

2008 Small Pumpkin Variety Trial Results

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Introduction

Pumpkins are an important fall crop for both wholesale and retail producers. Fall retail sales often include school trips with elementary students and require small sized pumpkins for these events. Eighteen small pumpkin varieties were evaluated in a research trial during fall of 2008. Pumpkin varieties were submitted by Johnny's Select Seeds, Rupp Seed Company, Siegers Seed Company, and Stokes Seed Company. The study was conducted during the 2008 growing season at the Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Bridgeton, NJ.

Materials and Methods

The varieties 'We-B-Little', 'RPX739', 'Baby Bear', 'Rockafellow', 'Touch of Autumn', 'Trickster', 'Batwing Mix', 'Orange Smoothie', 'Pick-A-Pie', 'Prankster', 'Small Sugar' (Asgrow strain), 'Spooktacular', 'Iron Man', 'Cannon Ball', 'Field Trip', 'Gargoyle', 'Goose Bumps' (medium warty type) and 'Knuckle Head' (medium warty type) were all seeded on June 18, 2008. Single rows were planted with a waterwheel transplanter at a spacing of 3 feet between plants in a row and 6 feet between rows. Plots consisted of two rows side by side with six plants per plot. The 2-row plots were separated by 12 foot breaks that also served as drive rows for spraying, irrigating, and harvesting. There were 9' breaks between plots and the breaks were planted with six plants of mixed gourds. Treatments (varieties) were replicated four times in a random complete block design. Irrigation was supplied using a traveling hard hose gun and applied weekly until the third week of August. Weekly applications of fungicide began when vines began to run. Insecticide applications were done as needed according to field scouting for insects. Harvest was completed on September 24. Fruit were counted, weighed, and quality comments were recorded on this date.

Results and Discussion

Two varieties, 'We-B-Little' and 'RPX739' were very small, almost gourd like, with average weights under half a pound (see Table 1). The rest of the small pumpkin varieties were divided into two categories of 1-2 pound pumpkins and 2-4 pound pumpkins. 'Goose Bumps' and 'Knuckle Head' were not included in the categories since they were medium sized specialty pumpkins. In the 1-2 pound category the varieties, 'Baby Bear' and 'Trickster' were top choices due to high yields, highest number of fruit per plant, consistent color, size and shape with good handles (see Table 1). In the 2-4 pound category top picks included 'Orange Smoothie', 'Small Sugar', 'Spooktacular', 'Iron Man', and 'Field Trip' (see Table 2). 'Orange Smoothie' had good yields, was in the mid range for number of fruit per plant, consistent size and shape, good color,

and nice thick handles. ‘Small Sugar’ was one of the highest yielding varieties with a high number of fruit per plant, consistent size and shape, nice long and interesting shaped handles. Color was satisfactory, but not as dark orange as others. ‘Iron Man’ had high yields, good number of fruit per plant, nice deep orange color, consistent size and shape with good thick handles. ‘Spooktacular’ had good yields and good number of fruit per plant. However, the handles could have been better, color was inconsistent and fruit size and shape were irregular.

Table 1. Number of fruit per plant, average weight per individual fruit and yield in tons per acre for pumpkin varieties in the under 1 pound and 1-2 pound categories.

<u>Variety</u> <u>(Under 1lb.)</u>	<u>Seed</u> <u>Company</u>	<u>Number</u> <u>Fruit per Plant</u>	<u>Average</u> <u>Wt. per Fruit</u>	<u>Yield (Tons/Acre)</u>
We-B-Little	Johnny’s	8.75	0.49	5.2
RPX739	Rupp	20.3	0.36	8.9
<u>Variety</u> <u>(1-2 lbs.)</u>	<u>Seed</u> <u>Company</u>	<u>Number</u> <u>Fruit per Plant</u>	<u>Average</u> <u>Wt. per Fruit</u>	<u>Yield (Tons/Acre)</u>
Baby Bear	Johnny’s	11.2	1.56	21.2
Rockafellow	Siegers	7.8	1.08	10.1
Touch of Autumn	Siegers	8.8	1.58	16.9
Trickster	Siegers	9.1	1.89	20.6
Batwing Mix	Rupp	7.3	1.41	12.3

Table 2. Number of fruit per plant, average weight per individual fruit and yield in tons per acre for pumpkin varieties in the 2-4 pound category.

<u>Variety</u> (Under 2-4lbs.)	<u>Seed</u> <u>Company</u>	<u>Number</u> <u>Fruit per Plant</u>	<u>Average</u> <u>Wt. per Fruit</u>	<u>Yield (Tons/Acre)</u>
Orange Smoothie	Johnny's	5.3	3.22	20.8
Pick-A-Pie	Siegers	4.3	2.99	15.3
Prankster	Siegers	4.7	2.42	13.5
Small Sugar Rupp (Asgrow Strain)	Rupp	8.0	2.30	22.0
Spooktacular	Rupp	8.1	2.29	21.7
Iron Man	Stokes/HM	7.6	2.62	22.8
Cannon Ball	Stokes/HM	5.4	2.80	17.4
Field Trip	Stokes/HM	4.6	3.34	18.8
Gargoyle	Stokes/HM	4.9	2.98	17.6