

Going the Mile to Get Kids in the Dirt.



For the past three years Genevieve Pollock and Todd Sandstrum of Easton MA have been working to get kids in the dirt and interested in the sport of growing giants through an organization the duo has developed called South Shore Great Pumpkin Challenge. This past Spring they planted 700 seeds that came from growers all around the world. A portion of the seeds went to schools as part of SSGPC's School vs. School Regional Grant Program. 100 seeds donated by Mark Clementz were given to the Mass FFA as an FFA Challenge. The group has a weigh off in Easton open to pros, backyard growers and participating schools. The public is

welcome to attend. Then one mile of a local road is lined with the pumpkins for "The Mile of Orange". The giants are decorated and lit for one week for the public to walk and enjoy for free. Categories like Heaviest Pro Grower, Youngest Grower, Heaviest Youth Pumpkin, and of course the School vs. School Grant winner are presented at the awards ceremony on the opening weekend of The Mile of Orange.

Going into its 4th year, this is a major undertaking of time and resources. A unique fundraiser to help absorb some of the costs is in the works for this year. Like a true pumpkin head, Todd didn't think small when he hatched this idea. He is aiming to set a record for the longest pumpkin boat run with not only one but two pumpkin boats. One will be a traditional paddle boat and one will be a motor boat. 'The Taunton River Great Pumpkin Run' will take place on September 5th, starting in Middleboro on Summer Street and travelling 21.3 miles, finishing in Dighton. Even with over 600 seedlings given out we all know it's not an easy task to grow a giant, especially two over 800 pounds by September. In order to help support SSGPC achieve this monumental event run they are asking all giant pumpkin and squash growers for help. If you would like to be on the list of pumpkin boat donators please reach out. Todd and Gen have set one pumpkin as of July 13, 2015 it's still small, and they are hoping to have a couple backups.



If you're a canoer or kayaker then consider doing the run with them, 23 miles is not something to wave your paddle at, it's a long distance. This is not a race, plan on a moderate pace for 8-10 hours. You can do all or part of the run and even get people to donate per mile to your run. All proceeds raised will go to SSGPC to help keep kids in the dirt. The Taunton River has many spots to put your boat in and join the fun and has some great fishing as well. Enjoy the rivers scenic view from farm land to industrial settings then salt water marsh at the end. Registration for the run is limited so get in touch with them soon to ensure you don't miss the sight of a giant pumpkin record event. It's bound to be a sight to see.

Growers wishing to help and be on the boat donators list can email Todd at tsandstrum@yahoo.com He will need a minimum of 800 but over 900 pounds is best. If your pumpkin is used it will be painted with the pumpkin's weight and your name for all to see.

