

Joze

Welcome, giant pumpkin enthusiasts, to the first of this season's featured grower chats. Thank you for joining us. We are honored to have with us tonight one of the most respected and revered growers in the hobby, Mr. Ron Wallace.

Before jumping into the dialog, here are a few guidelines regarding how this chat session will go. As the moderator, I'll be asking questions taken from your contributions to the featured grower thread posted recently.

Ron will answer the questions and we'll try to get through as many as time allows. If you have a comment or question regarding Ron's responses, or if we didn't get to a question you posted, please jot it down and save it for the final 15 minutes.

After 45 minutes or we reach the end of the prepared question list, whichever comes first, we'll open it up to questions from the live audience.

To maintain order and efficiency in the chatroom, we ask to keep cross chatter and interruptions to a minimum.

Ron's Bio: Ron Wallace is a professionally trained Executive Chef and graduate of the prestigious Johnson & Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island.

His passion for gardening started at an early age learning from his dad in the family garden. Since that time he has been on a mission to grow the world's largest pumpkin. Today he is regarded as one of the world's premiere giant pumpkin growers.

He has appeared on many local and national TV shows and been the subject of numerous books, newspaper and nationally-recognized magazines articles.

Ron is a two-time world record holder, three - time world champion and was the first grower in the world to grow a pumpkin over 1500 pounds (1502 in 2006) and in 2012 he was the first to eclipse the 2000-pound barrier at 2009 pounds.

His 2230.5lb effort in 2015 earned him world champion and GPC Grower of the Year.

I believe Ron has an announcement he'd like to make before we jump into the questions. Ron?

Ron W

First I would like to start by saying THANK YOU! As you all know Wallace Organic Wonder (WOW) was started a year ago. I am very happy to report that the "support" from the giant pumpkin growing community has been tremendous.

This first year has been, and still is, a great amount of work that has been very challenging as well as educational.

Through my website, social media, blogs, and newsletters I have tried to spread the word about what we "the giant pumpkin community" have done to benefit gardening and agriculture world wide. Your support has helped place WOW in a position where I am able to give back to this wonderful community. With that being said, I am pleased to announce that WOW will be making a \$2,500 donation to the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth for the 2015 fiscal year for use at their discretion.

I am hopeful with continued growth that I can continue to donate even more to the GPC and all the growers in the future. Starting in 2016 we will be doing a diary on BP for growers to follow along. Once again thank you all for kind emails and support of WOW, it has meant allot to me. Thank you Joe!

Joze

Right back at you. Very generous contribution!

As we jump into the questions, feel free to give me feedback on our pace...faster, slower, etc.

1. From your bio, it seems that your dad (Pap) has been a significant influence in gardening endeavors.

Pap himself even asked the question "is it true your Dad taught you everything you know?" How about we start with a little color around how you got into this hobby and your Dad's influence on your path to giant pumpkins?

Ron W

Pap was born and raised in Silver Creek NY (that's where the Bills fan in me comes from) Collins NY is not far from Silver Creek and that was one of the original WPC weigh-off sites, so Pap has been around giant pumpkins from the beginning of the hobby. He was one of the first to grow giants in New England and was always trying to find information on how to grow a bigger pumpkin. (Not easy information to get in the early 80's) My early memories were of Pap checking out books from the library on soil and growth regulators. The rest is history as they say, we have been growing together for 27 years.

Joze

2. Rich asked what was the first AG seed you grew, how big was it, and what did you think of your first time growing AG's?

Ron W

The first seeds we grew were packaged Dills Atlantic Giants, I always loved Halloween and pumpkins so it was a match made in heaven. I did find out shortly after how difficult it was to grow a big pumpkin and compete at a weigh-off since there was almost no information available. That all changed in 1993 When Pap received a Christmas gift from a friend "How To Grow World Class Giant Pumpkins" I read the entire book that Christmas day, I have not stopped reading about growing pumpkins since. Our first pumpkins only weighed around 100 pounds.

Joze

3. Thanks for the history. Lets turn our gaze forward and get your take on the future. Pap & Porkchop asked what do you feel its going to take to break the 2,500lb barrier and can it be done outdoors?

Ron W

No doubt it can and will be done outdoors. I really feel we would have come close this past season with our 1975. Fusarium stopped pumpkin growth with 6 weeks till the weigh-off. The previous week it had grown by measurement 18 pounds per day. I don't think we need to do much more than what we are currently doing to reach 2500, but I have listed a few keys: (most are obvious)

Weather (long, warm dry summer or controlled environment), Improved genetics. Increased soil biology/diversity, Early pollination date, Grower networking/education.

Joze

4. Lots of questions posted about soil fertility and fertility practices. Lets start with vine burying mixes...what's in your mix? Further, GAS asked if you are using 0-0-50 when burying and if so, elaborate on your reason why?

