

Do you have a record-setting pumpkin?

By Kay Melia

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Alright all you backyard gardeners...it's time to grab your bathroom scales and head out to the pumpkin patch to find out if you have a record setting pumpkin out there! Wait a minute...you say you don't have a pumpkin patch? You say you don't even have a bathroom scales? No problem. You are not alone. Ninety-four percent of all backyard gardeners do not have pumpkin patches, although surely most northwest Kansans have bathroom scales!



kay melia

• the gardener

are simply going nuts. Hundreds and hundreds of pumpkin growers all over the world are anxiously watching their pumpkin patches to see if that big yellow gourd is going to be big enough to capture the award for the biggest pumpkin of the year, at least in their block or township. County fairs, fall festivals

of all kinds, and even areas where there is no organized event, find pumpkin producers nervously watching their pumpkin patch.

It seems that with each passing year, more and more gardeners have become pumpkin fanatics, and pull out all the stops to grow big pumpkins that will hopefully assure them of bragging rights for the coming year. As you read these words, there are pumpkins out there that are gaining up to 25 pounds a day as growers are feeding their plants all kinds of

magic elixirs that they hope will win them the big prize.

The current world record for pumpkins is 1,810 pounds, 5 ounces. The pumpkin was grown by Chris Stevens of New Richmond, Wis., and was exhibited at the Stillwater, Minn., Harvest Festival on October 9th last year. Stillwater, a suburb of Minneapolis-St. Paul, is located just a few miles across the state line. It broke the previous world record by almost 50 pounds. Surely, a new record will emerge this fall.

Chris Steven's huge pumpkin was a Dill's Atlantic Giant. We can all buy Dill's Atlantic Giant seed off the

rack in the spring at just about every store, generally for about \$1.49 a packet. But if you were so lucky to buy one seed produced by Chris Stevens word record pumpkin, you would have to pay upwards of \$300! That's why a few growers, who strive to produce a record breaker, are wealthy. The late Howard Dill was one such man. He worked for 30 years by crossbreeding all kinds of pumpkins before he came up with the now patented Dill's Atlantic Giant variety, which is now the most popular variety available to those who want to try their hand at growing the big ones. Strangely

enough, Mr. Dill's pumpkin farm is located near Windsor, Nova Scotia, just northwest of Halifax, in a very fertile valley. The farm continues their pumpkin producing by Mr. Dill's family.

We probably will never see a world record vegetable specimen grown in northwest Kansas. But if you have a hankering to try the great big pumpkin thing, pick up a packet of Dill's Atlantic Giant seed next spring, and have a go at it.

Infiltration of water into soil important to crops

Where soils have been very dry, every drop of rain is welcome. But to have the most impact, the moisture needs to infiltrate the soil first - and good infiltration is not necessarily a given, said DeAnn Presley, Kansas State Research and Extension soil management specialist.

"Infiltration is the name of the game when talking about capturing moisture for crops or preventing runoff-induced erosion," she said.

Presley explained there are several factors that determine how fast a soil can absorb rainfall. These include:

- Length of time from the start of rain. Infiltration is usually high at first, decreasing gradually and eventually reaching a steady-state of slow infiltration as the soil profile fills with moisture. No-till soils usually have a higher infiltration

rate than tilled soils at the start of the rain event. But at steady-state, the infiltration rate of no-till soils is often the same as tilled soils.

- Water content of the soil when rainfall starts. Soils have a lower infiltration rate when they are wet than dry.

- Soil texture and structure. Soils with well-defined structure, stable aggregates, a large number of pores and higher organic matter content are best able to conduct water through the soil. The structural characteristics depend somewhat upon tillage. Tillage breaks down the soil structure and decreases initial infiltration rates throughout the soil profile. Raindrop impacts also break down aggregates. Soils that are not tilled gain some benefit from slightly higher levels of organic matter and from the much greater

stability of aggregates.

- Condition of the soil surface. Large soil pores, such as old root channels or other cracks that extend from the surface well into the soil profile, allow for good moisture infiltration. Residue lying on the surface slows running water, giving

water more time to infiltrate. Residue also protects the soil surface from the impact of falling raindrops. Partly buried residue that creates new flow paths into the soil also can aid infiltration. Each of these features is characteristic of no-till soils.

