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Carved pumpkins Photos Cynthia Brian

knife. Don't twist them off or they'll rot more quickly. Cure in the sun to harden for at least a week. They are now ready for display, carving, and eating.

Besides using them for jack-o-lanterns and pumpkin pie, the noble pumpkin (from the Greek work "pepon," or large melon) are a major health food fruit, packed with large amounts of vitamins A, C, and potassium. A full cup is only about 30 calories. Cut out the flesh and cook like squash, or make soups, cakes, bread, pancakes, or even a pumpkin pizza.

After harvesting, here are other ideas to consider:

1. Before carving your pumpkin, scoop out the seeds. Roast them on a cookie sheet with a dash of olive oil and garlic salt for a nutritious, crunchy snack.
2. Or dry the seeds, store them in a brown bag to plant next May in a sunny location. With plenty of water and fertilizer you'll be able to boast your own pumpkin patch in 75-100 days from planting. Now your kids will be really excited.
3. Spray paint the extra pumpkins bronze, gold, silver, or whatever colors you are using for your Thanksgiving or Christmas decor. I add natural foliage such as dried corn stalks and reeds for the November holiday, and evergreens and ornaments for the December season. My porch sparkles. You can even paint them one color for Thanksgiving and another for Christmas. Pumpkins, if kept dry, will last three months or more. Store your extra produce in a cool, dark place to enjoy all winter for projects and recipes.
4. Instead of carving your pumpkin, draw, paint, or use decals to make creative faces. In this way, after Halloween, you can cut up the pumpkin and enjoy the delicious flesh inside.
5. Once you have carved a pumpkin and put it outside as a decoration, don't attempt to salvage it for human consumption. However, pumpkins are great snacks for chickens, ducks, geese, goats, and other barnyard animals. Find friends with critters before you discard. Even the squirrels and birds love them.
6. Compost your carved pumpkins. They will decompose and can be used to fertilize your garden.
7. Bury the entire pumpkin. It may grow next season and if nothing else, it will enrich your soil.

Make sure to take lots of photos to reminisce in later years. The largest pumpkin my kids ever grew weighed in around 400 pounds, but the world record is over 2,000 pounds. The memories are priceless.

Enjoy a happy haunted Halloween as well as pumpkin treats.
Happy Gardening to You!

Cynthia

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I am available as a speaker, designer, and consultant.

Cynthia will answer one or more questions every other issue as space allows. Email your comments or questions to Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com



Growing pumpkin

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