

THE EURO GROWER

THE EUROPEAN GIANT VEGETABLE GROWER'S ASSOCIATION

MARCH, 2010 – YEAR THREE

HTTP://WWW.EGVGA.WEBS.COM



A SHORT WORD FROM THE PREZ

Again winter has been long. This winter has also been very cold and extremely snowy all over the North part of the globe. While we wait for the snow to melt and get ready to start this season again, we spend sleepless nights thinking of our line ups. What seeds will I grow? What seeds will others grow? But not only what pumpkin seeds will I grow, but what other giant vegetable seeds will I start? Too many interesting choices and varieties! Sometimes I wish I had 2 pairs of extra hands, 24 extra hours a day to use and most of all, at least 200 square meters bigger patch! Oh, and a greenhouse ;)

As I write this article, our club has passed the amount of 200 members. Quite an achievement in 2 years! Members from all over the world, even from Argentina! Thank you everyone for your seed donations, bidding in our auction and especially thank you for being our member. I hope you got your seed promo on time and enjoyed it. We are now officially out of seed promos for 2010. If you did not get the seeds you wished for, do not hesitate to ask/trade seeds in our website forum:

<http://egvga.webs.com/apps/forums/>

Personally I think we had quite a good selection of different kinds of giant vegetables seeds this year. Not to mention that most of them are from Europe. Rumour also says we are going to have even more varieties of giant vegetable seeds in our 2011 promos ;)

Spring is almost here, spring has already arrived in some countries, get ready on time, make good plans and then just fulfil them! Spring and summer will be a busy time again, take a deep breath and feel the joy of this hobby and most of all, do not forget to smile, because that is what this is all about: fun, friends and joy of growing!

Good luck for the new growing season, and take care.

Kaarina Rinne / President of the EGVGA

A SHORTER WORD FROM THE MEDIA COORDINATOR

Another newsletter. Year three already! Time flies when you are having fun. Our website is getting many, many visitors. The newsletter is getting longer. More and more members are becoming more and more active.

In this edition, news from several countries, articles on growing different kinds of vegetables, an interview, pumpkin growing inventions, the EGVGA competitions for 2010 and much more.

The EGVGA is becoming more and more a true giant vegetable association with many growers growing a lot more than just pumpkins. This has attracted a number of international giant veg growers. We hope we can provide them a good home. We are very privileged to have Mr. Peter Glazebrook of England join our club. He is an internationally acclaimed giant vegetable grower who has grown several world records including that of heaviest parsnip just last year, the second member of our club with more than one WR.

While filling in the EGVGA members' results at the end of the year, I am always surprised at the new names that pop up. And competition is getting more and more fierce. I am looking forward to the results again this fall, but in the mean time, enjoy yourselves, help another if you can and hopefully your hard work will be rewarded.

Bradley Wursten / Media Coordinator

EGVGA Giant Vegetable Competition 2010

The EGVGA recognizes any type of giant vegetable in existing international categories. The most common ones are listed on this page.

In order to win a trophy or prize money in 2010, the grower must have paid their 2010 membership dues before May 1, 2010. The specimens must be officially weighed or measured according to EGVGA and/or GPC standards.

TROPHIES

The following trophies will be granted in 2010 (only European members):

- heaviest 5 pumpkins
- heaviest 2 squash
- heaviest 2 marrows
- heaviest 2 tomatoes
- tallest 2 sunflowers
- largest 2 sunflower heads
- longest 2 long gourds
- prettiest orange pumpkin
- heaviest 2 beetroots (**new for 2010**)
- a new country record for pumpkin (all members)
- a world record in one of the categories listed on this page (all members)
- European Giant Vegetable Grower of the Year (more info on website)

The grower of the largest pumpkin outside of Europe receives a free membership for 2011.

