

# Agriculture Adventures for Families

Whether you like baking, decorating or eating a nutritious fruit, October is all about pumpkins! It's hard to pass a farm stand, produce aisle or front yard without seeing signs of pumpkins from now until Thanksgiving. Why does this agriculture commodity take center stage? Enjoy a glance through this month's adventure to learn some facts and see how important Illinois is to the whole pumpkin theme.



Illinois farmers grow more pumpkins than anywhere else in the world! In fact, they grow 90-95% of the pumpkins used for processing. Most of that processing takes place in Morton, Illinois – The Pumpkin Capital of the World.

*Morton is home to Libby's Pumpkin and over 85% of the world's canned pumpkin is processed there.*



## What are Pumpkins?

Pumpkins are members of the gourd family, which includes cucumbers, honeydew melons, cantaloupe, watermelons and zucchini. These plants are native to Central America and Mexico, but now grow on all continents except Antarctica. Pumpkins have been grown in North America for five thousand years. They are native to the western hemisphere. Pumpkins are grown primarily for processing with a small percentage grown for ornamental sales through u-pick farms, farmers' markets, and retail sales. Most pumpkins are processed into canned pumpkin and canned pie mix. Processing pumpkins have a comparable size and shape of a watermelon and a lighter colored shell. Pumpkins can range in size from less than one pound to more than 1,000 pounds. Miniature-sized pumpkins weigh less than one pound and typically are used for decorative purposes. Pie pumpkins come in many sizes. The five to ten pound pie pumpkin varieties are most often grown. Pumpkins in the 10 to 25 pound range are primarily used for jack-o-lanterns and can also be used for processing. Pumpkins above 25 pounds are called giant. Giant pumpkins typically range between 25 to 75 pounds.

70%

Of pumpkin-related sales occur in September, October, and November.

Pumpkin pie filling is the best-selling pumpkin product on the market. Pumpkin spice lattes come in second, but can you guess what comes in at a close third?

Pumpkin-flavored dog food!!



Source: Illinois Ag in the Classroom

### Did You Know?

The largest pumpkin pie ever was baked on September 25, 2010, and weighed in at 3,699 pounds! It was 20 feet in diameter. The pie was made with 1,212 pounds of canned pumpkin, 233 dozen eggs, 109 gallons of evaporated milk, 525 pounds of sugar, 7 pounds of salt, 14.5 pounds of cinnamon and 3 pounds of pumpkin pie spice.



## How Do Pumpkins Grow?



### Pumpkin Seed:

All pumpkins start out as seeds. With plenty of sunlight and water, the pumpkin seed grows into a pumpkin vine.

### Pumpkin Blossom

Pumpkins grow on a vine. Through pollination, they start by growing inside a flower. Insects help pollinate pumpkin blossoms.



### Mid Season Pumpkin:



After pollination, a tiny green pumpkin starts to grow at the base of the flower.

Over time, this bud grows in size

and changes in color from green to yellow, and finally to orange.

### Mature Pumpkin:

Pumpkins are harvested when they are a deep, solid orange color and the rind is hard.



## October Word Search

F M D F G A Y O V T T Z K X E  
J L O R M Y P A Z S N X R N V  
D L O S J W R I W E A X I K W  
Y R D W S I P C E V I V C O G  
M V W R E O U R A R G I V R Y  
W H G T U R L R P A T E E N A  
R D I N Q O V B B H P V I W V  
C E D W B T G A J C O I H Q E  
S S O H T A X B L O L D H X B  
I G R O W X U N N R L N O M W  
N I K P M U P O R A I W L N E  
S D E E S I T M J N N F X C S  
P N S Q Y R H K R G A P M T K  
L A B T O O I O H E T E C J Q  
C R Y M C A N N E D E M C H S

Blossom

Canned

Flower

Giant

Gourd

Grow

Harvest

Morton

Orange

Pie

Pollinate

Pounds

Pumpkin

Seeds

Varieties

Vine

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership #: \_\_\_\_\_

(Membership # is located on front of paper)

If you were to win, check your preference:

\_\_\_ Beggar's Pizza GC \_\_\_ HRI GC \_\_\_ 3 Movie Tickets  
(If a choice is not made, movie tickets will be sent)

Deadline is the 20th of each month.

### Choose your prize:

Choices include a \$25 Beggar's Pizza Gift Card, a \$25 Home Run Inn Gift Card, OR \*3 AMC Movie Tickets \*AMC Yellow tickets not valid in California, New York & New Jersey .

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Mail to: Cook Co. Farm Bureau

Ag Adventures Word Search

6438 Joliet Rd

Countryside, IL 60525

Fax to: 708-579-6056

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Complete and submit an entry every month all in 2020 and your name is automatically entered into an "End of Year" drawing for a gift basket full of ag themed goodies.

Good luck!

Last Month's Word  
Search Winner Is...



Paula Duff