



Growing Pumpkins

By Heather Aiken



Pumpkins are a symbol of fall.

People use pumpkins as decorations. You might go to a pumpkin patch to pick pumpkins.

But how do pumpkins grow?



Pumpkin seeds are planted in early summer.

The seeds are planted in rows.

The seeds need water, light, and rich soil to start growing.

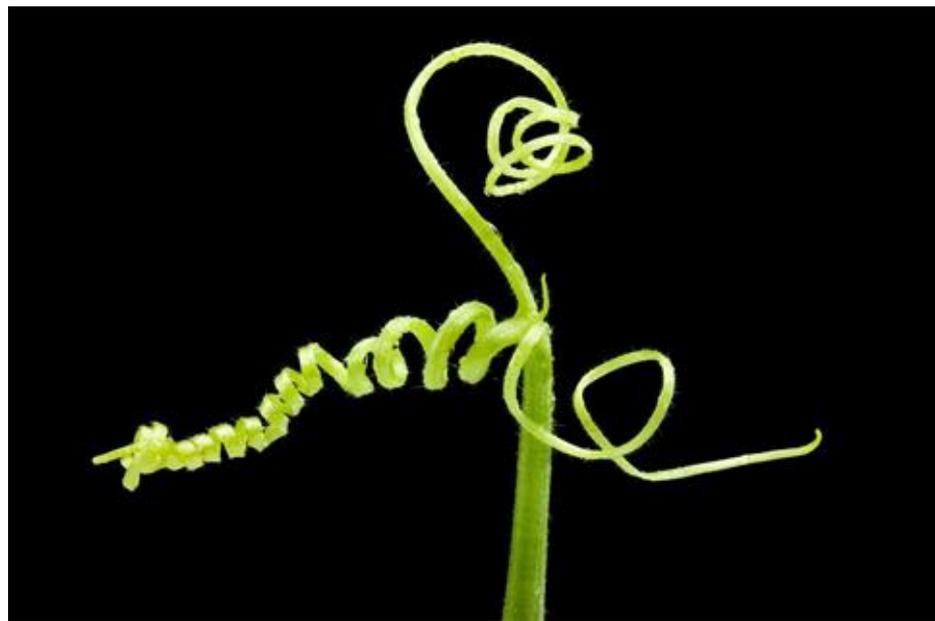


These are young pumpkin plants or **sprouts**.

See how the leaves are different shapes?

The first two leaves, called **cotyledons** or seed leaves, are oval shaped.

The rest of the leaves are pointed and prickly. They will grow much larger than the seed leaves.



A pumpkin plant is a vine that creeps along the ground.

The plant has **tendrils**, or curly bits, that grab onto other things and can help the vine climb.

Pumpkin vines can grow up to six feet a day. That's longer than most adults!



The plant begins to flower when it gets bigger.
Yellow pumpkin **blossoms** grow near the thick stem of the plant.
Green pumpkins form when the female flowers are pollinated.
Once the pumpkin begins to form, the blossom will dry up and fall off.
You can see where the blossom used to be on the bottom of a pumpkin.



It takes between 40 and 55 days for a pumpkin to become fully grown. When the vine starts to dry out you will know it is almost time to harvest the pumpkin.



If you want to grow your own pumpkins, you will need to find a sunny spot with lots of space for the pumpkin vine. Pumpkins need sunlight, soil that is rich with nutrients, and plenty of water to grow. Good luck!

Glossary



blossom: a flower



sprout: a young plant just emerging from a seed.



cotyledon: the first two oval-shaped leaves produced by a plant. Also called seed leaves.



tendrils: the curly bit at the end of a vine.

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Purple level
Multisyllabic Words
Two syllable words

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