# THE PRIMARY VINE
## SPRING/SUMMER 2018

**1256 Duffy** **1435 DeBacco** **1315 Paterson** **09/23/2017**

Word from the President:

Gosh, it seems like it was just yesterday that we had our winter meeting in Berlin, Vermont. Snow on the ground and freezing temperatures, but all was warm and toasty inside the Comfort Inn. The usual friendly conversation with members, exchanging stories and catching up on what was happening in everyone's busy lives. Discussions about what we planned on growing once spring arrived, we enjoyed a great meal that evening at the nearby Applebee's restaurant. Little did we know at the time, a very dear friend would be taken from us just a few weeks later. Mike Strange, passed away April 6th, 2018, shortly after doing something that we all enjoy doing annually, germinating Atlantic Giant pumpkins. Thoughts and prayers to his wife, Gail. I will very much miss Mike's enlightening conversations and sense of humor. Gail, I am so very sorry for your loss, you are very much a part of our family and I hope that you will continue to be involved with the club.

I hope that everyone has at least one of those Atlantic Giant pumpkin plants growing in their patch. Holly and I have a few growing and they are scratching at the opposite end of their huts begging to go out.

Here's something to ponder; this will be my last year as club president, I hope that someone will be willing to step up to the plate and give it a try. Please consider it and feel free to reach out to myself or a board member with any questions you might have.

I wish everyone a bountiful growing season and I look forward to seeing you at the summer picnic and patch tour.
Dan Boyce

# MEET THE MEMBERS

**(The featured member this issue is James Morgan. He has been a member since 2013. James lives in Barre and his personal best is 718 lbs, grown in 2015, it was also a Howard Dell award winner. James isn't growing this season as he is currently battling AML leukemia.)**

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

I live in the Granite Capital of the World, Barre, Vermont. I have lived there my entire 36 years of life.

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

I work for the U.S. Postal service. I am a rural letter carrier in Essex Jct, VT.

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

I am single. Never been married, no children. I have a home in Barre and enjoy being outdoors during any season. I love to hunt, fish and kayak.

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

I began growing in 2010.

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

I saw the Atlantic Giant seeds for sale at Agway and thought it would be fun to give it a try. I was hooked after my first year. I learned about the club in 2013 and have been participating in weigh-offs ever since.

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

I like how active it keeps me. From seedlings to maturity, the work never stops. It's amazing to see the changes that occur almost daily. But the absolute best part about it is, all the smiles that you get from people.

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

My biggest challenge thus far has been setting a pumpkin by the date I had hoped for. It always seems to come later than I'd planned for. And I feel as though I may not be getting the full potential out of the pumpkins.

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

No, I pretty much do it all myself. From composting, tilling and growing, it's all me. I do ask for help when it comes time to harvest/lift the pumpkins. - editor's note: *A couple years ago Jim showed up with no pumpkin to our weigh-off, when I asked why, he told me he had some "help" from the neighbor kids, I guess they thought it fun to chop down the leave stalks and left him with nothing but salad. He took it way better than I would have.* ☺

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

Tilling deeper and larger patches for the plants to grow in.

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

Advice for ALL growers; if you are going to be using any insecticides, fungicides or herbicides (any chemicals), read the labels and wear the proper protective gear. Gloves, boots, eye protection, mask/respirator, long sleeves and long pants. Especially if you are using a spray or powder that is easily carried in the air! - editors note: *Jim believes there could be a causal link between the chemicals he's used and his AML leukemia. If you'd like to help Captain Morgan with his medical bills there is a GoFundMe page at https://www.gofundme.com/teamjimmorgan.*

## Upcoming Weigh-offs:

Vermont State Fair, Rutland, VT 8/14
Champlain Valley Fair, Essex Jct., VT 8/23
Woodstock, CT 8/31
Tunbridge, VT 9/13
Durham, CT 9/25
Big E Springfield, MA 9/21
VGPGA Colchester, VT 9/22
Topsfield, MA 9/29
SNGPG Warren, RI 10/6

You don't have to have a 1000 pound pumpkin in order to go to a weigh-off, it's an accomplishment just to get any pumpkin successfully to a weigh-off. Our VGPGA weigh-off actually pays out to the top 20 places, I don't think any other weigh-off pays more than 10 places. So load it up and get to the weigh-off nearest you.

