



Local Harvest

Foodlink Waterloo Region Issue # 8 OCTOBER 2004

Features

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Shantzhholm Pumpkins

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Fall Food Event 2004

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Waterloo Region



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Local Farm Profile: Shantzhholm Pumpkins

They tried to stay closed on Sunday – they really did. Kevin and Angela Shantz wanted a day of rest but it ended up being more work to close their pumpkin patch to the public than to remain open. Despite taking down their signs and putting up rope barriers on Saturday night, people kept stopping and wanting to walk the corn maze or pick out a few pumpkins. One Sunday the Shantz's came home from a church event to find 13 cars parked in front of their farm and families enjoying their maze and the beautiful autumn day. Kevin said it took him a half an hour to tell people that they were closed and usher people back into their cars. When he went to see how many pumpkins disappeared, he found that someone had created a payment bag (since the payment box was in the house on Sundays) and left more than \$300 including a \$50 on top! He was very impressed with the customers' honesty. After considering the stress of trying to "shoo" people away on Sundays and the public's obvious eagerness to have a family farm experience on Sunday afternoons, Kevin and Angela decided to have Family Fun Days in September and October. Kevin enjoys these Sundays. Rather than multi-tasking, he takes time to talk with the customers and hang out with his children (all eight of them) in their pumpkin patch. "It's a different kind of work for me. I visit with the customers and I'm out there with the kids."



Located just west of Mannheim, Shantzhholm Pumpkins has become an annual autumn destination for many families and school children. Starting with just half an acre of pumpkins nine years ago, they now harvest 8 acres of pumpkins, squash, and gourds, 3 acres of sweet corn, and a few acres of ornamental corn. Kevin reports that each year their sales have almost doubled. With light sandy soil that is well suited to growing varieties of pumpkin and regular crop rotating, the Shantz's haven't had a bad pumpkin year yet. The Shantz children's contribution is also key to the success of Shantzhholm Pumpkins. With 20 varieties of squash seeds to plant, conventional seeding methods don't work. The older children help with the seeding by feeding the different sized seeds into the seeder at the right time. They also do a lot of hoeing to keep the weeds down in the pumpkin patch. Herbicides cannot be used in fields of pumpkin without damaging the plants so hoeing is the one way of keeping the weeds down.

Though their specialty is pumpkins, the Shantz's also grow and sell sweet corn. Their corn is unique in that they do not spray for the corn borer. They invite their customers to husk their cobs at the farm so that they are guaranteed all good ears. The corn that has a few bugs or is imperfect goes to their dairy herd of 20 cows. The Shantz's used to milk 75 cows but with the city moving closer and as a result manure storage and spreading getting more difficult, they decided to downsize the herd and start something more consumer friendly – like a pumpkin patch.

You could say that Shantzhholm Pumpkins is a very kid-friendly farm. Not only does it provide

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Farm Profile Cont...

work for the 7 Shantz children (ages 1-11) but it also draws in families, school groups, youth groups and birthday parties. Angela explains that the pumpkin patch activities grew out of what her kids were interested in; there's a small maze for young children, miniature horses, calves, rabbits, riding toys, wagons, and hayrides. With their large family, the Shantz's know how much it can cost to take the family out for an adventure. They strive to keep prices to a minimum and admission to the maze is free. Staffing costs are also kept to a minimum thanks to the many family and friends who readily help out with tasks like husking the ornamental corn and the picking pumpkins and gourds.

Running a farm business like the Shantz's is not all fun – the hidden costs are often a challenge. Angela explains that "People don't realize the risk we take by having people come on our farm." With children running through fields, riding wagons, and petting animals, accidents are a worry. Liability insurance is a hidden cost that the consumer doesn't usually think about. There's even an insurance fee for each horse on the farm! To help cover a portion of that cost, a small fee is charged when groups of children visit the farm for an educational tour. But the Shantz's feel that the effort and expense is worthwhile. They explain that they: "Want people to be aware of the farm—of farm life. We want to educate them the best way that we can." Kevin also volunteers his time to offer school tours on milking cows and crops and soil structures.

