

QUINN WERNER- "GPC GROWER OF THE YEAR"

Interview by Alan Gibson
Ohio Valley Giant Pumpkin Growers

Congratulations to Quinn Werner of Saegertown, Pennsylvania for being named the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth's "Grower of the Year". Quinn's three heaviest pumpkins (1521.5#, 1483.5# and 1472.5#) totaled 4477.5# for a new world record.

Quinn grew three of the top six pumpkins in 2008. All time, he has grown five of the top thirty. He has now won the prestigious OVGPG weigh-off five times.

His seeds such as the 985, 1556.5, 1363 and 1446.5 are in demand all over the world. Throw in that he is an extremely hard worker and nice guy and you have the picture. We are very glad to have Quinn as a director of the Ohio Valley Giant Pumpkin Growers.

Here are the 2008 results for the Quinn Werner pumpkin patch. His personal Top 10 average of 1309# would have beaten any of the 65 GPC weigh-off sites last year.

	PUMPKIN	MOTHER (seed)	VARIANCE	PLACING
1.	1521.5#	1161 Rodonis	+11.3%	1 st -OVGPG
2.	1483.5#	1385 Jutras	+11%	1 st -Oakland
3.	1472.5#	985 Werner	+10%	1 st -Pumpkinville
4.	1424.4#	904 Stelts	+9%	1 st -Chillicothe
5.	1413.5# (dmg)	1556 Werner	+7.3%	-----
6.	1264.5#	998.6 Pukos	+2%	2 nd -New Bremen
7.	1237.5#	1363 Werner	+8%	1 st - Ft. Wayne

8.	1234#	1350 Starr	+12.2%	4 th - OVGPG
9.	1086.5#	1308 McKie	+11%	6 th -Pumpkinville
10.	953#	1041.5 McKie	+10%	4 th -Canfield Fair
11.	772.5# (stump rot)	1207 Young	+3.4%	8 th -Canfield Fair
12.	669# (dmg)-split on 8/ 15	1100 Hester	+11.5%	-----

PATCH SIZE (Layout)

Quinn's twelve plants are grown in two patches totaling 9240 square feet. Each plant is 22" x 35' (770 square feet). Plants are spaced 20' back to back. The first secondary is angled back to the corners, leaving an empty triangle between the two plants. This is filled in using the tertiaries that are trained back toward the walkway. The finished plant has the first few side vines angled backwards, the next few straight out to 11' and the rest are "lobstered" to fill out the patch. By using this pattern, he has a lot of plant behind the fruit.

Ten of the plant sites were on third year ground and two were on new ground with no notable difference.

COMPOST-SOIL NUTRIENTS

The entire patch is covered with 2" of aged poultry manure in the fall. The organic matter level is at 8-11% each year. Quinn believes that too much organic matter can cause premature rot due to excessive nitrogen and increased soil diseases.

Sulphur has been used in the past to lower the pH to 7.0. Gypsum is usually applied. Chelated manganese is foliar applied to address that shortage. Epsom salts are spread to increase the magnesium level.

Fifty pounds of granular humic acid and 250# of granular kelp are spread over the entire patch. Fifty pounds of calcium nitrate was also spread over the patch this past spring. Liquid calcium is only used on a fruit if there is a sag line problem.

A subsoiler is used each fall going both ways at three feet apart. No compost teas are used.

GROUND COVERS/ SAND

Quinn puts 2" of sand under the pumpkin with the nylon ground cover on top of the sand.

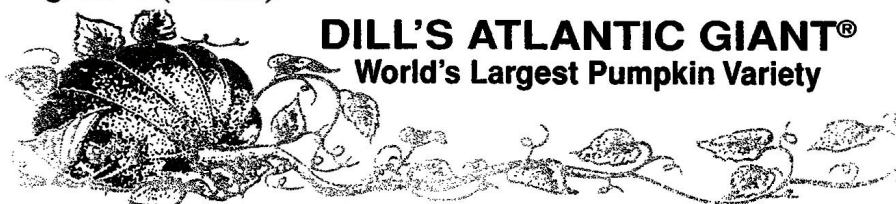
MYCORRHIZAE

MycoApply Endo (granular 4 way endomycorrhizae) was used mainly in the pots and in the huts to inoculate the roots. Some was used when burying vines but this slows down vine burying and the jury is out on this practice.