*New VGPGA jacket winners, awarded for growing their first +1000 lbs pumpkin or bringing first +1000 lb pumpkin to our VGPGA weigh-off. Two winners from last year, Matt Debacco (right) took first place at our weigh-off with a 1435 lb pumpkin. Wendy Patterson (middle) and Bob Bigelow (left) grew their personal best 1315 lb which took third place at VGPGA weigh-off.*

***Membership 2018*** *: If you haven't already done so please renew your membership. 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*

Q: Why do pumpkins sit on people's porches?

A: They have no hands to knock on the door.

Q: Why was Cinderella not very good at softball?

A: Because her coach was a pumpkin.

**08/11/2018 - Save the date!** The Annual Summer BBQ and Patch Tour will take place Saturday August 11th , 2018 at Dick and Ann Squires in Jericho, Vermont. Typical start time is 10:00AM but keep an eye out for email with further details. RSVP by emailing us at vermontgpg@hotmail.com or you can telephone Dan Boyce @ 802-537- 4775.

*Notes from the patch:*

*Do you plant "back-up" plants? Back-up meaning you plant two plants and see how they both grow and then later on decide which one is doing better and get rid of the other. But do you transplant or cull the back-up plant? I would say most folks cull their back-ups but I'm here to tell you that you can transplant them, even when they are already vined out.*

*This year I was considering not growing due to time constraints but my wife said just put a couple plants in and see what they do. So I started seeds, but a couple weeks later than usual because we were on school break vacation. Turns out I had a horrible time germinating, zero for four, so started four more a week later, only one came up. Not sure what I did wrong, did the same process I always do but it wasn't looking good. Now I was already four weeks late. I was talking with John Young and he told me he had some back-up plants, some still in pots and some in his patch. He was going to cull the patch plants unless I wanted them, he suggested we could transplant them, I wasn't so sure. He said he had successfully transplanted two foot vine plants before with Steve Minor, but his plants this year were already four/five feet long!*

*So on May 24 I ventured to Jericho to give it a try. I let John do the digging as I didn't want to get anywhere near the roots of his prime plants. This was definitely a two person job. He dug up the root ball (the best he could) and carried that in his two hands while I handled the vine. We moved two of his back-up plants in this fashion and we laid them out as carefully as we could on a red carrying tarp. We then dragged the tarp across the lawn to my waiting truck. Picking up the tarp and getting it into the pick-up bed was tricky, as we had to keep the tarp very taught so that the plants wouldn't roll and snap the leaves. We carefully got them in and then started on the task of covering them with another tarp to protect them from the wind. That was a bit difficult but we figured something out (having a bed cover sure would have been nice for this job). On the ride home I was on pins and needles, the tarp was really blowing around and I stopped once to clinch it up. I was quite worried and expected to see shredded leaves when I got home. Much to my surprise, once uncovered the plants looked no worse the wear.*

*Luckily my daughter was home to help me get the plants out of the truck (still on red tarp, again key was keeping the tarp taught). I had my patch tilled and greenhouses already setup with holes ready to go. This time I took the root ball as my daughter handled the vine. We buried nearly all the vine in order to set the leaves appropriately. John also had some potted back-up plants that I took just in case the large plants didn't make it, so we planted those as well (much less nerve racking). Then applied plenty of water to everything.*

*The next morning I was eager to see if the plants had survived. They didn't look too bad, only lost one leaf on one plant. So I was pretty happy with that. Since then we've had some warm days which caused the plants to "flag" significantly but I'm hoping as their root system restores this will subside. It's now going on two weeks and I'm just starting to see new growth so I'm hoping they are good to go for the long haul.*

*Hopefully we'll see you at a weigh-off this fall with an orange beauty, thanks to John!*

*Terry Keim*

Left: 1385.5 Howell/Jolivette, day after transplant.

Right: 910 Young, day after transplant.

Bottom Left: 1385.5 after 13 days.

Bottom Right: 910 after 13 days. Note flower opening.

*On April 6th, 2018 the world lost a great man. We lost a great member and friend, he will be sorely missed. Rest in peace Michael Strange.*

*http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/montrealgazette/obituary.aspx?n=michael-strange&pid=188737564&fhid=14763*