Shantzhalm's pumpkins are not just sold from the farmgate. You can find their products at the Canadian Tire on Ottawa and Fischer-

Hallman, and several area nurseries including Meadow Acres. Kevin explains that the owner of the new Canadian Tire was enjoying the Shantzhalm maze when he approached Kevin to ask about selling their autumn products from their store. Not only does the store sell Shantzhalm pumpkins, corn stalks and hay bales, it even promotes the corn maze at Shantz's with a big sign pointing the way to the farm. Kevin has also found a niche market of selling huge pumpkins to restaurants who want to hold a contest for customers to guess how much the pumpkin weighs. With these pumpkins weighing in around 175lbs, not many people are willing to sell them because of the risk involved in hauling and handling them.



Kevin Shantz, Shantzhalm Pumpkins

So what would Great-Great Grandpa Shantz—who established the farm in 1870—think of a corn maze on the family farm? We don't know, but he'd probably be proud of fifth generation farmers, Kevin and Angela, and their ingenuity. The Shantz's don't seem to be afraid to try something new—their corn maze was actually the first one in the area. Decorating for autumn is a new trend as well.

Kevin explains, that while traveling through the States nine years ago, he took special notice of the autumn décor of corn stalks, straw bales, scarecrows, flags, and pumpkins. It was something he hadn't seen before in Ontario. Now, autumn decorating is a common sight in front of businesses and residences. When asked what they'll try next, Kevin grins and describes a catapult that can fling pumpkins high into the sky.

Our Food, Our Community: Taste Local! Taste Fresh! 2004

Together with the Perth, Waterloo, Wellington Chapter of Canadian Organic Growers, Foodlink Waterloo Region held its first ever Taste Local! Taste Fresh! event on September 26th. 350 people joined us on the grounds of the Waterlot Restaurant and Inn for a celebration of local food on a perfect Sunday afternoon. Tasters sampled from a dazzling array of appetizers created by 15 pairings of local farmers and the region's best chefs.

This event was a tremendous opportunity for local food to shine.

New partnerships with farmers, restaurants and consumers have been created and we have had a chance to experience our food in an all-new light!



Photos by Carl Hiebert

Participating Restaurants

Ali Baba Steak House, Almadina, Artbar, Benjamin's Restaurant and Inn, The Brittany, Café Bon Choix, Crystal's Tea Room, Hannah's Bella Bistro, Langdon Hall, Pear Tree Catering, Spirits on Peel, Verses, The Walper Terrace Hotel, The Waterlot Restaurant and Inn, Whole Lotta Gelata

Participating Farms

Banbury Emu Farm, The Blueberry Patch, Charles Quality Meats, Cruickston Organic Project, Diversity Gardens, Grow Herbal Gardens, The Farmmarket, Hergott's Cider Mill and Products, Herrle's Country Farm Market, Laepple Organic Farm, Nauman's, Oakridge Acres, Shadynook farms, Shantzhalm Pumpkins, Stevanus Family Farms



Smashing Pumpkins!

Q: How do you mend a broken jack o'lantern?

A: With a pumpkin patch!

Pumpkin History

A person can pass by the same pumpkin field all summer and not notice what is going on under those large, floppy leaves. But come October, the beauty of the pumpkin patch is revealed in all its glory as the magnificent orange orbs above the withering vines and leaves. Little do these pumpkins realize that they will soon be the focus of intense conversation on the merits of their interior and exterior skins. Thanksgiving pumpkins are revered for their nutritious orange flesh, a food harkening back to ancient Mexican civilization. A few weeks later, however, the Hallowe'en pumpkin is favoured for its hard orange shell and carving potential, a tradition originating in Irish myth.



Based upon archeological evidence of pumpkin seeds in early Mexican society, the dietary importance of pumpkin can be traced back to about 7000 BC. The conquering Spaniards imported this versatile fruit to Europe and Asia where it was welcomed as a cheap and nutritious food source for both people and their livestock. It has been pointed out that squashes were supposed to have grown in the gardens of Babylon, and that first century Roman citizens, such as Pliny, Apicius, and Martial, mention them in

their writings. The confusion likely stems from the fact that the Latin word for squash is translated as "gourd", an Old World fruit originating in India. There is no evidence for the word "squash" in early Sanskrit or Chinese writings. No trace of squash has been found in Egyptian tombs.