INSECTICIDES- FUNGICIDES

Granular Merit is used in the huts and then the whole area before tillage in early June for systemic insect control. Talstar is sprayed weekly as a general insecticide. Sprayable Merit is added every three weeks for aphid control.

Foliar fungicides used are Kocide or Phyton 27 (copper fungicides), Daconil, Nova and Chipco Signature (Aliette).



Soil fungicides being drenched are Subdue + Medallion and Clearys 3336 + Chipco 26019 for phythium and fusarium.

IRRIGATION (DRIP)

Drip irrigation is used mainly to reduce foliar diseases. The T- tapes are spaced 14” apart.

FROST PROTECTION

Quinn is in a fairly cool area of Pennsylvania with frosts in May and September very common. Two lights are used in each plastic hut during May when frost is anticipated.

In September, triple Reemay is placed directly on the plants on frosty nights and removed in the morning. Quinn feels that permanent Reemay/ plastic structures in September create a hot, humid micro-climate leading to more disease and fruit collapse.

This was the coldest growing season in the ten years Quinn has been growing Atlantic Giant pumpkins.

TIMING

Seeds are started about May 1st and set out at the 3rd leaf stage. Pollinations are late June-early July at about 11’-14’ out on the main vine.

SEED SELECTION/ BREEDING

Quinn is a master at choosing seeds. He studies both the male and female parents and talks to growers to research growth habits, percent heavy, interior sag lines and splits.

PREDICTION

Quinn thinks a 2000# pumpkin is possible in the next 5-10 years. More breeding is probably needed to get the combination of total inches plus percent heavy to the chart to accomplish the one ton pumpkin. Also we probably have more work to do in refining our growing techniques.

Thanks to Quinn for supporting our auctions and seed sales with his great stable of seeds. He is definitely “Mr. Consistant” when it comes to growing giant pumpkins.

**BILL EDWARDS
MARSHALL, MICHIGAN
267# WATERMELON (#2 all time)
Congratulations from your friends in the OVGPG**

**“GROWING THE BIG ONE”
Bill Edwards**

This giant watermelon was grown from the 255 Mitchell and pollinated with the 262 Bright.

According to all the information I've read or heard, you have to live in the south to grow a large watermelon. Due to the fact that my buddy, Marv Mitchell from Fenton, Michigan grew a 255 pounder in 2007 and I grew the 267 pounder this year tells me big watermelons can be grown in the north. 2008 was a below normal summer in Michigan for temperatures.

My soil is sandy with a pH of 5.8. In the fall of 2007, I tilled in large amounts of leaves and planted winter rye. In the spring of 2008, I tilled in urea and 12-12-12 fertilizers. During the growing season, I used a watering can to pour on 20-20-20 water soluble fertilizer every 10 days.

I use Daconil for diseases and Mustang for insects.