Ron W

Our vine burying mixture consists of WOW Mycorrhizal Fungi, Humic/Fulvic Acid and Xtreme Gardening's Azos. For the first few months of the season we also add the product Root to our mixture. What's working best for us now is adding the 0-0-50 in the spring with our "base" nutrients. I found the 0-0-50 in the mix was tying up magnesium a bit.

Joze

5. Buckeyebiondie424 asked If you could only have three products in the early stage of plant growth (before pollination) what would they be and why? Then only three products from pollination to weigh off what would they be and why?

Ron W

I can't narrow it down to down to three as I use many products; they all work together to contribute to the plant/pumpkin success. It's an entire program we have been working on for 27 years. I am always hesitant to list fertilizers, what works for us in our sandy loam soil may not work in another grower's soil. So having said that, I'll name a few. Kelp Meal to feed soil microbes is defiantly one of them, WOW Mycorrhizal Inoculant, Borax, as boron is very important before pollination and WOW Seaweed Powder. The correct cold-water seaweed is loaded with plant growth stimulants that are very important in all growth stages. After pollination: Epson Salts, Our sandy loam soil leaches sulfur and magnesium fast so just about every watering contains Epson Salts. 0-0-25 and TKO Phosphite are two products we use a lot of. The 0-0-25 helps to keep our potassium up high and the TKO helps with disease control.

Joze

6. Ceis70 would like to know how much humic acid you add each fall and if you had to pick one, which is more important, soil chemistry or soil biology?

Ron W

Currently not adding humic acid in the fall. We apply it every time we water/fertilize. It all starts with balanced soil chemistry. If your soil is balanced and you have plenty of organic matter, you should have an ample amount of soil microbes. We add mixtures of different composts to ensure microbe diversity. If your chemistry is off slightly and you have good soil biology/diversity, your microbes will supply your rhizosphere (the area in and around the plants roots) with balanced NPK. Great question!

Joze

7. Pumpkin#1 is curious if you alternate soil plots or continually amend the same ones?

Ron W

Yes, we are currently on a 3-year cover cropping rest/rotation that includes: Mustard, Sudan & Sunhemp, African Marigolds, Zinnias and Winter Rye / Hairy Vetch mixture.

Joze 8. Big City Grower foolishly asks if you use milk, powdered milk, how do you turn your pumpkins and the best way to work on plants at night?

Ron W Milk is added to coffee syrup (a favorite Rhode Island drink) No we don't turn the pumpkins. Many nights I work with a miners cap on and headlights from my truck to finish.

Joze 9. Somebody from San Diego asked what you prefer to see for ratios on a soil test. Specifically, can you comment on what ratios are most important to you and the numbers you look to achieve? How about optimum pH?

Ron W A balanced soil is the key to any garden, all the ratios are important. Especially with a soil that drains like ours. If ratios are out of line, one or more nutrients will not be available to the plant in the quantity that is needed. Potassium=3-5%, Magnesium=15-20%, and Calcium=75-80%. pH for us as always been in the range of 6.5 to 7.2.

Joze 10. Cojoe asks if you do any traditional fertilizing during the season (water soluble) and are you thinking of any of the non-myco biologicials are helping put on extra pounds (Trichoderma, bacillus, subtilus, harpine protein, etc)?

Ron W We currently use Harpin Proteins every 2-weeks till the first of September. The water-soluble products we use are from Growth Products: 0-0-25, 12-12-12, and TKO Phosphite. This past spring We did apply a small amount of calcium nitrate to help with our cool soil. Yes, I firmly believe the biologicals are helping to put additional weight on. Companion containing Bacillus Subtilus added to Essential , containing 21-L Amino Acids, plays a big role in our program.

Joze Further, will you comment on any other general thoughts surrounding soil fertility and fertility practices?

Ron W As far as soil fertility I believe we need "luxury capacity" in regards to balanced nutrients. We also spoon feed fertilizers almost every time we water, a change from only fertilizing once or twice a week.

Joze 11. Have you ever used silica or would you consider it?

Ron W I have not added Silica to the program yet, but have been looking into it.

Joze 12. Do you use a EC meter and if so what numbers do you keep in check?

Ron W No I do not use an EC Meter

Joze 13. How often are you adding mycorrhizae and/or root shield throughout the season?

Ron W I add WOW Pumpkin Pro Inoculant every time we burry vines and additionally every 2 weeks a drench of Mykos liquid. We did n use Root Shield this past season.

Joze 14. Are you using any synthetic hormones and what are your thoughts on how these products may influence the hobby?

Ron W No Synthetic hormones at this point. If you look at what Gibberlic Acid has done for the size of seedless grapes you would think it could have a place in our hobby. Downside is if not used properly you could have seedless fruit. Many of the products we use contain naturally accruing hormones like, Cytokinins, Auxin and Gibberellins.

Joze 15. Switching gears to genetics... Alex B says Ron, the 2009 seed is the undisputed champion of all seeds. My question is when this seed becomes extinct and if we don't see another world record before then from another seed, where do we go?

