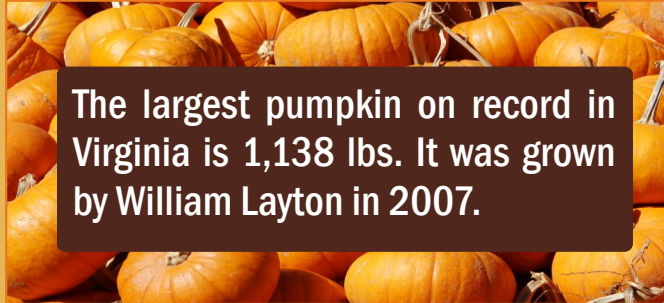


Did You Know.....



The Pumpkin - October's Big Fruit



The largest pumpkin on record in Virginia is 1,138 lbs. It was grown by William Layton in 2007.



What are Cucurbits?

Pumpkin is in the Cucurbitaceae or gourd family (*also referred to as cucurbits*). Other well known crops such as cantaloupe, cucumber, squash and watermelon are also cucurbits.



History of Pumpkin

The word pumpkin originates from the Greek word "pepon", meaning "large melon". The word "pepon" was pronounced in different languages several ways before the American colonists called it "pumpkin".

It is known that American Indian tribes grew pumpkins to use as food many years before European explorers arrived. In fact, information relative to pumpkins dates back many centuries. Archaeologists in Mexico discovered pumpkin fragments that date back to 7000-5500 BC.



Pumpkins produce both a male and female flowers; honeybees play a significant role in fertilization. Most commercial plantings are pollinated by honeybees. One hive per acre is recommended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. If there are inadequate bees for pollination, gardeners often have to hand pollinate. Inadequately pollinated pumpkins usually start growing but abort before full development.