

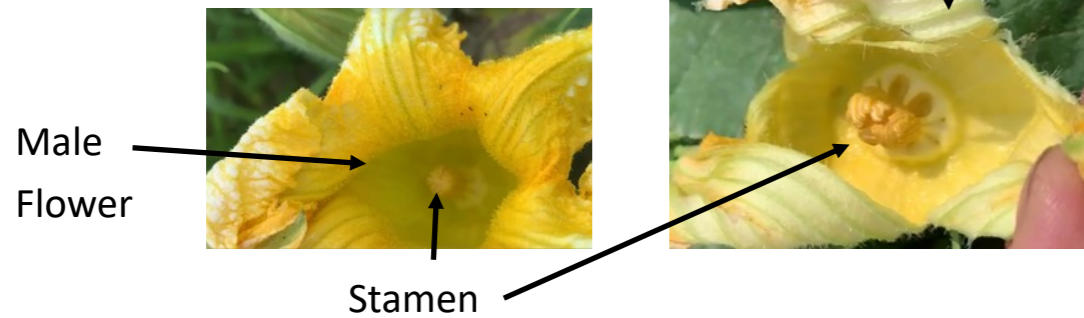


All About Pumpkins

Did you know Pumpkins produce both a male and female flower; they must be pollinated, usually by bees.



FLOWERS



What are Pumpkins ?

A pumpkin is really a squash.

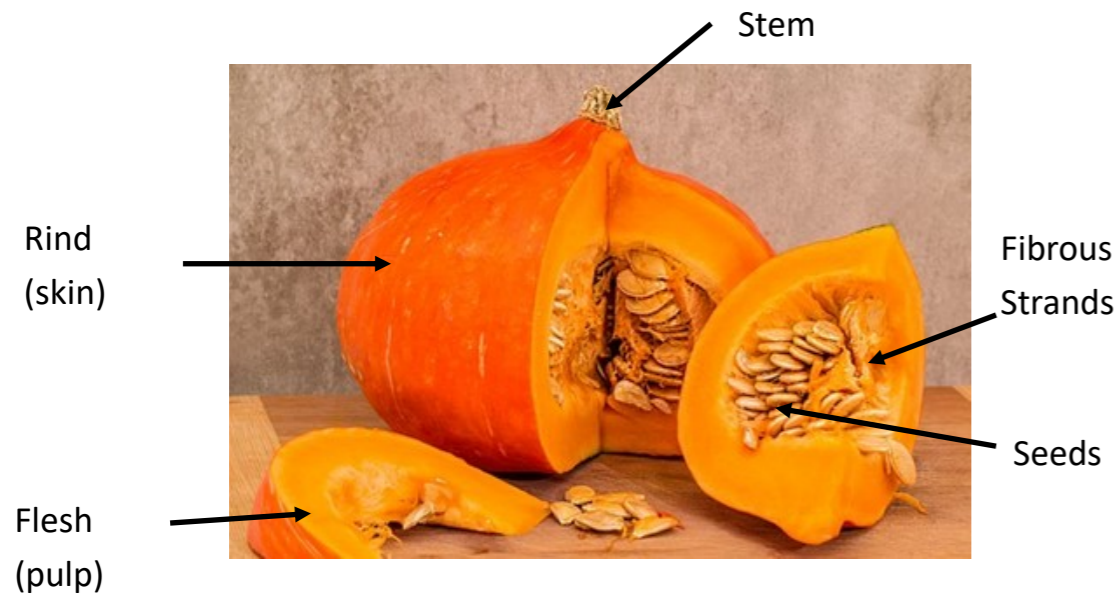
It's a member of the Cucurbita family, which includes squash and cucumbers.

A pumpkin is a gourd (gourds are from the pumpkin family)

The word pumpkin originates from the word *pepon* (πέπων), which is Greek for "large melon", something round and large. The French adapted this word to *pompon*, which the British changed to *pumpion* and to the later American colonists became known as pumpkin