Ron W Good question! A simple formula big x big = bigger has seemed to work so far. I really like some of the heavy genetics, the 1919 Barron and the 1625 Ganter being crossed into our line. One of the reasons I really like the 2230.5.

Joze Most seeds coming close in the 2100's have 2009 in the genetics already. What seeds or crosses are exciting your interest for the future?

Ron W The Wallace/ Werner line also excites me and I think I have a good one for 2016 in our 1790.5.

Joze 16. Do you feel every seed has a potential to go big given the right soil and weather conditions? Have you had and seeds that you feel let you down as far as pumpkin size at season end?

Ron W Not every seed has the potential to go big for many reasons. Sure, I have had high hopes for many seeds that did not "pan out" like I wanted it to.

Joze 17. Lots of interest in watering practices...Will you and pap be getting into the hydroponic game?

Ron W No hydroponics game for us, still trying to get better the traditional way.

Joze 18. Tom K says I understand that you used a moisture probe to monitor soil moisture and control watering this year. Could you tell us more about that setup? A Watermark moisture probe and handheld reader? or what type of system did you use?

Ron W We purchased in 2014 the McCrometer hand held meter and 2-soil probes. The probes were buried in the ground on an angle that would give us a moisture “average” from 2 inches to about 16 inches deep. 45-48% moisture was the sweet spot” for our garden. Lots of information on-line about soil probes and meters.

Joze 19. Additionally, So.Cal. Grower asks: Has your watering style changed in the last 3 years and if so, how ?

Ron W Because of the information the soil meter told us, we water more often and with a greater amount. We still water by hand and overhead so nothing has changed there.

Joze 20. When do you do most of your watering and how much water per plant?

Ron W From 10:00 am till 3:00 pm is when most of our watering is done. About 150 gallons of water per day, per plant from late June till the middle of September in 2015

Joze 21. Let’s transition to plant and fruit management in the patch. Team Z is curious how many secondaries you have behind and in front of your fruit and when do you terminate vines?

Ron W On average about 7-10 secondaries behind the umpkin with 3-4 on each side turned to run past the pumpkin. With an additional 4 or so vines on each side after the pumpkin. Vines are terminated before the fruit at 15-17 ft long. This past year it took longer to end the vines before the pumpkin, as the start of the season was very cool.

Joze 22. What square footage do you allot to each plant?

Ron W 1,000 sq ft

Joze 23. Ideal pollination date?

Ron W June 15-21

Joze 24. What is your ideal fruit set distance from the stump?

Ron W 12-15 ft

Joze 25. How long do you let your secondaries grow?

Ron W 15 ft, this past season they got a little big and went to 17 ft.

Joze 26. Still growing a cover crop ahead of the plant? If so, what's your strategy here?

Ron W Yes, spring cover crop of winter rye and hairy vetch, treated with Azos and WOW Pumpkin Pro. It's great for keeping weeds down, as we like to add our base nutrients as late as possible (3rd week of May) By June 1st all is tilled in. The pumpkin Pro and Azos starts establishing the underground "network".

Joze 27. In your experience, is a vine with a kink in it a big deal?

Ron W I really don't think it matters one-way or the other.

Joze 28. Can you describe your pruning techniques and do you allow the main to grow season long?

Ron W The main vine will run till about the second or third week of August when the entire 1,000 sq ft planting area is filled. I believe I answered plant pruning in a previous question.

Joze 29. Generally, how old is the pumpkin when you decide to keep it or cull it?

Ron W About the size of a basketball is usually when a decision is made. Most of the time it's the first one pollinated. If it seems like it is going well, we will get in growing "position" and leave a back up on for a few weeks. If your first one is doing well the second one does not grow much. If something happens to the first one or the second one is doing something special, then you have a back up plan already in place. The 2230.5 was the number 3 pumpkin on the plant.

Joze 30. Moeman asks what you look for in a seedling to determine if it's a keeper or a composter?

Ron W They have to look good, be growing average or better. We double plant to help with the decision making.

Joze 31. Along the lines of pest & disease control, What are the most important products you use to insure your plants stay disease free?

Ron W Insects: Merit and Warrior T, Disease: TKO Phosphite, Clearys, Subdue, Abound, Terrazole, Medallion, Chipco 26 GT, Manzate, Bravo and Eagle.

Joze 32. Do you use systemics? How do you protect bees for all your other plants/trees?

Ron W Yes, many of the products we apply are systemic. I spray VERY late in the day almost at dark to make sure the bees are back in the hive.

Joze 33. A number of insightful “big picture” questions were posted. I like this one from Pumpkinman Dan: What am I probably not doing that I should be?

Ron W I really can't answer that, as I am not there to witness what type of work is or is not taking place. If you stick with it and make adjustments you will eventually grow a MONSTER pumpkin. It's very important to try and network with local growers who have been successful as to what works in your area. Also, if you are not tissue testing, its very difficult to compete in this hobby without doing it in my opinion. A balance between chemical and biologicals are also very important, and don't be afraid to “push” the envelope a bit, step outside the box and try something new and treat everything like its critical to your success.

