

## MINIATURE PUMPKIN VARIETIES QUITE DIFFERENT IN 2003 TRIAL

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There was considerable differentiation between miniature pumpkin varieties in the 2003 trial in Blairsville. Decent growing conditions resulted in reasonably good yields for some varieties. Average fruit size was comparable to that advertised for most varieties. Once again, a separate trial was conducted in 2003 on miniature pumpkins to more accurately reflect differences among these varieties. Although excellent yields were recorded for most varieties, growers should keep in mind that yields in these small plot trials are greater than would be expected in large field production. However, the comparison between varieties remains valid.

### **Methods**

Eight commercially-available miniature pumpkin varieties were compared at the Georgia Mountain Branch Experiment Station (elev. 1900 feet) in Blairsville, Georgia. All pumpkins were field-seeded on June 10-11, 2003 into a Transylvania clay loam soil. Plots consisted of single rows which contained an appropriate number of hills for each variety's plant habit. Vining types were planted with four hills per plot, semi-bush (or semi-vining) types with six hills and bush types with eight hills. Plots were 16 feet in length with 12 feet between rows. The plantings were arranged in a Randomized Complete Block Design with three replications each.

Normal cultural practices were used for bare ground pumpkin culture in Georgia. Base fertilizer consisted of 300 pounds/A of 10-10-10 incorporated prior to planting followed by two side dress applications of 10-10-10 (300 pounds/A each). Ethafluralin (0.75 lb a.i./A) was applied pre-emergence for weed control. Fungicide and insecticide applications were made according to current University of Georgia recommendations. Irrigation was applied as needed.

Pumpkins were harvested at maturity on October 1-2, 2003. Data were collected on yield, fruit number and weight, rind color, rind texture and fruit shape. Results are summarized in Table 1.

### **Results**

Yields were very good for several varieties. Individual pumpkin weights were generally about what would be expected according to commercial variety descriptions or maybe slightly less. Conditions were generally favorable for pumpkins with occasional rains during the season. Among miniature varieties, fruit number is just as important as yield based on weight since they are sold by the piece and a variety of sizes is not a drawback. "Jack-Be-Little" produced the greatest fruit number, but is one of the smallest pumpkins available. Therefore it does not produce an incredible poundage. 'Jack-B-Quick' also produced a large number of fruit and is in the same size class.

Among those that weighed between 0.5 and 1.9 pounds, 'Little October' produced more

fruit than the others. Three of the eight pumpkins were over two pounds and 'Lil Ironsides' far outproduced the other two.

Marketability was exceptional at harvest for most varieties. Only 'Pro Gold # 100' (85%) produced less than 90% marketable pumpkins. As was the case in the larger pumpkin test, the variance among varieties for rind color and rind texture were in accordance with variety descriptions. Fruit shape was generally in accordance with the type of pumpkin, with smaller pumpkins having a flatter shape.

**Table 2. Yield, number, marketability and horticultural characteristics of eight varieties of miniature and white pumpkins grown at Blairsville, GA in 2003.**

Variety	Sponsor	No. Fruit/A	Yield <sup>2</sup> (lb/Acre)	Fruit Wt (lbs.)	Percent Marketable	Wt Large	Wt Small	Rind <sup>3</sup> Color	Fruit <sup>4</sup> Shape	Rind <sup>5</sup> Texture
Baby Bear	Rupp	12705	17367	1.4	97.8	2.2	0.8	1.7	2.3	1.3
Jack-Be-Little	Seigers	27830	10743	0.4	99.7	0.8	0.1	3.0	1.0	2.0
Jack-B-Quick	Seeds by Design	22007	8648	0.4	100.0	0.6	0.2	3.0	1.0	2.0
Lil Ironsides	Harris Moran	16638	32681	2.0	99.8	2.8	0.9	2.0	2.0	2.7
Little October	Rupp	16335	14244	0.9	97.8	1.5	0.3	2.7	2.3	3.0
Peek-A-Boo	Seeds by Design	12857	20491	2.9	94.0	3.9	1.0	2.3	1.7	1.3
Pro Gold #100	Abbott & Cobb	10663	23879	2.2	84.5	3.7	0.6	2.0	3.0	2.7
Touch of Autumn	Rupp	15730	27357	1.7	94.0	4.0	0.8	1.3	3.0	2.0
Mean of Test		16846	19426	1.5	96.0	2.4	0.6	2.3	2.0	2.1
L.S.D. (0.05)		10714	13712	1.5	7.8	2.0	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.7
C.V. (%)		36.30	40.30	56.20	4.60	46.10	55.90	15.30	25.90	17.40

One-row plot, 16 ft. long x 12 ft. wide. Hills/plot: Vine-4, Semi-bush-6, Bush-8. <sup>2</sup>Marketable Yield. <sup>3</sup>Based on scale: 1=deep orange; 2=medium orange; 3=light orange; 4=yellow; 5=white. <sup>4</sup>Based on scale: 1=flat; 2=round; 3=oval; 4=oblong. <sup>5</sup>Based on scale: 1=coarse; 2=medium; 3=smooth