- Depth and layering of the soil profile. The presence of different types of soil structure, texture and original parent material within the soil profile can affect the rate of infiltration. Tillage and heavy traffic on the soil also can change the profile by creating either a subsurface

plowpan or a surface crust that will inhibit water movement. Surface crusts can be broken up with freezing and thawing, but plowpans are not. Plowpans may persist in soils for many years and are very difficult to address once present.

Storm, crop damage has had a record year

Storm and crop damage estimates in Kansas for 2011 have hit a record \$1 billion, according to the Kansas Department of Insurance.



sandy praeger

• insurance comm.

Estimates through August 2011 show \$1.095 billion in estimated insured property damage and crop losses for the calendar year so far, according to Sandy Praeger, commissioner of insurance. The estimates are based on approximately 197,000 claims.

"This is a record amount of storm-caused property damage for the state," Commissioner Praeger said. "Our records go back to 1990, and this year's surpasses the previous record in 1992 by \$300 million. And, we still have the rest of 2011 to go."

A link to a complete set of storm loss statistics since 1999 is online at www.ksinsurance.org.

Property damage in April 2011 accounted for more than half of the year's estimate so far, at \$502.5 million. During that month, Kansans filed 66,000 claims for storm damage, mostly from extensive hail and wind storms in east and south central portions of the state, according to department reports.

June property damage totaled \$202 million with 43,000 claims. Wind and hail were again the major weather events causing the damage estimates.

The year's crop damage estimates total \$18 million, according to the department's current report.

"Rising costs of material, labor and claim adjustment expenses

can't be forgotten as you look at the property damage estimates," Commissioner Praeger said. "All of those factor into the losses. We may see increases in premiums by insurance companies as a result of the high number of claims and payouts."

Premium adjustments by insurance companies can also be influenced by the number of Kansas policyholders for each company and the geographic area of the state where the losses occurred.

Estimated storm loss data consist of windstorm, tornado and hail damage, or other weather-related claim losses, for insured real and personal property in Kansas. The totals are reported for each calendar year and monthly during the calendar year. Estimated flood losses and other insured perils are not included in the data.

The data include only estimated storm losses requested by Commissioner Praeger from the private insurance companies selling and servicing property insurance coverage in Kansas.

"It's been a tough storm year for Kansans and for the companies that insure them," Commissioner Praeger said. "If you have questions about your policies, contact our Consumer Assistance Hotline at (800) 432-2484."

Inspecting heating can prevent poisoning

Guard against carbon monoxide poisoning by inspecting heat sources and ensuring proper ventilation.

"Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that is toxic and results from the incomplete combination of oxygen and carbon during combustion," said Mary Knapp, state climatologist with Kansas State Research and Extension. She said common sources include unvented gas or kerosene space heaters, leaking furnaces or fireplaces, back drafts from gas water heaters or gas stoves, generators and exhaust from car engines.

Keeping the car out of the garage or enclosed areas with poor ventilated areas when it is running will reduce carbon monoxide production.

"Is is a good idea to make certain that your furnace is in good operating condition and that the chimney is clear and in good shape before lighting that first fire of the season," Knapp said.

You can also buy carbon monoxide detectors for your home, though you should not depend on these in place of routine inspections and maintenance on your heat sources.