In 1584, Jacques Cartier reported the discovery of "gros melons" in the St. Lawrence region. The English name for these gros melons originated from the Greek word "pepon", which also means "large melon". This was changed by the French into "pompon", and thereafter by the English into "pumpion". In the literature, the pumpion is referred to in Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Early American colonists changed pumpion to "pumpkin", famously described in *Cinderella*, *Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater*, and *the Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. The seeds of the pumpkin, or the pepitas, are also eaten, notably in Greece where they are called *passatempo* (pastime) and in Spain and Mexico, where they are ground to thicken sauces and stews.

The History of the Jack o' Lantern

The practice of carving pumpkins originated in medieval Ireland, a direct response to an ancient myth about Stingy Jack. The notable difference was that instead of pumpkins, the people carved turnips or potatoes. As the story goes, Stingy Jack attempted to trick the Devil a few too many times. Upon his death, neither God nor the Devil would allow such an

unsavoury figure as Jack into his kingdom. The Devil sent Jack off into the dark night with only a burning coal to light the way. Jack put his coal into a carved-out turnip and began to roam the earth. The Irish referred to this ghostly figure as "Jack of the Lantern", and then more simply, "Jack o'Lantern". People began to make their own versions of Jack's lantern by carving scary faces into turnips or potatoes, and placing them in windows or near doors to frighten away Stingy



Jack and other wandering evil spirits. In England, large beets were used. Immigrants from Britain brought the jack o'lantern tradition with them to North America. Imagine their delight in finding the bigger, easier- to-carve native fruit, the pumpkin!



Did you know?

Pumpkin flowers are edible

Pumpkins, Health and Nutrition

Dried strips of pumpkin, roasted over a fire, were a staple in the Native North American diet. Early settlers used the pumpkin much as we do today – in soups, stews, and desserts. It is thought that pumpkin pie originated from an early recipe in which the pumpkin top was sliced off, the seeds removed, and the cavity filled with milk, honey, and spices. The pumpkin was then baked in the hot ashes of a dying fire.

The bright orange colour of pumpkin is a sure indication that it is loaded with the important antioxidant, beta-carotene. Aside from countering the effects of free radicals in the body, beta-carotene is a plant carotenoid that is converted to vitamin A in the body. Current research indicates that foods rich in beta-carotene may reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer and offer protection against heart disease.

Info for 1 cup boiled, drained pumpkin

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup, mashed (245g)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 49 Calories from Fat 1

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g 0%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 2mg 0%

Total Carbohydrate 12g 4%

Dietary Fiber 3g 11%

Sugars 2g

Protein 2g

Vitamin A 245% • Vitamin C 19%

Calcium 4% • Iron 8%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

NutritionData.com

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Did you know?

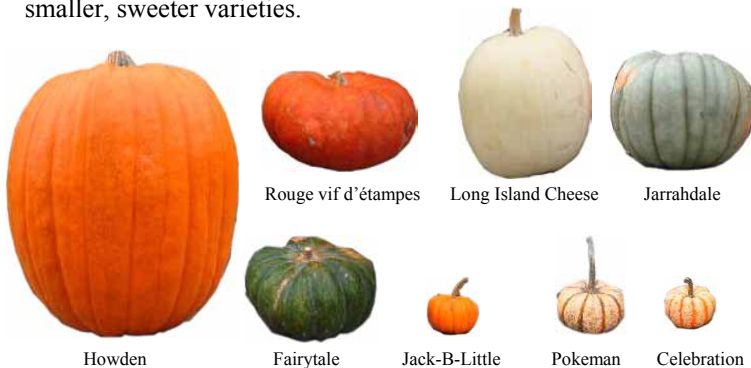
An American-English colloquial expression, *pumpkin-head*, referred to a “person with hair cut short all around”. (c.1781)

Pumpkin Horticulture

Pumpkins are part of the *Cucurbita* family of vine plants, which includes cucumber, melons, and zucchini. They are monoecious plants – that is, each plant produces both male and female flowers. Normally, the male flowers form before the female ones, and there are typically 10 male blooms for each female. While the male flowers do not form fruit, they are necessary for pollination of the female flowers. This is why only one or two pumpkins will develop on each vine.