PRIZE MONEY

- Grow the **prettiest pumpkin** of the EGVGA (all members) - **€100**
- Grow the **largest pumpkin** with a 2009 European pumpkin seed (all members) - **€250**
- Bring the **pumpkin world record** to Europe (only Euro members) - **€750**
- Grow the **largest squash** off of any European squash seed (all members) - **€100**
- Bring the **squash world record** to Europe (only Euro members) - **€250**
- Grow a **giant vegetable world record** from the list on this page (all members) - **€75**

GIANT VEGETABLE CATEGORIES

Beetroot – heavy – 51.5 lbs
Beetroot – long – 21.0 ft
Cabbage – 127.0 lbs
Cantaloupe – 64.81 lbs
Carrot – heavy – 18.81 lbs
Carrot – long – 19 ft 2 in
Cauliflower – 54.19 lbs
Corn – tall – 31 ft 0 in
Cucumber – long (English) – 37.0 in
Cucumber – heavy (English) – 27.3 lbs
Long gourd – 134.25 in
Marrow – 206.5 lbs
Onion – 16.53 lbs
Parsnip – long – 17 ft 1 in
Parsnip – heavy – 13.0 lbs
Potato – 7.69 lbs
Radish – 68.6 lbs
Runnerbean – 4 ft 3 in
Rutabaga/swede – 82.9 lbs
Sunflower – tall – 25 ft 5.5 in
Sunflower – head – 32.25 in
Tomato – 7.75 lbs
Turnip – 39.2 lbs
Watermelon – 268.8 lbs

EGVGA records to beat

For the growers that want to set a new EGVGA member's record this year, here are some of the current records to beat.

COMPETITION VEGETABLES

- Pumpkin: 1611 lbs (731 kg)
Mehdi Daho [France]
- Squash: 1234 lbs (560 kg)
Bradley Wursten [Netherlands]
- Marrow: 206.5 lbs (93.7 kg)
Bradley Wursten [Netherlands]
- Long gourd: 112.9 in (287 cm)
Johannes Offermann [Germany]
- Tomato: 5.0 lbs (2.27 kg)
Rhonny Clerinx [Belgium]
- Sunflower (tall): 15ft 7 in (476 cm)
Iwan Horde [Netherlands]
- Sunflower (head): 23.2 in (59 cm)
Iwan Horde [Netherlands]
- Beetroot (heavy): 51.0 lbs (23.1 kg)
Bradley Wursten [Netherlands]

For all records see:

www.freewebs.com/egvga/worldrecords.htm

Our Friendly Bugs

By Ian Paton

I thought it may be helpful if other growers got to see our pest programme which on the whole is all biological.

First of all this programme is targeted at problems we expect to get every year. Over a few seasons most growers will begin to get a picture in their mind of what to expect and the most important thing is to log these events.

The problems we expect each year can be dealt with before you see them in many cases or you will know where and went to look.

Our target problems and controls are;

Red spider mite



This is a common pest of protected crops with adults laying up to 40 eggs in 7 days. The mobile stages suck the contents out of the plant cells and produce leaf damage of white or silvery

speckled patches.

To control this we release *Phytoseiulus persimilis* which is a predator that actively hunts and attacks all stages of mites

White fly



Adult white fly lay their eggs on the underside of the youngest leaves and when the eggs change to a scale stage they suck the plant sap. Once high

numbers build up, large quantities of honeydew encourage black sooty mould.

To control white fly we use a parasitic wasp called *Encarsia Formosa*. These lay 60-100 eggs singly in to white fly scales.

Sciarid fly

The adult flies are commonly found hopping over the soil surface.



Adults can spread fungal diseases but the most damage is caused by the larval stage feeding on plant roots, making

them vulnerable to disease infections such as *Pythium*.

We have a few couple of controls for sciarid the first being *Steinernema feltiae*. This is a Microscopic parasitic worm which swims through the soil and enter the sciarid larvae. We also use *Atheta coriaria* (my favorite), these are 2-3mm beetles which feed on larvae and adults.

