



# THE PRIMARY VINE FALL/WINTER 2019



Matt DeBacco 1412 lbs

Kevin Companion 1727 lbs

Dale Duffy 1152 lbs

Word from the President:

Greetings;

Greetings,

Now that our season is over, I hope you are spending time with friends and family and are ready to celebrate the coming of the New Year. Regardless of how you measured your success in 2019, please make sure to pat yourself on the back for all your hard work and perseverance while trying to get a giant pumpkin or vegetable to the scales.

So, now that we have a break in the gardening duties, we need to focus on the three R's.

**Rest.** Take a break from pumpkins, soil samples, tissue samples, feeding schedules, and intense weather watching. This is a great time of year to take a break of all things gardening and to concentrate on the holidays.

**Reflect.** In the moment, we all wish our pumpkins were bigger or more orange or better shape and maybe even wish they were sound. But now that we get to step back a bit, it is a good time to reflect on how great it was to grow a giant or to attend a weigh off. Remembered who you met at a weigh off or how fun the summer patch tour was at the Baird Farm.

**Reinvigorate.** And finally, after resting and reflecting, it is time to start day dreaming of the season to come. What seeds do you want to plant? When is the winter meeting? What are you going to do different this year to make your pumpkins even bigger?

Regardless where you currently are on the three R's, just know you're not alone and you have plenty of time to process. So, for now, let's just rest and enjoy the quiet as spring will be here before we know it!

Happy Holidays!

John Young

# MEET THE MEMBERS

(The featured member this issue is Terry Keim. He has been a member since 2007 and his personal best is 1158 lbs, which he grew in 2010.)

## ***Where do you live and how many years have you lived there?***

I have lived in Williston, Vermont since 1995. We have been in our current house since 2002. I grew up in Northern Indiana so am a “flat lander” but Vermonter by heart.

## ***What do you do for regular work (if retired what did you do for work, how long)?***

I have worked for an Engineering contract company (AsicNorth) as a Circuit Design Engineer for the last six years. Prior to that I worked as an Electrical Engineer for IBM for 32 years.

## ***What is your family status, married, kids, pets, etc? Do you have any other hobbies?***

Cathy and I have been married for 33 years, we have a daughter (Abigail) in Med school (Dartmouth) and a son (Jonas) in high school (CVU). We have three cats (Midnight, Maple and Peyton), a dog (Dasher) and a horse (Francie). I love sports, both playing and watching (though these days I watch more than I play).

## ***How many years have you been growing giants?***

I grew my first giant in 2005 for a contest at my daughter’s school, we won first place with a 367 lbs pumpkin which had stopped growing mid-August but that was enough for me to catch the bug. I’ve grown seriously about half of the time, the other years I just put in some seeds and see what I get.

## ***How did you get interested in growing giants?***

Mary Whitcomb started a giant pumpkin going contest which we won for several years until they would no longer allow me to enter ☺ so I joined the Vermont Giant Vegetable Growers instead (that was our previous club name). I enjoyed the crazy company so stuck around.

## ***What do you like most about growing giants?***

I love to see the smiles giant pumpkins bring to people’s faces and their amazement of how something can grow so large in such a short period of time (which still amazes me too). I also enjoy working in the dirt and getting my hands dirty.

## ***What is your biggest challenge or obstacle in growing?***

My two major challenges are wind and bugs! We live on a hill and the wind can really blow though, I need to invest in some screening. Also I try to grow using as little chemicals as possible so the bugs tend to get the best of my plants. I did not grow last year because lack of time and I wanted the patch to rest for a year and hopefully the bugs will forget where I live.

***Do you have any help in the patch?***

Not any more, the kids used to help a little when they were younger but it's no longer cool ☺

***What is one thing you've done that you think has improved your weights?***

I have a long weigh to go, lots of room for improvement. That first year I grew my plant ran out of gas because I had no clue what I was doing. Since then I've worked to improve the soil but setting up a system to catch and store the rain water was critical to providing my weights. When I retire I hope to have more time and do it up right.

***Any words of advice for new growers?***

You can spend a lot of time and money on this silly hobby but I would encourage them to start out small and try to implement a new technique/method/idea every year, don't get overwhelmed by trying to do everything the first or second year. I would encourage them to find a club or a mentor to help answer questions and provide suggestions. And enjoy it along the way.



with Sharon Breznick

## VGPGA Weigh-off:

Was held Saturday September 21<sup>st</sup> at Sam Mazza's Farmstand in Colchester. We had 29 official pumpkin entries from Vermont, New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island. There were many personal bests, some new growers, some new jacket winners, 12 pumpkins over 1000 pounds! Congrats Kevin Companion, back to back years with new site records.