Worship warms the heart

<p>Calvary Gospel Church Pastor: Randy and Mary Payne Fourth & College • 890-3605 Sunday: Kid's Church: 10 am Morning Service: 10 am Prayer and Praise: 5:00 p.m. except last Sunday of the month Wednesday: Royal Rangers, Missionettes 6:30 p.m. during school year Youth @ the Rock House, Sixth & Caldwell: 6:30 p.m. Life Groups - Call for information Join us on Facebook www.calvarygospel.net</p>	<p>Goodland United Methodist Church 1116 Sherman 899-3631 Pastors: Dustin and Shelly Petz Saturday: Worship: 5:30 p.m. Sunday: Adult Classes: 9:15 a.m. Worship: 10:30 a.m. Wednesday: Wednesday Nite Live 5:45 - 6:45 p.m. Simple Supper "Free will Offering" 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Classes for all ages</p>	<p>Pleasant Home Church Serving the rural community for over 120 years Rt. 1, Box 180 • 3190 Road 70 (785) 694-2807 Pastor: Perry Baird Sunday: Worship Service: 9 a.m. Sunday School: 10 a.m.</p>
<p>Bible Baptist Church Pastor: Clifford Middlebrooks Fifth & Broadway 890-7368 Sunday: Sunday School: 9 a.m. Morning Service: 10 a.m. Evening Service: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday: Evening Bible Study: 7 p.m.</p>	<p>Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints 1200 15th Street • Burlington, CO (719) 346-7984 Sacrament Meeting: 10 a.m. Sunday School: 11:15 a.m. Priesthood/Relief Society: 12 a.m.</p>	<p>Iglesia Del Dios Vivo La Luz Del Mundo Spanish Speaking Church Minister: Esteban Ortiz B. 1601 Texas • 899-5275 Daily Prayer: Sunday thru Saturday: 5a.m. & 6 p.m. Sunday: Sunday School: 10 a.m.</p>
<p>United Methodist Church Brewster: Pastor: Dorine Chambers Worship Service: 10:45 a.m. CST Sunday School: 9:45 a.m. CST Wynona: Minister: Sheryl Johnson Worship Service: 9 a.m. CST Sunday School: 10:15 am CST</p>	<p>First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Pastor: Rev. Carol Edling Jolly Eighth & Arcade • 890-5233 Sunday: Church School - All ages 9:15 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Youth Group: 1st and 3rd Sundays 5-7 p.m. Thursday: Prayer Class - Noon Pastor Carol's Class 5:45 p.m. www.goodlandfccdoc.org</p>	<p>Kanorado United Methodist Church Pastor: Leonard Cox 399-2468 Sunday: Sunday School: 9 a.m. Worship Service: 10:15 a.m.</p>
<p>Church of the Nazarene Pastor: Bob Willis Third & Caldwell 899-2080 or 899-3797 Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 a.m. Worship Service: 10:50 a.m. Evening Service: 6 p.m. Wednesday: Evening Service: 7 p.m.</p>	<p>St. Paul's Episcopal Church 13th & Center Church 890-2115 or 890-7245 Services: 5 p.m. Saturday evening</p>	<p>Goodland Bible Church 109 Willow Road • 899-6400 Pastor: Chad DeJong Sunday: Sunday School: 9:30 a.m. Morning Worship: 10:45 a.m. 6 p.m. AWANA during school Evening Worship: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday: 6:30 youth group Growth groups call for information www.goodlandbible.org</p>
<p>First Baptist Church Pastor: Travis Blake 1121 Main 890-3450 Sunday: Coffee fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Morning Worship: 10 a.m. Sunday School: 11:15 a.m. Thursday: Bible study 9:30 a.m. Wheatridge Center</p>	<p>Our Lady of Perpetual Help Pastor: Father Norbert Dlabal 307 W. 13th • 890-7205 Sacrament of Reconciliation: 5-5:45 p.m. Saturday or by appointment Mass Schedule: Saturday: 6 pm, Sunday: 10:30 am Spanish Mass: Sunday: 12:30 pm</p>	<p>Harvest Evangelical Free Church 521 E. Hwy. 24 • 890-6423 Pastor: Brian Fugleberg Sunday: Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sunday school: 9:30 a.m. Wednesday: Senior High: 6:30 p.m. at the church Junior High: 6:30 p.m. at the church www.goodlandefree.com</p>
<p>Seventh Day Adventist Church 1160 Cattletrail Pastor: Jerry Nowack Saturday: Sabbath School: 9:30 a.m. Worship Service: 11 a.m.</p>	<p>Emmanuel Lutheran Church 13th & Sherman • 890-6161 Pastor: Darian Hybl Sunday: Christian education/fellowship: 10:15 a.m. Worship Service: 9 a.m.</p>	<p>Church of Christ 401 Caldwell 890-6185 Sunday: Bible Study: 9:45 a.m. Worship Service: 10:45 a.m. Wednesday: Bible Study: 7 p.m.</p>

The following sponsors urge YOU to attend your chosen House of Worship this Sabbath:

<p>Short & Son Trucking Hwy. 24</p>	<p>Koons Funeral Chapel North Main</p>	<p>Good Samaritan Center 208 W. 2nd</p>
<p>Kansasland Tire 1402 Main St.</p>	<p>KLOEIKKQJIKWGB 3023 W. 31</p>	<p>AFLAC Insurance 111 W. 12th</p>

Classifieds work!
899-2338