

# Fall is the time to think about pumpkins

By Mollie Moore

As the weather becomes colder, leaves start to change and summer turns into fall, our attention goes from summer to fall activities. People start to think about pumpkins. Many consumers only know that they are orange, round and fun to carve. They do not realize that there is so much more to the pumpkin.

Pumpkins are in the genus *Cucurbita* of the family *Cucurbitaceae*. This genus consists of vines with yellow to orange flowers, large leaves and long twisting tendrils. The family *Cucurbitaceae* also includes squash, watermelons and cucumbers. There are four species of pumpkins, *Cucurbita maxima*, *Cucurbita mixta*, *Cucurbita moschata* and *Cucurbita pepo* and there are many varieties in each species.

*Cucurbita maxima* is the monster of the pumpkin world because it contains some of the biggest varieties of pumpkins, including those grown for weigh-off competitions. This species also includes most winter squash, hubbard squash, banana squash and buttercup squash.

*Cucurbita mixta* are small and very colorful pumpkins. These pumpkins make interesting decorations for the fall holidays

## Garden Tales



Submitted sketch/Katie Yost

**Pumpkins (*Cucurbita spp.*) are colorful symbols of autumn.**

and are used in arts and crafts projects.

*Cucurbita moschata* are the pumpkins that are often used for pumpkin pie filling.

*Cucurbita pepo* includes the very famil-

iar field pumpkins, and also some of the most common squash that is found in the produce aisle such as acorn squash, spa-

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