

News Release

Will Sudbury See a 1,000lb Giant Pumpkin At AFMHS Fall Fair This Year?

Will Sudbury see a 1000 pound GIANT Pumpkin at the Anderson Farm Museum Heritage Society (AFMHS) Fall Fair in September? If Stephen Smith, creator of the Facebook page I LOVE Giant Pumpkins has anything to say then the answer is an absolute YES!!

This spring has been a busy one already for Northern Ontario Agri-Food Education & Marketing (NOAFEM) including multiple workshops in communities throughout Northern Ontario. These interactive workshops help teach people about agricultural practices but for Smith, (Director of GIANT Pumpkins & NOAFEM), it specifically teaches the "Art and Science of growing GIANT Pumpkins". NOAFEM offers a series of interactive workshops including gardening workshop about GIANT Pumpkins!

For the past two years Smith has been the Northern Ontario GIANT Pumpkin Champion. His 714 lb giant pumpkin was on display at the AFMHS Fall Fair last September. He has seeds from this award winning pumpkin still available as well as seedlings and books for sale and will be on hand demonstrating his passion at the upcoming Gardening Festival May 28th at the Parkside Centre. He has officially partnered with the city of Espanola and with NOAFEM. Smith says he lives each day questioning life and often enjoys quotes from the past. One of his favourite quotes is from Albert Einstein which says "*...Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better*".

"...I have been fascinated by GIANT Pumpkins for years now and each year I keep having more and more success. This year will be no different with plans to fuse two GIANT Pumpkin plants together creating a massive engine that will support one GIANT Pumpkin. The potential is huge! "

Smith formerly worked at Science North as a Staff Scientist educating and teaching thousands of school children and tourists who visited the science centre. *"... Growing up on a farm in the Ottawa Valley at a young age taught me about hard work and formed my understanding of gardening, farming and agricultural practices. It also gave me strong morals and values and although I didn't realize at the time, it helped plant the seed for many of my passions in life including growing the largest fruit on the planet, the Giant Pumpkin."*

Smith has created a Facebook page devoted to his passion called I Love GIANT Pumpkins. Combining this passion and pairing it with one of his many community involvements is what motivates him year after year. As a Director (NOAFEM), Smith enjoys spending his time travelling around Northern Ontario conducting workshops and teaching children and adults about agriculture but more specifically how to grow these amazing fruit. In early May he spent a day at Central Manitoulin Public School at their Fall Fair Preparation May, a curriculum filled day devoted to exposing kids from JK-Grade 8 to farming and agricultural practices. Before that he was in Sault Ste. Marie at the TECH Innovation Centre doing GIANT Pumpkin Workshops as part of the ARTIE Science Festival.

I Love GIANT Pumpkins has BIG plans to surpass the 1000lb mark. Smith is happy to announce that his GIANT Pumpkin was in the garden on May 11th, 30 days earlier than last year- beginning its 2016 journey in preparation for the AFMHS 10th Annual Fall Fair Sept. 10th.



"...Did you know that during the prime growing season, GIANT Pumpkins can gain up to 18 kilograms each day or an astounding 40lbs per day. Therefore, it was important for me to get a head start this season, a challenge for all Northerners and even the "avid green thumbs" who would not normally plant their gardens for another few weeks. According to many gardeners, the Farmer's Almanac and my 90 some year old living relatives, planting after the first full moon in June is a much safer bet. In fact, as this article was written May 15th, snow came down throughout Northern Ontario. Planting my GIANT Pumpkin in the garden May 11th was a huge gamble but I took precautions to protect it during this cooler weather and decided that taking a huge risk means the potential for huge rewards! The last thing you want is to freeze your plant. This early start will contribute to the overall weight and success of the GIANT Pumpkin. Check out the I Love GIANT Pumpkins Facebook page to follow along this season as I post updates, time-lapse videos, pictures and answers to questions you may have regarding GIANT Pumpkin or just to check in to see if I can in fact grow the first 1000lb pumpkin in Sudbury."

So if you are interested in a hands-on workshop that includes learning how to grow and care for a GIANT Pumpkin, pruning & managing vines, measuring & estimating the weight of a GIANT Pumpkin (without a scale), anatomy & physiology of a giant pumpkin plant, germination, pollination, genetics, tips & tricks from other growers or preparing and properly storing your giant pumpkin seeds etc you can contact Smith at stephen.smith@eastlink.ca 705 822-2988 or Like I LOVE GIANT Pumpkins Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/scienceofgiantpumpkins/?ref=settings>.

Or if you would like Smith (Founder, I Love Giant Pumpkins & Director NOAFEM) to do an interview about all things Giant Pumpkin, attend an event, host an official GIANT Pumpkin Weigh-In or conduct a workshop, please contact him at 705-822-2988 or stephen.smith@eastlink.ca .

At NOAFEM, We Love Giant Pumpkins! www.norontagrifood.org or Facebook

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