Aphid



Most crops can be infested with aphids and pumpkins are no exception. Damage is caused in three ways: sucking plant sap when feeding, excretion of honeydew leading to sooty mould and some can transmit plant viruses.

There are a range of parasitic wasps available and we use one called *Aphidius colemani* which



works very similarly to the white fly control.

So there you are, one way of keeping your bugs at bay under cover. You can, and we do, use sprays but one way or another sprays will affect your plants and we feel that the less we use them the better we are.



From Switzerland

An interview with Swiss pumpkin champion Beni Meier by Roger Rügger

Beni du hast eine Wahnsinns Saison im 2009 gehabt nicht nur die beiden Offiziell gewogenen Kürbisse mit 1410 Lbs und 1268 Lbs, sondern auch daneben noch 3 über 1000 Lbs (1119 , 1108 , 1036 Lbs)



1 .Wie lange Züchtest du schon Kürbisse?

Ich züchte schon seit etwa 10 Jahren, früher mit normalen Samen aus dem Gartencenter. Dies brachte mir einige Jahre Kürbisse um 80 bis 100kg. Seit ca. 3 Jahren kultiviere ich Kürbisse mit professionellen Samen. So konnte ich mich Jahr für Jahr um einige 100 kg steigern.

2 .Worauf ist diese Gewaltige Steigerung im 2009 zu führen?

Im Vergleich zur Saison 2008 habe ich im 2009 mit grosser Disziplin alle Tertiär-Triebe entfernt und das Unkraut im Rahmen gehalten.

3 .Züchtest du im Treibhaus oder im Freien?

Ich habe alle meine Pflanzen im Freien gezüchtet. Das Keimen und die ersten ein bis zwei Wochen der Jungpflanze im beheizten Treibhaus. In den ersten zwei Wochen im Freiland habe ich die Pflanzen mit einem Vlies gegen die Kälte geschützt.

4 .Wie sah die Bodenvorbereitung aus?

Auf derselben Stelle auf der mein 1410 gewachsen ist habe ich schon im Vorjahr Kürbisse gepflanzt.

Ich habe im Herbst Pferdemist und torfigen Kompost ausgebracht und dann grobschollig umgepflügt. Über den ganzen Winter habe ich nichts mehr gemacht, durch Frost und Auftauen zerfallen die schollen und es ergibt eine schöne Krümmelstruktur. Etwa eine Woche vor dem Auspflanzen habe ich den Dünger gestreut und gebräst.

5 .Hast du Mykorrhiza verwendet?

Ich habe 09 keine Mykorrhiza Pilze verwendet. Ich habe aber vor im 2010 bodenverbessernde Bakterien und Mykorrhiza bei einigen Pflanzen auszuprobieren.

6 .Hast du während der Saison Dünger verwendet wenn ja was für Dünger?

Ich habe zur Hälfte einen Organischen Dünger N 8 / P 2 / K 10 und zur anderen Hälfte einen reinen mineralischen Stickstoffdünger ausgebracht. In der Mitte der Saison habe ich nochmals nachgedüngt.

Ich denke es ist egal ob man seine Pflanzen allein mit Kompost, mit organischen oder mit mineralischen Dünger ernährt. Wichtig ist dass die Pflanze die richtigen Nährstoffe in der richtigen Zeit in der richtigen Menge zur Verfügung hat. Der Falsche Dünger oder zu viel davon kann mehr Schaden anrichten als er nützt. Dies gilt vor allem für N Stickstoff.

7 .Wie bewässerst du deine Pflanzen?

Anfangs Saison wurden alle Pflanzen mit dem Schlauch gegossen. Im Juni montierte ich T-Tape Bewässerungsschläuche unter den Blättern. In der Regel habe ich immer wenn möglich morgens gegossen, an heissen Tagen aber auch nachmittags. Um Pilzkrankheiten vorzubeugen ist es besser, wenn die Blätter nicht nass werden oder schnell abtrocknen können.

8 .Wie viel Platz hat jede Pflanze?

