

October 13th, 2025

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The Grapevine

Pumpkins and Halloween

Halloween is quickly approaching, and you might be thinking about getting a pumpkin to carve. While Halloween has been around for over a 1,000 years, carved pumpkins are a recent addition to the holiday. Jack o' Lanterns have long been part of the tradition, but since pumpkins are native to the New World, they weren't used till after the 1700s. Their origin comes from an Irish myth about Stingy Jack, who tricked the Devil for monetary gain. When Jack died, God didn't allow him into heaven, and the Devil didn't let him into hell, so Jack was sentenced to roam the earth for eternity. In Ireland, people started to carve demonic faces out of turnips to frighten away Jack's wandering soul. When Irish immigrants moved to the U.S., they began carving jack-o'-lanterns from pumpkins, as these were native to the region. But how did jack-o'-lanterns become associated with Halloween? Halloween is based on the Celtic festival Samhain, a celebration in ancient Britain and Ireland that marked the end of summer and the beginning of the new year on November 1. It was believed that during Samhain, the souls of those who had died that year traveled to the otherworld and that other souls would return to visit their homes. In the 8th century CE, the Roman Catholic Church moved All Saints' Day to November 1. All Hallows' Eve (or Halloween) fell on October 31. Traditions from Samhain remained, such as wearing disguises to hide yourself from the souls wandering around your home. The folklore about Stingy Jack was quickly incorporated, and we've been carving pumpkins—or turnips—ever since. Happy Growing!



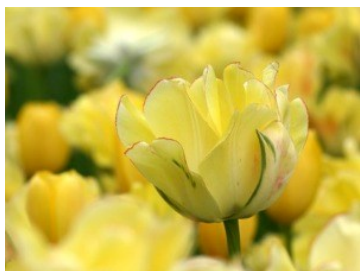
Preserving Pumpkins



Pumpkins are everywhere during the fall season. One of our neighbors carved their pumpkins last week, and with the heat, those poor jack-o-lanterns collapsed quickly. Carving pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns is an art form in all shapes, sizes, and difficulty levels. The final product (usually) makes the pumpkin carvers proud and anxious to display their work. However, often, just a few days later, the pumpkin creation may start to wither and rot, and eventually, mold will take over. Why does this happen? Carving the pumpkin exposes the insides to airflow and other environmental factors. Molds

are a fungal microorganism that has the potential to live everywhere. These fungi release tiny, lightweight spores that allow them to travel through the air. They can then infect and cause carved pumpkins to shrivel, soften, and grow fuzzy, grey mold. Some factors to help keep your jack-o-lanterns for a more extended period:

1. Thoroughly wash your pumpkin before cutting into it.
2. Sterilize spoons, knives, or other carving tools before use, especially when carving pumpkins.
3. Remove all the pumpkin's insides to reduce the surface area where potential fungi can grow.
4. To prevent mold and help keep the pumpkin fresh, you can either:
 1. Dip, wash, or spray your finished carving with a 10 percent bleach solution
 2. Spray the inside with lemon juice
5. Rub the cut areas with petroleum jelly or vegetable oil, which helps lock in the moisture.
6. Consider using an electric light or a glow stick instead of a candle. This will prevent the gourd from "cooking."



Video of the Week- Planting for Spring Color

Fall is the time to plant spring-flowering bulbs such as tulips and daffodils. This segment has tips on what bulbs to buy and includes step-by-step instructions on growing them for a burst of color next spring. Watch the video on the [Kansas Healthy Yards website](#).

Question of the Week: Controlling Trumpet Vine

This week's question is how to control Trumpet vine without damaging the trees on which it is currently growing. Trumpet vine is native to the United States, and its original range was from Maine to Florida and as far west as Kansas. Trumpet vine climbs to 30 feet or more when given support. Growing right before your eyes, trumpet vine can easily climb 10 feet or more in a summer. It does not play well with others and will send runner roots into nearby garden areas. The brilliant orange flowers are borne in summer and are often visited by hummingbirds. They will hang down from an arbor or trellis, making a wonderful "wall" or "ceiling" in a garden. Rapid growth makes training easy, but regular pinching and pruning are required to establish this vine on a structure. The plant's aggressive nature makes it hard to get rid of once it is established in the yard. The thick, woody stem can grow between wooden house siding and destroy it. It is best suited for planting at the base of an arbor or trellis. It can also be used in a container where it will cascade over the side. And don't forget its seeds! A single pod can have 600+ seeds. The trumpet vine can be used in the home landscape despite its aggressive nature. It makes an excellent statement plant on a trellis or growing up an old windmill. You will have to prune it to keep the vine in check. Suckering plants produce new shoots from their roots. These new shoots may spring up several feet away from the original vine. Use a spade to dig out the unwanted plants. Persistence is the key, as new plants will continue to emerge.



