

Pumpkins

Growing and Marketing the Crop

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Introduction

- Horticulture adviser in ADAS
- 40 years experience
- Specialised in soft fruit, farm retail, more recently vegetables
- Pumpkins
- Rhubarb
- Farm tourism

Pumpkins as a Crop

- Currently working with 20+ farms
- England and Wales
- Supermarket supply, wholesale and PYO
- Useful introduction to farm tourism
- Summer crop



Variety Choices

- Picking varieties
- Main seed houses
- Moles and Kings for smaller quantities
- PYO big range needed
- Supermarket and wholesale depends on specifications



Size Guide	Variety	Type	Supplier	Weight Estimate	
Monster	Kratos	Halloween (H)	Clause UK	>10kg	
	Captain Jack	H	Sakata	>10 kg	
	Gold Medal	H	Tozer	>8 kg	
	Champion	H	Tozer	>8 kg	
	Large Marge	H	Sakata	12kg	
	Mr Wrinkles	H	Sakata	12 kg	
	Early King	H	Moles	12kg	
	Polar Bear	White	Tozer	>8kg	
	Diablo	H	Sakata	8kg	
	Earlipack	H	Sakata	8kg	
	Wicked	H	Moles	8kg	
	Large	Magic Lantern	H	Clause	7kg
		Racer	H	Tozer	5-7kg
Gladiator		H	Clause	5-6 kg	
Mrs Wrinkles		H	Sakata	7kg	

Size Guide	Variety	Type	Supplier	Weight Estimate
Medium	Magician	H	Clause	3-4kg
	Gomez	H	Clause	3-4 kg
	Cargo	H	Tozer	3-4kg
	White flat Boer	White	Sakata	4kg
	Bellatrix	H	Enza	4kg
	Mars	H	Tozer	2-4 kg
	Harvest Moon	H	CN	4-5kg
Small and mini	Spitfire	Mini (m)	Clause	1kg
	Full splendour	M	Sakata	2kg
	Jack Sprat	M	Sakata	1-2kg
Warts	Toad	Warty (W)	Sakata	1kg
	Goosebumps	W	Tozer	2kg
	Warty Gnome	W	Clause	2kg
	Warty Goblin	W	Clause	2 kg
	Knuckle head	W	Moles	5-7kg

Sowing Dates and Target Density

Planning & Ordering Seed

- 10,000 -12,500 plants per Ha
- 5000 per acre
- Modules will take 3-4 weeks under protection
- Direct drill

Planting and Sowing Dates:

Likely to be around 20th May if the weather is good enough

20th June getting too late, needs a good summer



Soil Preparation and Feeding

- Crop wants low N or will grow too vegetatively
- pH 6.5
- P&K Index 3
- RB209 use with care
- No analysis 400 kg ha 10-10-20 type
- If P is high Knitro type



Drill or Plant

- Drilling easier mostly use adapted vacuum maize drills
- Big scale mostly drilled
- Plants for smaller and challenging sites
- Weed control can be easier with plants
- Grow your own or buy in.
- Water only needed to establish
- Don't drill in dust
- Straight after planting if dry



Weed Control England and Wales

Stale Seed Bed

- Roundup

Residuals

- Gamit 0.25 L/Ha
- Kerb
- Flexidor 500 ml/ha

Directed residuals

- Wing P – some reports of damage

Directed Contacts

- Finalsan
- Shark
- Hoeing hand and mechanical



Spapperi Inter-Plant Weeder -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nxT-2RsyTk>

Disease Control

- Powdery Mildew
- Control until August?
- Crop damage
- Wide spectrum fungicides
- Field rots
- Calcium foliar feeds may help
- Storage rots



Pollination

- Bees and other insects
- Male and female flowers
- Delayed female flowers with too much N
- Hives rarely needed
- Set in July most years

Male with no Ovary



Female with Ovary

Marketing

Small 1-2kg £1.00 - £1.50

Medium 3-5 kg £2.00 - £4.00

Large 5-8 kg £5.00 - £8.00

Monsters 10kg and over £10 plus

Some farms do £1.00 - £7.00/kg max

Wheelbarrows bigger the better

**Area where a lot of money can
be won or lost.**



Pumpkin storage

Wholesale and supermarket

- Ideally get off the field as soon as orange
- Put in glasshouses, tunnels, dutch barns etc dry and warm
- Do when dry if you can
- Never store cold ideal is 25⁰c +
- Don't wash pre store wipe down with dry sack etc only
- Field storage can give a lot of rots if wet August onwards
- Supermarket pallet containers can be rejected if muddy
- Some farms cut vines to aid ripening

PYO

- Put some in a barn especially if orange early
- Some farms sell them all from barns etc
- If September is dry and warm then there is unlikely to be a problem
- Field access with barrows can be part of the experience
- Infrastructure and parking
- Pressure washer available if muddy

Adding Value

- Catering
- Pop ups
- Carving schools
- Trailer rides
- Other crops
- Infrastructure



In Field Payments

- Card payments quick, easy and covid-friendly.
- Many apps available with supporting tech – linked with mobiles or tablets
- Low charges (c. 1.75%)
- Quick to set up and install



Booking Systems

- Give customers a fixed time slot
- Came with Covid now standard
- Manage footfall on site
- Match customers with available fruit
- Avoid congestion on roads & carparks
- Charge a redeemable fee for booking
- Advertise booking needs



Any more Questions?