Eine Pflanze hatte 8m in der Breite und 10m in der Länge zur Verfügung.

alle sekundär Triebe wurden nach 3m bis 4m abgeschnitten und eingegraben. Ich hatte alle meine Früchte an der Haupttranke. Mein 1410 war ca 3,5m weit aussen, der 1286 auf 4,2m.



9 .Hast du Probleme gehabt mit Pilzkrankheiten und wenn ja wie hast du die bekämpft?

Ich hatte Probleme mit verfaulenden Wurzelstöcken. Ich bin mir aber nicht sicher ob es einfach zu nass war im Juni oder ob es durch einen Pilz Faul wurde. Die Faulen stellen wurden mit einem Messer saubergekratzt und nach einigen Wochen heilte fast alles aus. Das grösste Problem ist der echte Mehltau. Von Mitte August bis zur Ende der Kultur muss regelmässig auf Pilzbefall geachtet werden. Ich habe mit handelsüblichen Fungiziden je nach Befallsdruck gespritzt. (alle ein bis zwei Wochen)

10 .Und Insekten, waren die ein Problem und wenn ja wie hast du die bekämpft?

Die drei wichtigsten Schädlinge sind Blattläuse, Weisse Fliegen und Spinnmilben. Dagegen habe ich mit Insektiziden und Akarizid gespritzt.

11 .Wie war das Wetter in der Saison 2009?

Im grossen Ganzen war das Wetter im 2009 super! Es war nur im Juni zu kalt und zu nass. Im Juli und August hatten wir einige Sommergewitter, welche mir einige Blätter abknickten. Es war lange schön warm, wir hatten viel Sonne und es regnete mehr oder weniger regelmässig.

12 .Nach welchen Kriterien hast du deine Kerne ausgesucht?

Ich habe geschaut welche Kerne was produzierten und dann entsprechende Kreuzungen gesucht.

13 .Welche Kerne wirst du im 2010 pflanzen?

Ich werde Kerne von mir selber ausprobieren. 1343 und 1305 Lyons werde ich auch wieder pflanzen. Dann habe ich noch Kerne von Quinn Werner. Den 1472,5 und 1264,5 (985Werner x 998,6Pukos) und reverse. Ich denke diese zwei Kerne haben gutes Potenzial.

14 .Hast du etwas das du im 2010 verbessern willst?

Sehr viel verändern möchte ich nicht. Aber natürlich versuche ich noch alles zu optimieren (Bewässerung, Düngung, Pflanzenaufbau) Sehr wichtig ist dass man von Anfang bis Ende Saison am Ball bleibt mit Jäten und dem aufbauen der Pflanze.

Ich empfehle lieber etwas weniger als zu viel Kompost und Mist auszubringen um eine gute Bodenstruktur zu erhalten.

Kürbispflanzen sind stark zehrende Pflanzen. Sie benötigen viel Nährstoffe. Aber ich gebe lieber etwas zu wenig Dünger als zu viel um Splits zu vermeiden.



Beni Meier, Jos Ghaye and Anders Lilja in Ludwigsburg

Vielen Dank Beni für das Interview.

THE 2010 BEETROOT COMPETITION

By Bradley Wursten

Introduction

First of all, let us explain what a beetroot is. The beetroot belongs to the *Beta* genus, a member of the amaranth family. There are many kinds of beets, some used for their leaves, others for their roots. There are three main types of beetroots: sugarbeet, mangold (wurzeln) / mangelwurzeln and the red root vegetable beetroot. But all three are known by the Latin name *Beta vulgaris*.

Unfortunately even Guinness World Records does not know the difference between the three types. The red root vegetable beetroot record is now held by a sugarbeet grown by a Dutch grower in 2005.



For giant vegetable competitions, mangolds and sugarbeets are not permitted. A sugarbeet is always white, has a very high sugar content and is not fit for human consumption, but is used

in the sugar industry. Of all the beet types, this is by far the largest, with weights going up to 70 kg.