1<sup>st</sup> Place: Kevin Companion – Huntington, VT

To see all the pumpkins that were weighed check out this hotmail folder:

<https://onedrive.live.com/?id=9E61D93116D7D21B%21220&cid=9E61D93116D7D21B>

**Membership 2020** : *If you haven't already done so please renew your membership before March 1st. Dues are only \$20 per year. Your dues cover annual seed swap, Winter Meeting, Summer BBQ and Patch Tour and Weigh-off in September, as well as bi-annual Newsletter. What a deal. You can register by mailing form and check to Ann Squires or you can pay on-line via PayPal from our website. <http://vermontgiants.tripod.com/id26.html>*

**A pumpkin says to a jack-o'-lantern "All we ever do is sit around on the stoop. Don't you want to mix it up, try something different?"**

The jack-o'-lantern says "Sorry, I don't have the guts."

**01/04/2020 – 01/12/2020 : Online Seed Auction!** The Annual Club seed auction will be held on BigPumpkins, so far we have 53 awesome lots. See below for further details, if you have any questions email us at [vermontgpg@hotmail.com](mailto:vermontgpg@hotmail.com).

## **VGPGA ANNUAL WINTER MEETING..... SAVE THE DATE!!!!!!**

The Annual Vermont Giant Pumpkin Growers winter meeting will be held Saturday February 1, 2020 at the Comfort Inn & Suites at Maplewood in Berlin, Vermont (Exit 7 off I-89). (Their address is; 213 Paine Turnpike North, Berlin, VT 05602, telephone (802) 229-2222.)

The meeting will begin at 10:00 AM and a light lunch consisting of deli platters, sandwiches, chips, soda and water will be available at noon. The club is asking for a **\$5.00 per person donation at the meeting for the lunch**, to help defray some of the event expenses.

Featured guest speakers will be Woody Lancaster and Steve Geddes; (If you have something specific about growing Atlantic Giant Pumpkins that you would like more information about let us know ASAP.) Please let us know you if are coming by emailing [vermontgpg@hotmail.com](mailto:vermontgpg@hotmail.com).

Over the last several years some of us have stayed over Saturday night at the hotel and enjoyed dinner at Applebee's as well as some lively pumpkin conversation. If you would like to stay overnight you can make a reservation by contacting the Comfort Inn directly, at the telephone number listed above, mention that you are attending The Vermont Giant Pumpkin Growers winter meeting and you will receive 20% off your room rate. Hope to see you there!

P.S. Comfort Inn Hotel & Conference Center link below.

<https://www.choicehotels.com/vermont/montpelier/comfort-inn-hotels/vt004?pmf=yext&mc=llyxyxpx>

Our seed distribution will again be organized by Dan and Holly Boyce who have graciously done this for many years. Our Vermont club is one of the few left in the world that collects seeds from the membership and distributes them to all members. In past years, packets have contained been between 15-20 great genetic seeds thanks to our growers. We welcome any and all contributions. There are about 60 members, so send what you can spare. We certainly understand that you may not be able to provide enough for all members. Please prepackage your seeds; You can use coin envelopes from Staples to package the seeds, but any craft store or Walmart will have small plastic envelopes to package them. We are not looking for professional packaging; they just need to be clearly marked with the weight of the pumpkin or other vegetable, your name and the parents of the pumpkin or other vegetable if you have that information. **If interested, send what you can, individually packaged seeds by early January to:**

Dan and Holly Boyce  
152 Rte. 144  
Benson, VT 05743

Thanks in advance for your seed contribution and for supporting the club!!

Our annual online seed auction will again be hosted on the Bigpumpkins.com website and will be run as a silent auction for a week in January. We would like to thank this year's auction seed gatherers Norm Gansert and Paul Gouin! If you have seeds that you would like to donate, please reply to the club email as soon as possible. In past years, our members have shown great support by bidding on the auction lots and we are hoping this will continue. Please remember that the club has only volunteer positions and the funds raised go directly to VGPG events and the weigh off payouts.

## Congratulations to New Vermont State Records in 2019:



**Mike Cole – Castleton, VT  
30 lb. Cantaloupe**



**Wilbur Horton – Springfield, VT  
58 lb. Rutabaga**



**Ron Scholtz – Williamstown, VT  
73 lb. Marrow**

### **Personal best grown in 2019:**

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**Kevin Companion : 1727 lbs (New Site Record)**

**Lisa Gates : 1087 lbs (second year growing, first 1K!)**

**Aaron Messier : 1004 lbs (first 1K!)**

**Ralph Bell : 974 lbs**

**Ben Messier : 953 lbs (Junior grower, first year)**

**Jim Morgan : 886 lbs**

**Steve Picknell : 885 lbs**

**Jay Bleeker : 803 lbs (first VGPGA w off)**

**Richard Mace : 601 lbs (first VGPGA w off)**

**Tim Marcotte : 524 lbs (first VGPGA w off)**

**Michael Haseck : 291 lbs (one pound more than last year)**

**Matthew Cole : 200 lbs (first VGPGA w off)**