

Kids Korner

Giant Pumpkins Provide Hours Of Play

JOYCE BUPP

York Co. Correspondent
WRIGHTSVILLE (York Co.)

— Question: How many pies can you make from a 325-pound pumpkin?

Answer: Lots!

The huge, 325-pound Giant Pumpkin contest winner from the York Fair may never become pies. But the Ellsworth Lehman family, of Wrightsville, grew so many other giant pumpkins that they have plenty of other ones for pies. In fact, the Lehmans also won second place in the Giants contest, with a 324-pounder, and third place, with one that weighed an even 300 pounds. They entered another in the fair's regular pumpkin class — and won that, too!

Actually, a whole farm-wagon load of huge pumpkins sits on the lawn at the Lehman family's roadside market near the Wrightsville exit of Route 30 in eastern York County. That wagonload of pumpkin giants, as well as several big ones sitting nearby on the lawn, have become a fun playground for the Lehmans' grandchildren. And there are even more still waiting to be harvested from the 20 stalks planted on the family's dairy and produce farm.

The five cousins all live at or close to the Lehman farm, and helped to keep watch over the growing pumpkin crop this past summer. They are Brandy Lehman, age 10; Brittany Lehman, 7; Melissa Darcy, 5; Stephanie Burns, 4, and Courtney Lehman, 3.

Last spring, they watched the special, large seeds poke through the soil in pots started in the farm's greenhouse. Then, the plants were set out in rich soil, surrounded by plantings of sunflowers. The sunflowers were planted as food for the groundhogs, so the rodents did not eat the pumpkin stalks.

It was fun for the Lehman cousins to walk to the patch and watch the pumpkins grow ... and grow ... and grow. By early September, the patch held dozens of Atlantic Giant pumpkins and a variety of the

Lehmans call "Cinderella pumpkins" (because they look like the pictures of Cinderella's pumpkin-coach in fairy-tale books).

To harvest the heavy pumpkins, a special canvas was made with hand holds for four people. The giant pumpkins were cut loose from their stalks, gently rolled onto the canvas and carefully loaded onto a wagon or truck.

Some of the Lehmans' market customers are buying the giant pumpkins for fall decoration and some will probably be used for pies and for seeds for next year. One will probably become a Halloween jack-o-lantern for the Lehmans.

For the York Fair children's pumpkin decorating contest, the

Lehman grandchildren used several kinds of smaller pumpkins. They all entered different pumpkin creations — and all won prizes.

You can save seeds from a special pumpkin. Have a grownup help you cut it apart, and then carefully remove the seeds from the stringy pulp inside. Rinse the seeds well in cool water and lay them out on newspaper or paper towels to dry for several days. When the seeds are very dry, store them in a cool place. If they are too moist or stored in too warm a place, they may become moldy and spoil.

Plant them next spring after the ground has become warm. If you want to try to grow a Giant Pumpkin, only let one or two pumpkins grow on each stalk.



These two pumpkins glued together make a great elephant.



Cousins Melissa Darcy, Stephanie Burns and Courtney Lehman find pumpkins a great place to hide and climb.



The cousins call these pumpkins their Cinderella pumpkins because they look like the pictures of Cinderella's pumpkin coach in fairy-tale books.



Add a glamorous hat, eyes, ears, and hair and this pumpkin looks just like a pig.