A mangelwurzeln has a whitish/greenish/yellow/orange colour and is the second largest type of

beetroot. It is an animal fodder with a high content of sugar.

The red root vegetable beetroot has a red or pinkish colour. Again this is confusing because many vegetable beetroots have other colours including white, yellow, purple to almost black. These other colours never produce large beetroots though. The world record red/pink beetroot, according to the EGVGA, is the 51.5 lb (23.4kg) true red beetroot grown by Ian Neale



of the United Kingdom in 2001. The second biggest beetroot was a 51.0 lb (23.1kg) red/pinkish Mammoth variety grown by yours truly in 2009.



For the EGVGA competition, we will only be accepting beetroots that belong to the red/pink family.

Growing

Beetroots like a pH level of about 5.5. If the pH level gets above 6, beetroots, especially the true red variety, will likely develop canker, black holes that will start rotting and disqualify the beetroot. Do not use fresh manure or lime. I add peat and leaves to the soil in the fall to bring down the pH level.

Beetroots are best grown in large barrels or raised beds. It is best not to transplant beetroots, so start them outside once the chance of frost is gone, or earlier inside.

One beetroot plant will eventually need about 1 square meter of growing space. I keep 1 meter between plants. I start off about 5 or 6 seeds in each hill. Some of the seeds will produce multiple plants. Once they have started growing, I cut off the weakest few plants, leaving three. Transplanting these to another spot in the garden is of no use, unless you wish to eat them. Once the beetroot plants are about 15 cm high, I cut off the smallest plant (pulling them out will disturb the other roots). Once I am sure which one is the biggest, I get rid of the second plant as well.

Beetroots, like carrots, need very even watering. They should never get too dry and never get too wet. Like carrots, they will split. Large temperature differences should also be avoided for the same reason.



The only way to feed a beetroot is through foliar spraying. I use a standard foliar spray (about 10-10-10) once a week from about June onwards. I remove dead or brown leaves whenever I see them.

Much of the beetroot will grow above ground. In some cases only a small part of the root will still be in the ground. When watering a raised bed, make sure the water cannot roll off the sides. And remember that the beetroot has quite a large network of roots, so water the entire 1m².

Harvesting

When digging them up, be careful of the roots. I usually break or cut off the outside leaves and dig the beetroot up with my hands or some small handheld tool. Make sure the little roots are not snapped off.



It is best to brush off all the soil that is stuck in the roots and then wash it off in warm water (cold water can cause it to split). The leaves must be cut off as close to the beetroot as possible. It may not have any rotten spots or (large) cracks.

If you want to get seeds from the beetroot, you just put it back in the garden, well protected from frost (which really will kill it and cause it to rot). The leaves will grow back and produce stalks with thousands and thousands of seeds on them.

Did you know that a beetroot seed is actually a cluster of seeds? So more than one plant can come from one seed.



From Germany

Cover crops

By Raimund Burghardt

Zwischenfrüchte bei AGs oder Unkrautunterdrückung einmal anders!

Der Zwischenfruchtbau in der Riesenkürbiszucht ist immer wieder Thema. In der Regel werden diese Pflanzen vor oder nach der AG-Kultur gesät, um dem Boden zusätzlich organische Masse zuzuführen. Dies bringt eine Vielzahl von Vorteilen mit sich. Organische Masse im Boden fördert das Bodenleben, die Wurzeln der Zwischenfrüchte lockern den Untergrund (v.a. bei Pfahlwurzlern) und gegebenenfalls wird sogar Stickstoff (N) aus der Bodenluft gebunden. Die Fähigkeit Luftstickstoff zu binden haben allerdings nur die „Leguminosen“, eine Pflanzenfamilie, zu der alle Kleearten zählen. Ein nicht zu unterschätzender Faktor ist auch die Bodenbedeckung während der Wintermonate als Erosionsschutz.