FRUIT

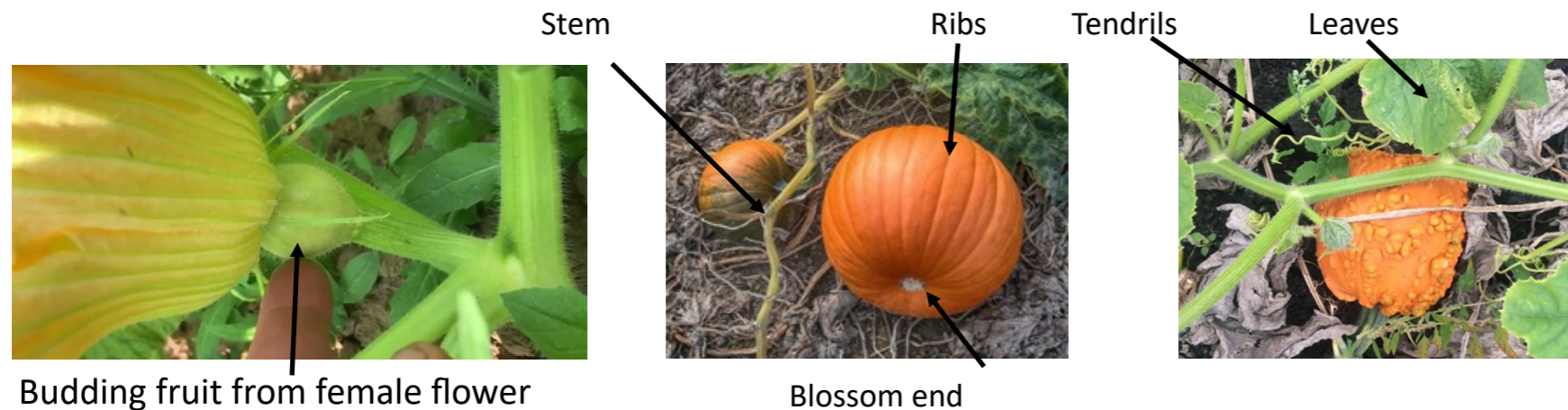


Parts of a Pumpkin explained

Stem – Refer to Sometimes as the 'handle'. Situated on the very top of the pumpkin, the stem is green, when the pumpkin is still growing. As the fruit ripens, it turns brown to brownish green, and slightly curved (see diagram below). The stem is very important; it brings nutrients to grow the fruit

Tendrils – Normally attached to the stem they are thin, curly "tendrils". They twist around fences, posts, other plants, and objects on the ground, to help anchor the vine and protect it from strong winds

Leaves - The leaves of a pumpkin absorb energy from the sun for plant and fruit growth. Pumpkin leaves are very large. In August they are 'Snipped off' in the field to die back allowing the sun to get to pumpkin - Starting the curing process in September – October getting ready for harvesting .



(Pumpkins before and after snipping)



Parts of a Pumpkin—continued

Skin - The thin, shiny, orange outer layer of a pumpkin is called the skin. It is sometimes called the "rind". It is a protective layer, which keep insects and disease out of the fruit. It is not edible

Flesh - Also called "pulp". This is the yummy part of the pumpkin. You can cook with, and make lots of tasty recipes and treats

Ribs - Look at the outside of a pumpkin. There are indented ridges running from top to bottom. Sometimes, they are shallow. Sometimes, they are very deep.

Blossom End - When the fruit is very young, a flower blossom is attached to the end of the baby fruit (see over leaflet). This is the blossom end. The female flower is pollinated, and the fruit then develops. The flower dies, off, leaving a scar in its place. Some call this the pumpkin's belly button

Fibrous strands and seeds - referred to as " pumpkin brains". There are many names for this slimy, mushy, mass of strings and seeds

Seeds - Seeds are the beginning of next years pumpkins. Pumpkin seeds are a delicious and nutritious snack. A pumpkin has hundreds of seeds.


A Short History of the Pumpkin


Pumpkins are believed to have originated in North America. Seeds from related plants have been found in Mexico dating back to 7000 to 5500 B.C


Native American Indians used pumpkin as a staple in their diets centuries before the pilgrims landed. They also dried strips of pumpkin and wove them into mats. Indians would also roast long strips of pumpkin on the open fire and eat them. When settlers arrived, they saw the pumpkins grown by the Indians and pumpkin soon became a staple in their diets. As today, people used them in a wide variety of recipes from desserts to stews and soups





Check out our Perfect Pumpkin facts for children:


 Pumpkins are actually fruit, even though they are usually referred to as vegetables.


 Pumpkins come in lots of colours including green, red, yellow, tan, white, blue and multi-coloured stripes. They can be big, tiny, round, oblong, tall, flat, smooth, ribbed or bumpy


 Pumpkins are grown all around the world for a variety of reasons ranging from agricultural purposes (such as animal feed) to commercial and ornamental sales


 Pumpkins are commonly carved into decorative lanterns called jack-o'-lanterns for the Halloween season


 Giant pumpkins can be grown for competitions, with some weighing over 1000 pounds! (450 kilograms). In 2010, the world record was 1810 pounds! That's huge!!


 Pumpkin plants feature both male and female flowers, with bees typically being involved in pollination (the transfer of pollen).


 As a food, pumpkin can be baked, roasted, steamed or boiled.


 Pumpkin soup is popular, as are roasted pumpkin seeds.

 Pumpkin pie is a sweet dessert that originates in North America and is traditionally eaten during harvest time and holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas.

 Pumpkins are made up of approximately 90% water.

 Pumpkins are usually shaped like a sphere (ball).

 Pumpkins vary in weight but an average sized pumpkin might weigh around 13 pounds (6 kilograms).

 This 174-stone pumpkin is officially the biggest in the UK (2018) weighing the same as a Ford Fiesta. Ian and Stuart Paton at Pinetops Nursery in Lymington, near Southampton, have a passion for producing super-sized pumpkins.