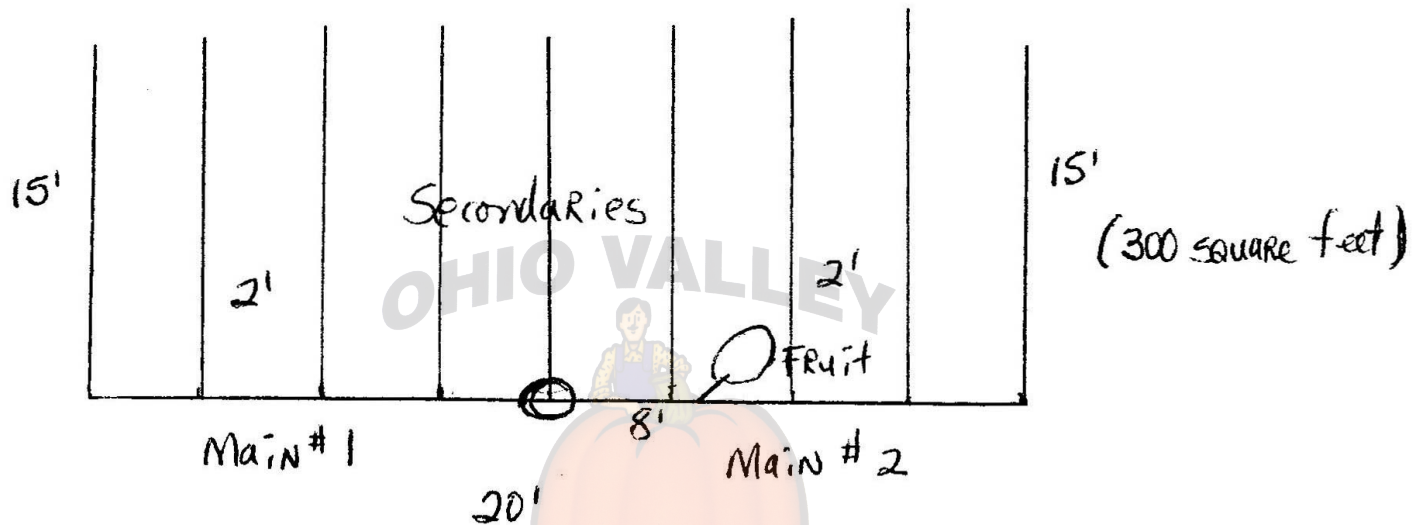
Seeds are germinated like you do pumpkins. Once the seed has rooted, I transplant into 4" x 4" pots with seed starter. The seedlings are put into a small greenhouse with electric heaters.

I transplant to the garden about May 15th (weather permitting).

As the plant grows, I take two main runners and run them in opposite directions. Secondaries grow on one side only and are spaced two feet apart. Total area is 300 square feet. Secondaries are 15' long and the main is 10' each direction and then 15' more as the last secondary (total main vine on each side is 25"). Plant is 20' x 15'.

“GROWING THE BIG ONE” - BILL EDWARDS (continued)

Remove all secondaries on the opposite side of the main vine (but not too soon as they may need to be rerouted to fill in the plant area).



Bury all vines just under the surface (too deep could kill the plant).

Leave one melon per plant. The 267 was grown at 8' out on the main.

As the melon grows, use a sheet to shade it. Water every 3-4 days unless it rains.

The 267 was pollinated on June 28th and picked on September 26th. I hand pollinate so I can control the genetics just like with pumpkins.

Lots of luck in 2009. Bill Edwards

Date	Total Measurements	Days Old
7-18	118.25"	20
7-25	140.75"	27
8-2	158.5"	35
8-14	176.75"	47
8-26	192"	59
9-7	202.75"	71
9-26	209.25"	90

IRRIGATION SUGGESTIONS FOR RAISING GIANT PUMPKINS

Dan Kamburoff-Columbus Irrigation Co.

* OVGPG member and sponsor



Most of you know there are books out there that are quite thick about the art of raising giant pumpkins. There are an equal number of books as thick or thicker about irrigation systems. Alan has graciously allowed me a couple of pages to combine and condense for you, some suggestions and ideas concerning irrigation systems for raising giant pumpkins. I have owned Columbus Irrigation Co., for six years, now. I have used most forms of irrigation, while as a grower for 30+ years. I'm not bold enough to call myself an expert but this ain't my first rodeo, either. Every year I learn more and more about irrigation systems and of course, raising giant pumpkins as a hobby (or a passion) but have not achieved the giant status, yet. Having said all that let's get to the subject at hand: irrigation suggestions for raising giant pumpkins.