Zunächst sollen hier einige Zwischenfruchtpflanzen vorgestellt und bewertet werden die für den Kürbisacker in Frage kommen.

1. Bodenbedeckung vor und nach den AGs:

Sollen Zwischenfrüchte vor oder nach den Atlantic Giants gesät werden, reduziert sich die Auswahl der möglichen Pflanzen beträchtlich. Es bleibt nur das sehr frühe Frühjahr bis Anfang Mai und die Vegetationszeit ab frühestens Ende September. Im Sommer sollen ja Riesenkürbisse wachsen.

Am Erfolg versprechendsten sind aus meiner Sicht folgende Pflanzen:

Gelbsenf:

Es gibt keine andere Pflanze die schneller wächst als der Senf. Früh gesät (vielleicht schon

im März) bildet er noch bis Anfang Mai bis zum Auspflanzen der AGs erheblich Blattmasse. Ähnliches gilt auch für die Aussaat nach der AG-Ernte, vorausgesetzt es gibt keinen strengen Frost bereits im Oktober, denn Senf ist nicht winterhart und friert sicher ab.

Senf ist durchaus spätsaatverträglich aber entscheidend für eine ausreichend Blattmassebildung im Herbst ist der Verlauf der Witterung von Oktober bis Winterbeginn. Ein weiterer Vorteil dieser Pflanze: es ist ein Lichtkeimer, d.h. er kann auf den Boden gestreut werden. Oft scheidet es aber auch an der entsprechenden Motivation des Züchters das Feld nach einer anstrengenden Saison gleich nach dem Wiegen für eine Zwischenfrucht vorzubereiten.

Saatmenge ca. 6.10g/m²

Winterroggen:

Viele Züchter greifen nach der AG-Ernte oft auf ein Wintergetreide zurück. Winterroggen ist wohl die robusteste Getreideart für den Anbau im Herbst, bildet ein ausgeprägtes Wurzelwerk und wächst auch noch bei kühlen Temperaturen. Roggen ist winterhart, d.h. er muss im Frühjahr gemäht bzw. gemulcht werden um in anschließend einfräsen zu können. Roggen sollte zumindest mit dem Rechen etwas eingearbeitet werden, um etwas Bedeckung der Körner zu erreichen.

Saatmenge ca. 16-20g/m²

Natürlich können auch andere Pflanzen verwendet werden, egal ob winterharte oder nicht winterharte Arten (siehe weiter unten).

2. Anbau von Zwischenfrüchten auf einer Brachfläche:

Manche Züchter haben das Glück und wechseln von Jahr zu Jahr den Standort ihres Patches.

So kann ein Feld optimal auch mit Zwischenfrüchten für die Riesenkürbiszucht vorbereitet werden. Manche Züchter setzen auch mal ein Jahr aus mit der Zucht oder werden frühzeitig im Sommer von Wetterextremen überrascht...auch dann machen Zwischenfrüchte durchaus Sinn.

Steht der ganze Sommer zur Verfügung gibt es eine Vielzahl von Möglichkeiten. Hier mal eine kleine Auswahl.

Im Wesentlichen wird unterschieden zwischen winterharten und nichtwinterharten Kulturen:

Winterhart für die Saat im Herbst:

Rotklee: Pfahlwurzler und Bindung von Luftstickstoff, gut winterhart

Hier eine gut entwickelte Rotkleepflanze im Frühjahr (gesät im Vorjahr Monat August)



Weißklee: im Vergleich zum Rotklee eher ausläuferbildend

Kleegrasmischungen: je nach Bestandteilen eine Mischung aus Weidelgräsern und Kleearten

Landsberger Gemenge: setzt sich Zusammen aus Winterwicken, Inkarnatklee und Welschem Weidelgras; Bei Kahlfrösten auswinternd

Nicht winterhart für die Frühjahrssaat:

Alexandrinerklee: schnelles Wachstum, sicher abfrierend, viel Blattmasse

Ackerbohne, Wicken und Erbsen: tief wurzelnd, Stickstoffsammler, relativ teures Saatgut. Oft wird eine Stützfrucht (Getreide) zu

Erbsen oder Wicken mit eingesät um den Pflanzen besseren Halt zu geben.

