



Gordon Thomson says it takes six men to lift his world champion pumpkin.

755 LB. PUMPKIN AND 743 LB. SQUASH MEASURE OVER 12 FT. IN CIRCUMFERENCE

New World Records Set For Pumpkin, Squash

This fall Gordon Thomson, Hemmingford, Quebec, harvested a 755-lb. pumpkin while Leonard Stelplflug, Honeoye Falls, N.Y., harvested a 743-lb. squash - both world records, according to the World Pumpkin Confederation. Previous records were a 671-lb. pumpkin and a 653-lb. squash. Stelplflug grew the world record squash in 1988.

Thomson's "biggest ever" world champion measured 31-in. high, 51-in. wide, and 48-in. long. Circumference was 12 ft. 7 1/2 in. and during its peak period of growth it grew nearly 20 lbs. per day.

It took six men to lift the pumpkin off a pallet mounted on a forklift.

"The secret is to have good seed, good soil, good weather, and good luck," says Thomson, who bought the seed from Howard Dill, Windsor, Nova Scotia. Dill produced the fifth largest pumpkin in 1989 and the second largest in 1988.

Thomson began growing all of his pumpkin plants indoors in 4-in. dia. peat pots, one seed per pot, on April 30. Four days later the first plant emerged from the soil. He transplanted the seedlings outdoors on May 10, planting one pumpkin plant in hills 30 ft. apart in east-west rows. He hand pollinated the first female flower to appear on the main vine, then pruned off all the other flowers on that vine as well as all the flowers on all of the side vines. He installed thermostatically-controlled electric heating cable under the soil in each hill and a cold frame on top of each plant. The heating cables kept the soil at 70°. He also installed underground irrigation tubing every 18 in. in a north-south direction. The tubing provided a constant low-pressure flow of water. As the plants grew outward, establishing new auxiliary roots, he installed extra rows of irrigation tubing every two to three days.

Thomson staked the vines down every five days to make sure they contacted the soil to set up new auxiliary roots. "They feed the pumpkin just as much as the main roots," says Thomson. "The vines grew to be 1 1/2 in. in dia."

The previous fall Thomson had applied 20 lbs. of 5-20-20 commercial fertilizer which he roto-tilled into the soil. In the spring a heavy application of cow manure was roto-tilled into the whole patch. Com-

posted sheep manure was dug into each hill. During the growing season he also applied Miracle Grow tomato formula to the plants' main roots.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Gordon Thomson, Hemmingford, Quebec, Canada J0L 1H0 (ph 514 247-2886).

Stelplflug's 1988 world record squash weighed 653 lbs. (Vol. 13, No. 1). He used seed from that squash to grow this year's squash which was 89 1/2 lbs. heavier. It measured 31-in. high, 47-in. wide, and 45-in. long. Circumference was 12 ft. 4 in. and during the peak period of growth, from August 10 to Sept. 1, it grew 18 lbs. per day. Stelplflug used the same growing methods as in 1988, planting two squash seeds 45 ft. apart and giving each a 45 by 50 ft. growing area. He pruned all but one blossom per plant.

"The main difference between 1988 and 1989 was that I used more manure and watered more consistently," says Stelplflug. "The previous fall I planted rye. Then on April 20 I applied 1/2 gal of well-rotted horse manure, or 3 cu. yds. per plant, on top of the rye within a 15-ft. radius of each plant. Toward the end of April I plowed the manure and rye under together, as well as 22 lbs. of 8-23-17 commercial fertilizer. Two weeks later I dug up the ground and applied another 3/4 of a load of manure and worked it in with a Ford 9N digger."

The weather turned dry from mid July through mid September so Stelplflug used his garden hose to water for one hour every three days. He applied about 300 gal. with each watering for a total of almost 700 gal. per week.

Stelplflug has been breeding pumpkins commercially for eight years, but squash for only three years. "My goal next year is to grow an 800-lb. squash. I believe my squash would have grown another 25 to 40 lbs. except for an unexpected frost on September 24."

Stelplflug sells 6 seeds from his world record squash for \$12 or 10 seeds for \$18.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Leonard Stelplflug, 171 Works Road, Honeoye Falls, N.Y. 14472 (ph 716 624-1079).

FARM SHOW

Ag World

Editor's Note: Most of what goes into *Ag World* stems from story ideas sent to us by readers. This special section of *FARM SHOW* touches on the lighter side of farming and ranching - everything from human interest stories, to unusual hobbies, to unique things farm families are doing for fun or profit.

If you've read or heard a good *Ag World* type story you'd like to share with others, send it to: *FARM SHOW*, Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044.

ENTIRE FAMILY GETS INVOLVED IN HOBBY

He Creates Owls, Ducks From Pine Cone Seeds

By Wally E. Schulz

Kenneth Monty, Eagle, Wis., makes ducks and owls out of pine cone seeds.

"They're rare and different and attract attention wherever we exhibit them. We think they'll be collectors' items," says Monty, noting that his wife and four kids all go pine cone hunting in the fall looking for the three different kinds of pine cones needed to make the birds.

"I work right at the kitchen table with baskets of pine cones we've gathered in the woods. I use an ordinary scissors to cut the pine cones right down the middle because it's easier if you pull the individual seeds out from the core," says Monty.

"My wife and youngsters have a great time pine cone hunting. We carry plastic bags and gather the cones lying on the ground. We make sure we keep the three cone species separated."

After the seeds have been picked from the cones, they're glued individually onto paper mache duck or owl decoy forms which they buy complete with eyes in them. "I use a hot glue gun. Each seed has to be glued individually into place. It's a long, tedious process but when you complete the owl or duck, it's worth all the work. They're very striking looking."

Monty uses different type seeds on different parts of the bird. One type of seed looks best when used for the feathers while another type is used on the legs and feet. Once the seeds are all glued in place, they're varnished with a clear varnish.

It takes Monty about 5 hrs. to complete a big owl. The large owls sell for \$50 each and the smaller ones for \$30. "We sell little ducks that measure 10 in. across for \$11 and



Kenneth Monty made this owl by picking out the seeds from pine cones, then using a hot glue gun to glue them individually onto an owl decoy form.

14-in. ducks for \$16. My wife and I can turn out about five ducks that measure 14 in. long in one evening or a dozen smaller 10-in. ducks."

Monty takes his creations to craft shows and flea markets. "They're popular with outdoorsmen and make nice gifts for nature lovers. They attract attention wherever we go because no one's ever seen anything like them."

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