Joze 34. Is pumpkin growing an exact science?

Ron W Baking breads, pies and cakes is an exact science; there are too many variables in growing pumpkins to call it an exact science.

Joze 35. Do you ever go into panic mode growing these and for what reasons?

Ron W If you ask Pap I am in panic mode from April till October. LOL I like to push myself to see how big I can grow, so having said that if I am not where I need to be I will push them a bit (with a balanced plan) to try and gain some ground.

Joze 36. General advice for folks new to the hobby?

Ron W Find a mentor in your area who can help cut down the learning curb, that way you can find out what works best in your environment. Don't be afraid to reach out to growers and ask questions. In today's hobby everyone is very approachable. (Not like the old days)

Joze

37. As a follow on, David G asks what are 3 significant growing techniques that a grower re-entering the hobby needs to adopt relative to historical practices?

Ron W

Tough to narrow it down to 3, as growing these giants has changed dramatically in the last 20 years. More usage of organic vs. synthetic fertilizers, biological fungicides/fertilizers, mycorrhizal fungi, pollinating earlier.

Joze

38. Are you afraid of Eddy's setup?

Ron W

Looks great, could be dangerous in a few years when he gets it dialed in.

Joze

39. LL asks: What is your favorite part(s) growing giants besides making it to the scale?

Ron W

I like going out to the patch first thing in the am and at night when I come home from work just to look at the beauty of the patch. I have also enjoyed meeting so many great people from around the world.

Joze

40. What explains the giant leap in weight increases in these giants over the last decade?

Ron W

In no particular order: Internet/Big Pumpkins.com, grower networking, genetics, mycorrhizal fungi.

Joze

41. What do you believe sets you and other top growers apart from other pumpkin growers? Also, is Kelly Rippa getting better looking with age?

Ron W

What I see from growers who are consistent is: They are competitive, have a tremendous work ethic, dedicated to the hobby, 12 months a year they are researching, and networking with growers looking for an edge. Kelly looks like she is aging well! Lol

Joze

42. Tanner would like to know what is the biggest thing you have learned to do in the last 5 years?

Ron W

Getting dialed in on our tissue test to be proactive instead of reactive.

Joze

43. Lastly, You're a Culinary Chef, how do you cook a great Steak! and what's your favorite Beer?

Ron W

Yum, I love a great steak! Nothing beats a steak cooked over charcoal. Try this at home; if you don't have a charcoal grill you can cook it over a gas grill. 14 oz NY Strip of Rib Eye steak (which ever one you like best), ¼ stick butter, 3-Tablespoon Kosher Salt, Cracked Black pepper, Light Charcoal or gas grill: Crank up the heat! Steaks need to caramelize for intense flavor around 450 degrees, Remove steak from fridge 20 minutes before grilling (This helps to evenly cook the steak).

Melt butter and add vegetable oil to it, set this aside till cool. Coat steak with butter/oil mixture; making sure there is no excess butter mixture on steak to help prevent grill flare-ups. Season each side with about 1-tsp each of salt and pepper.

When charcoal or grill is hot place steak in center of grill. Turn steak only a few times, total cooking time should be 10 minutes or so for rare to medium rare. Let steak "rest" for 5 minutes when done to lock in juices.

Need to stay light on my feet during the growing season, Coors Light runs from my keg system from May till October. Southern Tier Pumpking is the best pumpkin beer I have had; try that one with the steak!

Joze

That concludes the prepared question list. Since there are likely many more questions on the minds of our live audience, and to ensure we get through them in an orderly fashion, lets take questions from grower's who's BP.com handle begins with A through I.

I'll ask Ron to answer 2 questions of his choice, and then we'll move onto handles beginning with J-Q. After two more are answered by Ron, we'll take questions from handles beginning with R-Z. Following these two answers, and if time allows, we'll cycle

cntryboy

Ron, a lot of people were very successful in WI this year using Green Gro, have you considered adding it to your product line?

Ron W

Cecil, I am not considering it at this time. I only use products that I have tested and feel comfortable using. Nothing against Green Gro or any other products.

I have tested WOW Pumpkin Pro many times and I am very happy with the freshness and results.

Big City Grower

What seeds do you plan on growing next year?

Ron W

Growing the 2009, 2230.5 and 1790.5

Cancersurvivor

What you think of biochar?

Ron W

No biochar for us I have plenty of OM so I feel we don't need it.

Andy S

Hey Ron, Southern Tier beer is made in my back yard, Jamestown NY.

Ron W

Andy, AWESOME!

jlindley

What do we need to do to advance watermelons like pumpkins have?

Ron W

Get more people growing them and making genetics better, that's why the squash line is slow not enough people growing them.

Tconway

Hey Ron what do you think of BigStem or do you think that Tconway kid is blowing smoke out his butt?

