

# Girl Scouting at Home Fall Patch Activity



**Instructions:** Complete as many or as few activities as you would like. You must complete five activities throughout the fall to earn your fall patch. Record the activities completed on your Girl Scouting at Home Fall Activity Log. Bring your log to the GSNC Shop to purchase your fall activity patch.

## READ IT! **History of Pumpkins**

**First, let's take a look at the history of pumpkins, as we always find that knowing more about a plant helps you develop a greater appreciation for it.**

- Pumpkins are a member of the *Cucurbitacea* (gourd) family.
- The word pumpkin is derived from the Greek word “pepon”, which in English, translates to “large melon.”
- The French word for “pepon” is “pompon” and the latter was changed to “pumpion” by the English.
- Colonists in America changed the word “pumpion” to the word “pumpkin,” the name that this vegetable is still called.

According to archeological evidence, pumpkins are considered a winter squash and are native to the south-west part of the United States, Mexico, and throughout South American countries, including Columbia, Ecuador, and Peru.

These hardy veggies have been cultivated since around 3,500 B.C. Pumpkins and maize, or corn, are the oldest known crops grown in the western hemisphere. It is believed that Native Americans roasted strips of pumpkin on open fires for food. Some Native American tribes also dried out strips of pumpkin and used them to create woven mats.

Pumpkins are an American favorite. Pumpkin was a very popular source of food among American colonists. One of the most popular ways that pumpkins were prepared by colonists was removing the tops, de-seeding the vegetables, and filling the inside of the squash with a mixture of milk, honey, and spices, and then baked. This preparation is believed to be the origin of modern-day pumpkin pie.

Christopher Columbus took pumpkin seeds from the Americas back to Europe on one of his excursions to the New World. But because pumpkins require warmth and their growing season is pretty long, the plants never really became as popular in northern European countries, as the temperatures of the summer season are not warm enough to support their growth.

Today, pumpkins are still used as a food crop; however, they are most commonly used for ornamental purposes. Pumpkins are a staple decoration of the fall season and are particularly associated with Halloween and Thanksgiving.

Courtesy of: <https://gardenbeast.com/how-to-grow-pumpkins/>



# CREATE IT! **From Seed to Harvest: The Growth Stages of a Pumpkin**

**One of the most exciting things about planting pumpkins is watching them all through the different stages of development. There is little as satisfying as planting a seed, knowing it will eventually provide food for you.**

## **It Starts With a Seed**

Like most plants, pumpkins start out as nothing more than a seed. Roughly triangular, the pale yellow seed contains everything needed to grow a mature plant. Once you plant the seeds in warm, moist soil, you only have to wait approximately a week for the first two leaves to appear.

## **From Seed to Sprout**

Once germination has occurred, two small green leaves will break through the earth. These two leaves are not actually “true” leaves, but are instead known as the sprout.

## **True Pumpkin Leaves**

About a week after the sprout has emerged from the ground, you will see the first leaves appear. You can differentiate between true leaves and sprouts by paying attention to the following:

- Sprout leaves are small and round.
- True leaves grow from the center of the plant between the sprout leaves.
- The leaves are dark green and have jagged edges.

Within a few more weeks, the leaves will continue to develop. Once these three leaves form, the rest of the plant begins to grow.

## **Formation and Growth of Pumpkin Vines**

Once the leaves are established, you can see the pumpkin plant begin to grow. Almost daily, you can see the vines grow longer and spread out away from the base of the plant. Under the right weather and water conditions, pumpkin vines can increase by as much as six inches (15 centimeters) each day!

## **Next Comes the Flowers**

Midway through the growing season, the pumpkin vines will suddenly be covered with bright yellow flowers.

## **Fruits Begin to Form**

Small green fruits will appear at the base of the flower. These are infant pumpkins! Over the next weeks, the baby pumpkins increase in size.

## **The Last Few Weeks of the Growing Season**

The last few weeks of the pumpkin growth stage, the green fruits reach their final size and begin to turn their trademark orange color. Pumpkins must be turned occasionally so the sun can reach all sides; otherwise, you will end up with green streaks on the pumpkin!

Courtesy of: <https://www.garden.eco/pumpkin-growing-stages>

Color the picture below. Then cut out the names of the parts of the pumpkin plant and paste each one below the correct picture.

# The Pumpkin Life Cycle



Vine

Sprout

Green  
Pumpkin

Seed

Pumpkin

Flower

PLANT

## TRY IT! **How to Pick the Perfect Pumpkin**

*Courtesy of Ivory Harlow -September 18, 2015*

**Pumpkins, gourds, and squash are all members of the *Cucurbitaceae* plant family. Most non-botanists distinguish the three by our purpose for the plant: we carve pumpkins, eat squash and use gourds for fall decorating.**

- Look for a pumpkin that is well-developed in size and has lots of dead vines attached to it.
- The outside of the pumpkin, which is called the rind, should look dull and dry.
- Don't pick a pumpkin that has scratches or holes. It will rot quickly.
- Cut the stem off of the pumpkin leaving 3-4 inches of the stem attached. Do not use the stem as a handle.



## DO IT! **Decorate Your Pumpkin The Girl Scout Way!**

**Decorate your pumpkin using at least two of the items listed below and a trefoil. Be creative, but more importantly have fun decorating! Display your pumpkin for all to see on Juliette's birthday, which is on Halloween, October 31, 2020.**

- Paint or markers
- Washi or duct tape
- Stickers
- Glitter
- Something from nature
- A word or a color or a symbol that is thoughtful and communicates a message to those who pass by.

# MAKE IT! **Cracked Pepper and Sea Salt Pumpkin Seeds** (Make pumpkin seeds with the supervision of an adult.)

## Ingredients

- 2 cups pumpkin seeds
- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 tsp sea salt
- Fresh milled black pepper

## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees.
2. Separate pumpkin seed from pulp. Do not wash seeds.
3. Toss seeds, salt and oil together in a large bowl. Spread on a greased baking sheet. Sprinkle with fresh cracked pepper.
4. Bake for 2 hours, stirring half-way through cook time. Remove baking sheet from oven when seeds are dry and golden brown.
5. Cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

Snack on seeds or use as a garnish on pumpkin casseroles or soup.

*Courtesy of : <https://www.farmanddairy.com/recipes/cracked-pepper-sea-salt-roasted-pumpkin-seeds>*

