

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Prelude to 'Howloween' Zoo ushers in annual celebration

Some of the world's largest land animals demolished some of the area's largest pumpkins as the Oregon Zoo kicked off its 23rd annual Squishing of the Squash last week, a prelude to this month's Halloween activities.

This year's pumpkins were provided by Pacific Giant Vegetable Growers Club members Larry Nelson and Jacob Baldrige.

The zoo's annual "Howloween" celebration takes place over two weekends, Oct. 23-24 and Oct. 28-31, when kids can show off their costumes and learn about wildlife in a fun and safe setting.

The Squishing of the Squash tradition dates back to 1999, when Hoffman's Dairy Garden of Canby dropped off a prize-winning 828-pound pumpkin for the elephant family. In those days, local farmers often donated overstock



PHOTO BY SHERVIN HESS, COURTESY OF THE OREGON ZOO

Pachyderms from the Asian elephant family at the Oregon Zoo pulverize pumpkins in prelude to the zoo's special "Howloween" festivities, Oct. 23-24 and Oct. 28-31.

pumpkins for use in the zoo's groundbreaking animal enrichment efforts — improving animals' well-being by providing stimulating and challenging environments, objects and activities. The zoo is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekends. To plan your trip, go to oregonzoo.org/visit.

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