The basic components for most irrigation systems are, in order, from the source of water, filters, pressure controlling devices, a pressure gauge, chemigation/fertilization injectors, timers, water delivery components, valving, and the actual water distribution components. Typically most growers have a source of water of somewhere between 7 to 12 gallons a minute. Usually a garden hose (Larger diameter is always better), a yard hydrant (I recommend the 1" one because of larger capacity), or a storage tank.

One of the first components in the system should be a plastic screen type Spin Clean® filter. The spinning action of the filter traps any debris before potentially plugging the irrigation system and keeps it in suspension to collect in the filter's debris basin. This filter works well to keep particulates, sand, grit, rust scale etc, out of the system. The filter will keep organics, ei. algae, out of the system but the filter itself doesn't work well with organics. The filter will not keep dissolved contaminants out of the system, ei. iron or lime.

Somewhere and probably next is the pressure regulator. The pressure regulator is sized to reduce the incoming pressure to the required system pressure, and to meet the flow rate of the system. The pressure regulator provides 2 services to the system. First, it reduces the incoming pressure (usually 20 - 40 psi) down to the operating pressure of 10 psi, if drip TAPE is used. Secondly the pressure regulator creates a pressure reduction for a venturi type fertilizer injector to work.

Somewhere in this area a pressure gauge should be installed. I recommend the liquid filled ones. The needle stays steady to give you a more accurate read. The pressure gauge is like a doctors' stethoscope. It gives you a visual on how the system is working. Ei. plugged filter, blown lines, incorrect flow, etc. Pressure gauges (actually you should have 2, one on the high pressure side and one on the low pressure side) are a must when using a venturi-type injector in order to accurately determine pressure differential for suction injection rate.

Having mentioned the fertilizer injector let's go there. The first type I can recommend is Mazzei® venturi-type, differential pressure injector. A pressure difference between the inlet and outlet of the injector creates a vacuum inside the body, which results in suction through the suction port. The suction can then be used to inject fertilizers and water treatment chemicals in the water.

The second type fertilizer injector is a Chemilizer® HN55: Fixed Rate Injector. The HN55 is a proportional liquid chemical injector; it injects a precise amount of chemical in proportion to a volume of water. The HN55 does not use electricity. It runs off of water flows as low as one gallon per hour, maximum flows of 13 gallons a minute. This type of injector does not require a pressure differential to work. This injector is particularly favorable if drip TUBE is used but can be used for tape systems as well.

Somewhere early on in the system a timer and solenoid valve may be installed. The advantage to installing these earlier in the system reduces the amount of the system that is constantly under pressure and reduces the number of places for a blowout. The very definite advantage of a timer and solenoid valve is it cuts down on baby (pumpkin) sitting time. It automates the system. I've put these in systems for growers to be able to water at those critical times of the day, to cool with a misting system at those critical times of the day, or to fill retention tanks at those more appropriate times of the day. The timer and solenoid valve can be as simple as a battery operated digital timer with a latching type solenoid valve that can be installed anywhere in the field. We can get as elaborate as a 6 valve manifold set-up with a 120volt/24volt timer to control different zones of the system at different times. One of these valves can have a cooling thermostat incorporated into it to run that misting/cooling system only when temperatures are high enough.

The water delivery components simply are a combination of tubing, piping, and valves to get the water from the source, filter, timer(s), injector to the individual "zones" (plants) in your growing area and then in the individual zones as a header line to connect individual emitter lines to the source of water. I don't recommend vinyl hose less

than 2" in diameter. The friction (pressure) loss is too great. Typically poly tubing, or pvc rigid pipe is used. The poly tubing is available in round or a "flat tube" type, that can be driven over in the field or lawn, not the driveway, though. Strategically placed valves are always a plus to achieve better control of your system.

