

# OSU Extension



The pumpkin is most popular around Halloween and Thanksgiving, more for its ornamental characteristics than anything else. But this great gourd has more value than being a carved lantern or a tasty holiday dessert. Did you know that diets that include pumpkin have been shown to be protective for diabetes?

Pumpkin pulp and seeds have also been associated with lower risks of gastric, breast, lung, colorectal and prostate cancers. A Korean study showed pumpkin was used in treatment of intestinal parasites and edema related to pregnancy.

And pumpkin seeds have been shown to lower cholesterol as much as flax seeds or barley. Let's stop treating the pumpkin like a Halloween toy and give it

the kudos it deserves. Pumpkins are great and powerful warriors in the fight against chronic disease.

As one of the largest in the winter squash family, pumpkins grow to a usual weight of 4-8 pounds (although there are some giant varieties). The word *pumpkin* originates from the Greek word *pepon* meaning *large melon*, although they are thought to be native to North America, since the oldest pumpkin seeds, dated between 7000 and 5500 BC, were found in Mexico.

Pumpkins are very versatile since they can be boiled, baked, steamed, roasted, chunked, mashed and pureed. They can be used in soups, stews, chili, lasagna, pancakes, breads, muffins, cakes and of course, pies. (See

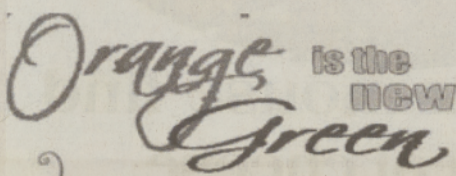
page 4 for recipes) Most parts of the pumpkin are edible including the flesh or pulp, the shell (yes the shell is edible), seeds, leaves and even flowers. The flowers have a sweet flavor and can be used in salads but be sure to pick only the male since the female flowers grow into the pumpkin.

Pumpkins aren't scary gourds to be avoided or given consideration only once a year. They are good sources of protein, healthy fats, antioxidants and other phytochemicals that our bodies need to fend off disease. They are low in calories with no saturated fat or cholesterol. They're high in fiber, vitamins and minerals. They can add a splash of color to any meal and can be a powerful ally in your fight against disease.

## Did you Know

- ◆ Pumpkin is the only fruit or vegetable to contain three different carotenoids (antioxidants): beta carotene, alpha carotene and lutein
- ◆ The top pumpkin-producing states are Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania and California with about 90% of the processed pumpkins are grown in IL
- ◆ Colonists removed seeds and filled pumpkins with milk, spices and honey then baked in hot ashes creating the original pumpkin "pie"
- ◆ Native Americans roasted long strips of pumpkin in an open fire and made them into mats
- ◆ In colonial times, pumpkin was used for the crust of pies, not the filling
- ◆ Adding pumpkin to your diet may help curb your appetite
- ◆ Pumpkins are really fruits
- ◆ The largest pumpkin ever grown weighed 2009 pounds (Sep 28, 2012)
- ◆ Pumpkins are 90% water
- ◆ Libby's, part of the Nestle Corporation, produces 85% of the pumpkins in the US
- ◆ Pumpkins have no cholesterol (no plants have cholesterol)
- ◆ Pumpkin originated in Central America
- ◆ Pumpkin flowers and leaves are edible
- ◆ Pumpkins are members of the vine crops family called *cucurbits*

Source: University of Illinois Extension



You may have noticed a common theme referencing the benefits of dark leafy greens, especially kale, among other green vegetables. Greens and other darkly colored vegetables are among the healthiest foods on earth. But current research also indicates that bright orange foods like pumpkin, along with reds and yellows, are also loaded with powerful nutrients and plant compounds that support health. Oranges, red and yellow fruits and vegetables are loaded with beta carotene which is a yellow-orange pigment that gives fruits and veggies their color. In our bodies, beta carotene is converted into Vitamin A, which is important for healthy skin, immune function and eye health. The advantage to consuming beta carotene over straight Vitamin A is that Vitamin A is a fat-soluble vitamin, and excess amounts can be toxic. But the body only converts only as much beta carotene to Vitamin A as it needs, therefore eliminating risk of toxicity. Beta carotene is a powerful antioxidant which protects body tissues and cells from damaging free radicals. Free radicals are molecules with a lonely unpaired electron. In order to pair up that electron, they scavenge and steal electrons from healthy tissues. Now the formerly healthy tissue with an unpaired electron must steal from another to pair up it's electron. This creates a chain reaction of damaged tissues and cells leading to aging, wrinkles, plaques build up, heart disease, stroke and cancer. Antioxidants help by donating electrons to free radicals, without creating another, stopping the chain reaction and neutralizing damage.