Ron W

Tanner! You could be on to something.

Prizewinner

Any interest in using Anthesis?

Ron W

Talking with Matt about it.

Jeff Reid

Hi Ron How big are your plants in your cold frames before taking off?

Ron W

5x7 cold frame

Spambie

Two questions about Lithovit, do you use any? And Blossom End Splits is there a correlation with low Boron levels and splits?

Ron W

Don't know on BE splits and boron. I use calcarb no lithovit.

rick.j

You water between 10 and 3. Do you think this will increase heat of soil maybe damaging roots closer to the surface?

Ron W

Don't think we have a heat problem with roots.

Ron Rahe How many hours of sunlight does your patch get?

Ron W all day sun

FlatNorm Ron, would you consider entering the 150sq ft contest?

Ron W Thinking about it and may do it if time allows. I think it would be challenging and fun.

Rookiesmom1 Another question about roots. Noting that you measure moisture levels down to 16 inches, do you evaluate how deep your pumpkin roots are getting during the season?

Ron W about 8-10 inches deep we notice

Big City Grower Ron... Any chance on you growing a 1625 Gantner?

Ron W It's on the short list.

nitro3custom What 3 disease products would you recommend for start of the season?

Ron W All depends on what disease you are going after.

Luigi What type sprinkler heads do you use?

Ron W Just kind of cheap home depot sprinklers.

Perriman Ron what's the best fight so I have a chance against preventing light fusarium infestation? It comes most years.

Ron W Love TKO. Bravo for contact. Eagle and Clearys for systemic.

Rich. Do you have a problem with SVB's?

Ron W No, Warrior and Merit = no SVB

Rookiesmom1 Do you provide drainage from the bottom of your patch?

Ron W No, we are sandy loam so we drain fast.

don young Ron, 10 years from now low boy trailers and excavators at weighoffs? How big will stuff maybe get?

Ron W Definitely 2500, then we can talk about 3000.

Tconway Ron as a younger grower myself and studying horticulture in college what advice do you have to offer?

Ron W Treat everything likes its critical to success. Detail, research think outside the box.

Rich. Do you soak your seeds in anything? Or just warm water before planting?

Ron W Seaweed soak and a touch of harpin proteins.

Big City Grower Ron, why harpin?

Ron W Gary, would take too long for that answer, tons of info on line about Harpin.

Gourdzilla How many tissue tests do you get on any one given plant throughout the season?

Ron W About four. Very important.

Rookiesmom1 Do you test each plant or just one?

Ron W I test plants that are all responding the same, then switch to biggest pumpkin on plant.

sambo At what stages do you take those tissue tests?

Ron W Before pollination then every 14 days until late August.

Gourdzilla

Do you correct deficiencies from your tissue test by foliar or through the soil?

Ron W

Both.

MAG

Ever thought to try Master And Gardener competition?

Ron W

No, not enough time, I like pumpkins too much!

Green Gene

Do you have the fishbowl shoes on?

Ron W

Yes Gene, my favorite new pair.

Bird Man

Where do you like to see your boron at on your soil test??

Ron W

All depends on who is doing your testing. I just want to make sure I am not deficient.

SmallTownUSA (Mikkal)

What lab do you prefer for tissue Ron?

Ron W

Western Labs does a great job on testing.

Joze

Western Labs has a great protocol outlined specifically for pumpkin growers regarding tissue sampling. Check out their website.

Tim Pennington

Are you using any chelated calcium products? Do they translocate into the fruit?

Ron W

Some cal/mag max but not much.

WAIT TIL NEXT YEAR

Ron, with Pap being an ex- Marine is he the best guard to have on duty overlooking your patch?

Ron W

No doubt, he can still bring it!

West of the Blue Ri Being in Rhode Island in full sun do you ever have to shade plants?

Ron W No.

jlindley Best advice to people growing in the south? with the heat and humidity?

Ron W Start earlier to avoid big time heat if possible.

Perriman How do you keep fruit warm on cool/cold nights?

Ron W Just a white sheet during the day and a blanket at night when going into the 40's.

bnot You were saying next year you were thinking about doing a Grower Diary, will you include soil test sample results in it?

Ron W If time allows. My results are in the SNGPG newsletter.

smoky mtn pumpkin What are your highs and lows in the summer?

Ron W 80-85 60-65 at night.

Prizewinner Do you use stickers when doing foliage applications? If so, what? Thanks

Ron W no stickers

pap Ron, tell everyone the benefit of growing on a piece of belting laid over top of plywood.

Ron W Yes, the belting helps the kin to slide, also helps with mice and splashing from rain.

Big City Grower Ron, any other new to market products you would recommend people to watch... Like harpin protein?

Ron W Gary, great question. Working on a few but hesitant until we have some field trial results.

Cindy in Littlerock Those levels Western Labs has published were benchmarks established for much smaller pumpkins a few years ago. Do you think they're still relevant today with our larger pumpkins? If not, how are you using that data to suit what you think you need?