Pumpkin Varieties

Field pumpkins, with names like Trick-or-Treat or Howden, are the most popular for making Hallowe'en Jack o'lanterns. However, their flesh tends to be fibrous and not as tasty for making purées as are the smaller, sweeter varieties.



Choosing and cooking your pumpkin

When choosing a pumpkin, look for one that feels solid and heavy, free of cracks and soft spots. Never carry a pumpkin by its stem as it may break. Care should be taken not to bruise the pumpkin during transport or storage as this will shorten its life span.

When making your own pumpkin purée for pies, muffins, and cakes, choose a fruit of between 5-7 pounds. Cut the pumpkin in half lengthwise, remove the seeds and stringy parts, and place cut-side down on a greased baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees (180 C) for about an hour, or until the pumpkin is easily pierced with a fork. Scoop out the pulp and purée in a food processor until smooth. Cool before using. A 5-pound pumpkin yields about 4 ½ cups of purée.

When used in sweet dishes, spices like cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and nutmeg are usually added. To make your 1 tsp of your own pumpkin pie spice, combine ½ tsp ground cinnamon, ¼ tsp ground ginger, ¼ tsp ground allspice, 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg.

Giant Pumpkins!

At www.pumpkinnook.com, there is a page devoted to pumpkins of over 1000 pounds. According to this site, a new world record was set October 2, 2004 at the Port Elgin Pumpkinfest. Grower, Al Eaton took first prize establishing the record with a **1,446 lb pumpkin!**

Pumpkin Production in Ontario

Pumpkins and squash are important sources of income for many growers in Ontario. Hallowe'en now has a huge public following, and is second only to Christmas in decorative spending. Many farmers have discovered that people are often willing to spend more money on decorations than food, and therefore augment their usual crops with a field of pumpkins! Pumpkin and squash production has, therefore, increased significantly from 1979 (earliest statistics available) to 2003. During this 24-year period, the number of acres in pumpkin and squash production has risen from 1,200 to 6,100.

Buying local pumpkins

Looking for a perfect jack-o-lantern “straight from the patch” this season? Foodlink's 2004 Buy Local! Buy Fresh! Map lists a number of producers across Waterloo Region that grow and sell pumpkins.



Amos Bauman Map Listing # 7 2560 Floradale Road, Elmira Tel. 669-3102
Arnold and Selina Bowman Map Listing # 11 8047 Reid Woods Dr., Elmira Tel. 669-8155
Dettweiler Family Farm Map Listing # 21 5015 Fountain St. N. Breslau Tel. 648-3989
Fall Harvest Farm Map Listing # 26 1011 Gerber Rd., St. Agatha Tel. 699-5867
Herrle's Country Farm Market Map Listing # 36 1243 Erb's Rd., St. Agatha Tel. 886-7576
Norman and Bernadine Horst Map Listing # 38 1888 Listowel Rd., Elmira Tel. 669-0795
Jantzi Family Farm Map Listing # 39 6213 Rd. 116, Milverton Tel. 656-3534
Clarence and Edna Knorr Map Listing # 41 2477 Lobsinger Line, Waterloo Tel. 699-4077
Nauman's Pumpkins Galore Map Listing # 55 3250 Hessen Strasse, St. Clements Tel. 699-5524
Our Country Garden Map Listing # 57 1867 Shellard Rd., Cambridge Tel. 740-8120
Shantzholm Pumpkins Map Listing # 65 1544 Bleams Rd., Petersburg Tel. 634-5252
Sittler's Produce Map Listing # 67 2535 Arthur St. North, Elmira Tel. 669-3549
J. Steckle Heritage Homestead Map Listing # 69 811 Bleams Rd., Kitchener Tel. 748-5719
Stevanus Family Farm Map Listing # 70 1082 Snyder Flats Rd., Bloomingdale Tel. 585-7784
T.J.'s Farm Fresh Produce Map Listing # 74 3010 Kossuth Rd., Cambridge Tel. 650-1007