



ASSOCIATION, INC.

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ALL ABOUT PUMPKINS

Pumpkins as a NY state crop:

- New York State ranks 3rd nationally in production of pumpkins.
- In NY State alone, there are over 1,400 pumpkin growers who produce about 50,000 pounds of pumpkins annually, which are valued at \$25 million.
- NY's biggest ever pumpkin weighed 1,631 pounds and was grown in 2007.
- According to Dr. Steve Reiners, Associate Professor in Horticulture NYS Agriculture Experiment Station, "New York grows great pumpkins and for some growers, a good pumpkin crop can make the difference in the farm's bottom line."

History

- Pumpkins are believed to have originated in Central America. Seeds from related plants have been found in Mexico, dating back over 7,000 years to 5500 B.C.
- Native American Indians used pumpkins as a staple in their diets centuries before Pilgrims arrived. When white settlers arrived, they saw the pumpkins grown by Indians and thus, the pumpkin became a staple in their diets too. Hence, seeds were brought back to Europe, where they quickly became popular.
- Early settlers also dried the shells and cut strips to weave into mats.
- Pumpkin carving evolved, in part, from the Celtic tradition of All Hallow's Eve, although the Celtic people of Ireland originally carved turnips and rutabagas in ancient times.

Nutrition & Benefits

- Pumpkins are rich in vitamin A and potassium, and are also very high in fiber.
- From a medicinal standpoint, pumpkins have been used for a variety of ailments:

They were once recommended as a cure for freckles, used as a remedy for snakebite and the seeds are said to help avoid prostate cancer in men.