140 days to grow, he said.

Keeping them alive all season requires managing bugs and fungus.

For those with a competitive streak, IPGA holds several "weigh-off" competitions each year.

"The Indiana Pumpkin Growers Association is a small group of volunteers that organizes several

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**Mark Seest**

INDIANA PUMPKIN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

weigh-offs," Seest said. "This year we had five that people could take their pumpkins to and visit with other growers.

"Pumpkin growers are really good about helping each other. There aren't many secrets. Most people are glad to help you.

"We're always looking for more people to try and grow these big pumpkins."

The world's heaviest pumpkin was grown in Germany, weighing in at 2,624 pounds.

A new record for the U.S. was set this year by a New Hampshire grower. The pumpkin weighed 2,528 pounds.

The Indiana record is held by Mark Goodman from Marion at 1,739 pounds.

Learn more at [www.ipga.us](http://www.ipga.us) or at [www.big-pumpkins.com](http://www.big-pumpkins.com).



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