Ron W Yes Cindy.

Tconway Ron who is your favorite little rascal?

Ron W Porky

Doug14 Hi Ron, have you ever tried the plant management method of only growing out every other secondary?...if so how did it compare?

pap Great for final tweaking of pumpkin position with tight stems etc.

Ron W Yes Doug, a few years ago, went terrible plants were bloated. Did not fit our system.

jserry Who won the WOW pic contest?

Ron W Still working on it as a few more growers sent in photos.

jlindley Ron, what do you use under the kins?

Ron W Plywood and mill fabric.

Ceis70 What do you think caused the fusarium in your patch? out of balance?

Ron W A load of uncomposted chicken manure many years ago.

Tconway Ron, do you think 2500 will happen next year? and how big do you think my 2009 will get next year?

Ron W No maybe not next year but who knows.

Barbeetoo

I never see walk boards in your patch photos. Do you use them?

Ron W

Yes, all the time.

pap

I have been hollered at many times for missing a board or two when staggering out to the patch!

Ron W

Yes pap is not as light on his feet as years ago. LOL

Pumpkin grower493

What product do you use for root rot?

Ron W

Many, check out the SNGPG newsletter from this month.

Big City Grower

When it's dry how many gallons per day per plant do you use?

Ron W

150 gallons.

Tconway

Ron when you spray foliar applications what ph of those solutions do they typically run?

Ron W

In the 6 range some times need ph up to balance or ph down.

Ceis70

What is your opinion on greenhouse growing? Ever thought about doing one?

Ron W

Too hot in my area for a green house, but a high tunnel in the Spring and Fall may help and I am considering it.

Ceis70

Yeah to extend the season on both ends.

Ron W

yup, could be key to 2500 outdoors, bubba has a step on us in this area of growing.

Big City Grower

Do you use a tds meter ph meter? How often?

Ron W

no ph meter.

Rookiesmom1 With excessive multi-day rainfall do you ever notice a drop in your daily gains?

Ron W Yes, but they bounce back after a few days.

bnot What have you noticed between the pre-growing and post-growing soil tests?

Ron W I only test soil in Spring and Fall. During the season its all tissue testing.

jsterry Pumpkin Pro on the cover crop in the fall?

Ron W Yes, early Fall.

Ceis70 How often on the subsoil plow? Just once or every fall?

Ron W Every few years on subsoil plow.

Barbeetoo If you notice your pumpkin weight dropping way off around day 35 what would you do?

Ron W If they drop off at day 35 they are usually not contenders.

Rookiesmom1 Have you ever played with oxygen insertion into the soil after a super rainy spell?

Ron W No Rookie.

Tconway If something was sprayed foliar on the leaves with a pH of 8 do you think that would hurt the plant?

Ron W No Tanner. At least that's what the experts tell me.

Ceis70 Rhizosphere goes how deep? 24 - 30" deep?

Ron W Don't know that answer, maybe Matt D will know? It's just usually the area in and around the roots.

Joze Depends on the plants root system...rhizosphere goes as deep as deepest root.

cntryboy You mention using zinnias and African marigolds in off years can you explain why?

Ron W Yes Cecil, that's what they grow mycorrhizal fungi on (and other hosts) it colonizes very fast on the roots. I have tested cover crops for mycorrhizal results and it has been very educational. Have also tested roots from my pumpkin plants and my lawn! My lawn roots had very little... pumpkin plant roots very off the charts.

SmallTownUSA (Mikkal) Do you have a favorite type of compost?

Ron W Yes, yard waste compost and fully composted chicken.

Jeff Reid How long do before you till cover crop in where you are going to plant or plant?

Ron W A few weeks to decompose. With the microbes in most of our soils, the cover crops disappear very fast.

bnot What do you think is the ideal patch size?

Ron W We have moved plants back to about 1000 sq ft 30x32.

Barbeetoo Do you have any speaking events lined up for this winter?

Ron W Yes, Massachusetts, Vermont, England, Ohio and a few others.

cntryboy woot, cya in OH.

Ron W Ohio Valley Seminar

Perriman What's the best way to fluff up clay soil for new ground?

Ron W Add compost.

Rich. How many pounds of Mycorrhizal per plant roughly do you use?

Ron W 5 pounds Rich.

andy W How far apart are the stumps?

Ron W Planted in center of patch 5 ft apart.

jlindley How many 2009's are left Ron?

Ron W 6, but Eddy Z has more than me. LOL

jsterry Opinion on mushroom compost?

Ron W High pH on mushroom compost, needs more diversity of products in it.

Bart We have already grown over 800 pound in 150 square feet ...what do you think is the max for that size patch?

Ron W Over 1,000 easy Bart.

Bart yes I think so

Ron W Just need more people trying.

Bart YES we do, LOL.

Spambie How was seed count on your 2230 biggie?

Ron W average

bnot That is 7 lb per sq ft..can you see 7000 out of 1000 sq ft.