Here comes a powerful SuperFood. Pumpkin is one of the richest sources of carotenoids known to man. Just one 1/2 cup serving provides more than twice the recommended daily intake (RDI). The two most potent carotenoids are alpha and beta carotenes, which are both found in pumpkin. Be careful. Studies have shown that beta carotene supplements may have negative side effects. It appears the health benefits are seen when carotenoids are found in their whole food form, creating a synergistic symphony of nutrients.

*Leutin* carotenoid has been shown to prevent macular degeneration, and cataracts.

*Cryptoxanthin* carotenoid has been found to reduce risk of lung cancer and is sometimes used as a food colorant.

*Zeaxanthin* carotenoid is one of the two carotenoids found in the retina. It filters UV light to protect against age-related macular disease and is used to treat eye disorders.

Pumpkin seeds contain all 9 essential amino acids, and are particularly high in arginine. The seeds are also high in phytochemicals which can lower blood sugar, cholesterol and triglycerides. Pumpkin seeds are good sources of minerals magnesium, copper, selenium, iron and zinc. Vitamins in pumpkin seeds include folate, B6, thiamin, pantothenic acid and Vitamins C and E.

Seeds also contain mono unsaturated fatty acids including oleic acid, a mono-unsaturated fat, which helps lower LDL cholesterol and raise HDL cholesterol, and alpha-linolenic acid, an essential omega 3 fatty acid instrumental in reducing inflammation. The oil derived from pressing pumpkin seeds appears green or red and is sometimes called "green-gold." It has a nutty flavor but cooking pumpkin seed oil destroys it's healthy omega 3s so it is more often used in salads or in cold desserts.

## Beef Quality Assurance:

### Basic Cow-Calf Certification Workshop

#### What is BQA?

- √ Nationally coordinated, state implemented program
- √ Provides common sense husbandry techniques, along with scientific knowledge to raise cattle under optimum management and environmental conditions

#### Who Should Attend?

- √ All cattle producers
- √ All cattle producers in need of recertification (recommended every 3 years)

#### Why Should You Attend?

- √ Upholds consumer confidence in valuable beef products
- √ Protects the beef industry from

additional and burdensome regulation

- √ Demonstrates commitment to food safety and quality
- √ Enhances herd profitability through better management
- √ Safeguards the public image of the beef industry
- √ Improves sale value of marketed beef cattle

Dec 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Maupin, OR – Maupin Community Center, next to City Park For more information – call 541-565-3230 or 541-296-5494 (1 pm to 4 pm)

The program will consist of 2-hour workshop training, followed by the certification exam.

Certificates will be mailed within 2 weeks. A workbook will be provided.

## 2013 Beef Industry Tour:

### Nutrition and Health Management for Cow-Calf Operations

- Basic Concepts on Cattle Nutrition and Health Management - Fara Brummer – Oregon State University
  - Energy and Protein Supplementation for Cow-Calf Systems - Dr. David Bohnert – Oregon State University, EOARC - Burns
  - Feeding Fat for Optimal Health, Production, and Reproduction in Cattle - Dr. Reinaldo Cooke – Oregon State University, EOARC - Burns
  - Break - Refreshments Provided
  - Mineral Supplementation to Enhance Beef Cattle Performance and Health - Dr. John Arthington – University of Florida – RCREC, Ona
- December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
1:00 to 4:30 pm

The Dalles, OR – Shilo Inn | 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way  
For registration, call 541-565-3230 or 541-296-5494

\$30 - Registration Fee  
Need-Based Scholarships available (up to 5 participants)

For more information, please visit the Beef Cattle Sciences Website (<http://beefcattle.ans.oregonstate.edu>)

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Beef-Cattle-Sciences