Many growers are using overhead misters to cool the plants. I appears the John Deere® 435/436 sprinkler works well, 1 covering the biggest part of 1 plant. It works both in upright and inverted positions and produces a fine mist to large droplet spray patterns. I'm not happy, wetting the foliage of the plant any more than necessary, but if you feel cooling is that important than this is probably the way to do it. As mentioned before a cooling thermostat can be incorporated into the system to only cool when the temperature is above that certain mark.

The last and probably most important of the system is the emitter distribution system. Probably most widely used is "drip tape." I recommend John Deere RO-DRIP® Drip Tape. Drip tape is widely used in the vegetable production industry. The great advantage to drip tape by it's design, is the precise amount of water and the exact and efficient placement of the water. The relative low cost of the tape can also be a consideration. Drip tape is designed to operate at 10 psi, so a pressure regulator is a must. Each drip line is connected to the header line with an adapter fitting. That fitting with a valve in it gives ultimate control with the ability to open or close each individual drip line. All tape has a preinstalled emitter at a designated distance apart. Tape placed 12 to 16 inches apart with emitter spacing of 8" has irrigated 1500 pound giants. The tape is placed under the eventual, entire canopy of the pumpkin plant. The tape can be placed on the soil directly or 2 to 3 inches deep. Drip tape, by design, is made for one year's use. The management of all this tape underneath the plant definitely needs to be major consideration.

Another method of drip irrigation is using drip line (tube). This is a more rigid tubing, 5/8" in diameter and has preinstalled emitters 12 inches apart. Drip tube operates at 20 -60 psi, so a pressure regulator is usually not necessary. Typically the tubing is placed only in proximity to main vine(s). 1/4" tubing can be plugged into the main line or into the header line to water in the proximity of lateral vines. This type of a system seems a little more manageable under the canopy of a pumpkin plant. It's your call. You people are the experts when it comes to raising the giants. I'm the so-called expert when it comes to irrigation. It would take many more pages to describe all the little pieces and parts. I stock everything I've discussed as well as all those little pieces and parts and look forward to working with you. Just give me a call or an e-mail.

Some basic component parts pricing.

3/4" mpt x 3/4" mpt #4EH-3/4B-150 9gpm filter w/ball valve	\$23.50
1" MPT x 1" MPT #4EH-1BN-150 18gpm filter w/ball valve	\$23.92
PR-075-10 LF .5-5 GPM 10 PSI pressure regulator 3/4" fpt x 3/4" fpt	\$9.83
PMR10 MF 4-16 GPM 10 PSI pressure regulator 3/4" fpt x 3/4" fpt	\$12.00
PMR 10 MF 4-16 GPM 10 PSI pressure regulator 1" fpt x 1" fpt	\$13.08
PR-10-HF 10-32 GPM 10 PSI pressure regulator 1-1/4" fpt x 1" fpt	\$25.55
2-1/2" liquid filled gauge 0-100psi	\$9.99
2-1/2" liquid filled gauge 0-30 psi	\$9.99
#287 Mazzei Injector, Kynar	\$36.92
Suction line kit for 1/2" & 3/4" injectors	\$31.12
Chemilizer HN55 Chemical Injector; 12GPM; 80PSI; 3/4" NHT; 1-100 oz ratio; MSRP \$275.00; special OVGPG price	\$221.00
DIG 510.100 9 VDC, Single station irrigation controller w/ 1" in-line valve with flow control; List price \$113.80	\$92.00
DIG 5006-IP 6 station irrigation, propagation controller w/ rain sensor and wall mount;AC;LCD; List \$109.70	\$99.00
3-way 1" valve manifold assembly, #P39-203	\$74.52
4-way 1" valve manifold assembly, #P39-204	\$96.72
Thermostat, remote bulb, cooling	\$66.52
2" x 300' green lay flat hose; List price \$161.54, .53 per foot; your cost .45 per foot	\$137.67
1.174"x1.050" x 100' PE tubing; #1174x1050-100PE	\$40.50