Ron W I like they way you are thinking.

Cancersurvivor What is it in your 1790 you like?

Ron W 2009x1730 Werner. That 2009 plant produced the 1975.

cntryboy What's not to like about that. LOL

Ron W The 1975 lost 6 weeks of growth, it would have made a run at 2500 in my opinion.

Doug14 Ron, what do you think of selfed seeds? A great question someone asked a little earlier that you may have missed.

Ron W The 1725 Harp worked for me.

jlindley So why not grow the 1975?

Ron W I am growing it. To clean up a line then add some other stuff to it, I think its great look at what the 2009 has done.

Barbeetoo Do you think heavy pumpkins are caused by genetics or growing practices? Or both?

Ron W Both.

Cindy in Littlerock

Everything I grew went light. Other than seed selection, what cultural practices contribute to heavy pumpkins?

Ron W

If potassium is low, you will not get a very heavy over the chart to weigh out. CORRECT amount of water.. Learned this from Steve Daletas. He has helped me big time with water. Grower networking is very important.

bnot

Thanks Ron, my potassium was low and I went light.

Dale M

Are moisture meters the way to go?

Ron W

Yes Dale, It helped me big time this year.

Barbeetoo

Do you add potassium thru the season or try to up it pre-season?

Ron W

Yes, 0-0-25 from Growth Products. Plus the TKO. 0-0-50 is in my Spring soil amendments.

Barbeetoo

I noticed that TKO has an NPK rating. Is that also adding K?

Ron W

Yes, but I mostly apply for the phosphite for disease control.

Ceis70

Too much water and what happens other than splits?

Ron W

Root rot.... It took me and Joe Jutras about 1-season to get dialed in on the moisture probes.

WAIT TIL NEXT YEAR

Ron, how old are you now and how many years out would you like to still be growing AG's?

Ron W

50! I would like to grow till I can't make it out to the patch any more, love doing this more than anything.

Ron Rahe

So what kind of numbers do you like to see for K in your Spring soil test?

Ron W

See the SNGPG newsletter, I break it all down. But that's what works for us, it may not work in your soil.

jlindley Perlite? How much do you add?
Ron W I don't. Just in my seed starting mix.

Doug14 Do you think you'll try greenhouse growing sometime?
Ron W No, too hot during summer for us. Will try a high tunnel in Spring and Fall at some point.

Perriman Part of my patch is on a hill, go figure in WV, how might this effect growth?
Ron W I don't know.

GEOD Is giant pumpkin growing an exact sport ?
Ron W I know its allot of fun.
Ceis70 I like to think of it as a blend of art and science.

GAS Do you give much thought to Sulfur in your soil test?
Ron W YES!! I leach sulfur like crazy, so I need levels up high but have to apply epon salts.

Barbeetoo I have high iron in my soil. Will raising another micro nutrient offset that?
Ron W Iron manganese ratio is they key on that one.

Dale M Is too much daylight stunting my fruit weights?
Ron W Plants do like time to "rest". I have grown seedlings under full light and some with light 17 hours a day. The ones getting 7 hours of sleep always did better.

jlindley

ok Ron... Thoughts on artificial light 24/7? Plants in Alaska deal with it and thrive...

Ron W

Artificial light will probably break the bank but in my opinion it is not necessary, unless adding a few extra hours a day.

Jeff Reid

What rate are you maintaining on mg?

Ron W

I have it used epon salts almost every watering for MG and Sulfur.

cntryboy

Have you experimented with Bryan Langley's soil calculator at all?

Ron W

No.

Barbeetoo

So would you say you are adding something to most every watering and are you using an inductor or something to deliver it?

Ron W

Yes, fertilize about every watering. Yes injector, plus tanks with sub pump.

cntryboy

What kind of an injection system do you use?

Ron W

Dosatron.

Jeff Reid

Are you watering from a well or pond?

Ron W

Well.

Barbeetoo Is there a reason you like overhead as opposed to drip?

Ron W I hate working around drip, just hate it!

Barbeetoo LOL. Cut with hoe?

Spence Drips the devil.

Ron W Burying vines, working, I don't have the time to go slow working around it. Used it once along with Joe Jutras and we tossed it out at seasons end.

rip Do you have to adjust your water pH?

Ron W No Rip, it's about 6.5 pH.

VTBC How many plants are you growing in 2016?

Minnesota Ron, what is your line up?

Ron W Down to 5 plants with WOW I just am tight on time. 2009, 2009, 1790.5 1975 and 1 TBD.

rick.j I would go with a 1756 Ron.

cnyboy How many hours a week do you work at your "real job"?

Ron W About 60-70 every week we do over 200 weddings a year plus members and other banquet functions.

rick.j When you overhead water do you also water by hand to get areas sprinklers have missed?

Ron W Yes Rick definitely.

Spambie This might have already been asked but do you use a ppm or tds meter?

Ron W No.