If you have trumpet vine growing in your yard and want to control it, several options are available. The first is mechanical control by cutting the vines back or digging out the smaller suckers. In many cases, mechanical control alone will not be 100% successful. The second method is using chemical control. Several active ingredients have proven successful against trumpet vine, including glyphosphate and any herbicide labeled as a brush killer. The best time to spray trumpet vine and any woody plant is in the fall. In the fall, the plants are less likely to grow and "outgrow" herbicides than in the spring or early summer. They will take nutrients down to be stored in the roots for spring growth. The herbicide will be taken down to the roots, giving you better control. The best control is often found using mechanical and chemical control, especially if the trumpet vine is growing on other plants or is surrounded by plants you want to survive. Prune the trumpet vine to the ground and then paint the stump using the herbicide rather than spraying it. You must paint the stump soon after it is cut for best results.

While trumpet vine can be an excellent plant when used in the right place and is a plant that hummingbirds love, it does have a habit of moving to an area where it is not wanted and taking over. While it can take several attempts to control trumpet vine in your yard, you can eventually get control.

Upcoming Events

November 5th- Climate Resilient Gardens

December 3rd- Gifts for Gardeners

Upcoming Events:

October 8th at 12:15 pm-
Woody Plant Propagation
at the Andover Library

October 20th at 12:15 pm-
Bringing Color with Bulbs
at Lori's EmporiYum

Butternut Squash Soup



Ingredients

- 1 pound peeled and cubed butternut squash (about 4 heaping cups)
- 1 yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium apple, cored and roughly chopped (such as Honeycrisp or Gala)
- 2 teaspoons olive oil, canola oil, or favorite oil
- 1-1½ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice (to taste preference)
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger (or ¼ teaspoon ground ginger)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can pumpkin puree
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- Optional toppings: sour cream, pumpkin seeds, chopped pecans, fresh herbs (rosemary, thyme, sage, or basil)

Directions

1. Cube butternut squash, onions, and apple.
2. Lightly coat them with oil, then roast in the oven for 8-10 minutes.
3. Stir in pumpkin pie spice, ginger, and salt; cook 1 minute.
4. Add pumpkin puree and broth; stir well to combine. Bring the soup to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes. Squash should be fork-tender.
5. Carefully transfer soup to a blender using a ladle or an immersion blender. (If the blender isn't large enough to hold the entire soup, blend in two batches.) Secure the lid on the blender. Remove the center piece of the blender lid and place a clean kitchen towel over the opening to avoid splatters. Process soup until smooth, about 45 to 60 seconds. Divide soup evenly among bowls and top with garnishes of choice.
6. Croutons (prepare while soup simmers): 1 loaf sourdough or plain sandwich bread
7. Preheat oven to 400°F. Cut bread into 1-inch squares and cover with oil.
8. Place on sheet tray and bake until golden brown (5-7 minutes)—top soup with croutons.

Recipe Source: [North Dakota State University](#)



LUNCH & LEARN

Bring your lunch and join Horticulture Agent, Calla Edwards, over the lunch hour during our monthly Lunch & Learn Program. This will be held over the lunch hour and will cover a variety of horticulture topics.

October 20th
12:15-12:45 p.m.

Lori's EMPORIUM!
1604 Custer Lane
Augusta, KS

October Topic:
Bringing Beauty with Bulbs

Nothing says "Hello Spring" like the cheery smile of a bright yellow daffodil or a bed of colorful tulips. This spring welcome does not just happen, it must be planned. Fall is the ideal time to plant spring flower bulbs in the landscape. Calla will cover everything you need to know to have success with spring-flowering bulbs.

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