Perriman How do you go about trimming male flowers?

Ron W Only leave main vine, and pinch all others off.

cntryboy Do you think the main vine males are more powerful?

Ron W Yes I do but who knows. Could just be my wishful thinking.

cntryboy Interesting.

cntryboy OK, how about comparing seed weight? Does a heavier seed have more vigor?

Ron W Have not given it much thought, the 2009 seed that produced the 2230.5 was small and terrible looking so go figure, I started it as a backup.

buckeyblondie424 Do you use a male if it is odd shaped or toss it?

Ron W Great question Theresa!! NO I do not, got to be good looking. Same with females if possible. That's what the 2230.5 was number 3 on the plant.

Minnesota Do you start many of the same seed and keep the strongest?

Ron W Yes Minnesota. That's why growers usually grow the biggest on their own seed, they start many of the same.

rick.j Do you cover your stumps and if so with what?

Ron W We use to, not any more. 2230 plant was very slow to start then caught "fire".

cntryboy Do you double plant same spot and cull?

Ron W Yes Cecil.

Perriman Do you shade vine tips Ron and how?

Ron W Yes, when its going to get very hot, just some remay fabric tent over main vine tip.

Bart Does that prevent the third leaf back from wilting?

Ron W Sure does Bart.

Cancersurvivor Do you mist in a heat wave?

Ron W No, just run over head sprinklers.

Cindy in Littlerock Do you cover clear to 3rd leaf, or just the tip?

Ron W Usually about 1 ft.

jlindley What are your thoughts on water during the day in the south? We have 95-100 degree days and 80s at night.

Ron W I can't answer that as I do not have those type of conditions.

Prizewinner Ron do you run a water rinse to clean off leaves after you have feed amendments through your watering system?

Ron W Great question. Yes I do.

cntryboy What is the first sign you see of fusarium?

Ron W Wilting edges of leaves.

Tim Pennington Why didn't Leepson do the TV show?

Ron W I did not want to do a reality TV show, not my style.

Minnesota What is your favorite beer?

Ron W Miller High Life.

big bluecat wva How long between amendments and rinse?

Ron W big blue, I rinse right after I am finished with fertilizer or chemicals.

Green Gene How big are your seedling when putting out?

Ron W 1 gallon size, very big. That was new for this year.

Pumpkin grower493 If I let soil for a soil test sit around for say 4 weeks before I send it in will the results be flawed?

Ron W No as long as kept properly.

VTBC You mentioned chatting with Joe Jutras, do you have any interest in growing giant squash?

Ron W Joe wants competition on squash, BUT I really like pumpkins.

Travis	I would like to throw out a huge thank you to Ron Wallace for tonight. We're going to start winding this down so Ron can get home.
cntryboy	Yes thanks Ron.
jlindley	Thanks Ron.
cntryboy	you rock
Ceis70	Thanks a million Ron!!
WAIT TIL NEXT YEAR	THANK'S RON
VTBC	Thanks
buckeyebлонdie424	Thank you Ron
Prizewinner	Thanks Ron, much appreciated
ghoomis	Thanks Ron
Perriman	Thanks Ron, have a good night..
jules	Thanks Ron!!
Cancersurvivor	thanks
Ron W	Any other questions, email me at ron@wallacewow.com Thank you it was an honor to be asked.
swinging crane	Thanks Ron

Obie1	Thanks Ron!
eastkypumpkin	thanks Ron great advice as always
Spambie	Thanks Ron very informative
FlatNorm	thanks Ron
Jeff Reid	Thanks Ron best of luck this coming year
Ron W	dwight!
Just Bill	Thanks Ron
eltech	Thanks a lot....Awesome Seminar RON
Minnesota	The true champion Ron Wallace
rick.j	thanks Ron
iceman	Yes thanks Ron you're the best
eastkypumpkin	I didn't ask any tonight you hear enough question from as it is
eastkypumpkin	lol
cntryboy	lol dwight

Pumpkinson

Thanks so much Ron....you are a Champion in many ways...

Ron W

Glad I can help, with everyone sharing information we can keep the weights getting bigger!

iceman

Ken has said he will start working on the transcript tomorrow

cntryboy

is it done yet?

cntryboy

lol

Ron W

Thanks for the kind words, got to head in the WOW plant as I have orders to fill Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all!

Ron W

Go Bills!

Green Gene

Thanks Ron

rip

Thanks Ron I better get to bed have to be in hospital at 9:15 for left hip replacement

cntryboy

Merry Christmas

Ron W

good luck RIP I am close dr says a few more years too much vine burying

Minnesota

Merry Christmas

eastkypumpkin

everyone have a great night nite all

rip

Thanks

cntryboy

cya Dwight

Minnesota

I grew my biggest on a Wallace.

buckeyblondie424

nite Dwight

cntryboy

OK Ron you have to leave the room or no one else will. LOL

Ron W

Cecil, Thank you, I owe you big time!

Ron W

Later.