Ölrettich und Rübsen: rasche Jugendentwicklung, viel Blattmasse, spätsaatverträglich; Winterrübsen winterhart

Phazelle (Phacelia oder Bienenfreund): mit keiner anderen Nutzpflanze verwandt, langsame Jugendentwicklung, blau blühend und wertvolle Bienenweide, sicher abfrierend

Weitere Möglichkeiten: **Buchweizen, alle Getreidearten, Esparsette, Serradella, Raps...**

Dies ist keine vollständige Liste und es gibt bestimmt noch andere hier nicht genannte Pflanzenarten. Sogar Sonnenblumen, Spinat oder Kresse kommen in Betracht. Hier gilt wie fast überall: Probieren geht über studieren...

3. Zwischenfrüchte zwischen und mit den AGs oder: Unkrautjäten leicht gemacht.

Diese Variante sieht man wohl eher selten. Nichts desto trotz möchte ich sie hier vorstellen, da ich von dieser Methode überzeugt bin und schon einige Erfahrungen damit sammeln konnte. Eine AG-Pflanze braucht ja eine gewisse Zeit, bis sie die ganze Fläche bedeckt. Also warum nicht die Zeit nutzen und zwischen den AG-Pflanzflächen eine Zwischenfrucht anbauen? Meine Favoriten Senf oder Phacelia! Der Senf besitzt im Frühjahr eine immense Wuchskraft und wächst jedem Unkraut davon. Einfaches Ausreißen oder mähen genügt und man hat wunderbares Mulchmaterial, was den Boden bedeckt hält.

Hier mal eine Bilderfolge, um die Vorgehensweise zu verdeutlichen:

Vorbereitetes Patch und Aussaat von Senf zwischen den Pflanzstellen am 11. April:



Es wird Zeit den Senf zu mähen (Aufnahme vom 23. Mai)



Der abgemähte Senf bleibt als Mulch zwischen den Pflanzen liegen und bedeckt den Boden. Mit dem Wachstum der AG-Pflanzen kann die Mulchschicht mit dem Rechen zurückgezogen und der Boden um die AGs gelockert werden.



Nahaufnahme Mulchschicht:

Wo soll hier Unkraut wachsen?



Gleiche Methode habe ich auch schon mit Phacelia ausprobiert.

Es fällt nicht leicht diese blaue Blütenpracht abzumähen.



Phacelia wächst allerdings nicht so rasant wie der Senf und braucht vor allem nach der Saat etwas Zeit zur Entwicklung. Außerdem sollte sie nach der Saat etwas eingearbeitet werden, da sie ein Dunkelkeimer ist.

Nachteile?

Na die gibt es natürlich auch hier, die ich euch nicht vorenthalten möchte:

- Erhöhter Schneckendruck durch Bodenbedeckung Nachdem vor allem die jungen AGs gefährdet sind ist Schneckenkorn an den Pflanzstellen ausreichend. Bei größeren Pflanzen gab es nie Schneckenprobleme.
- N-Fixierung durch die Zwischenfrucht selbst Entscheidend ist wohl den richtigen Zeitpunkt des Mähens zu erwischen, damit die Mulchschicht schon am Verrotten ist, bis die Riesenkürbispflanzen das Patch überwachsen. Vielleicht hilft auch die Gabe von etwas Stickstoffdünger, damit sich der Mulch schneller zersetzt.
- Erhöhter Zeit- und Kostenaufwand: Senfsaat ist im Vergleich zu Phacelia vergleichsweise billig und in jedem Lagerhaus erhältlich. Den Zeitaufwand für Mähen oder Mulchen des Senfs ist relativ gering. Eine einfache Sense hat sich gut bewährt.

Zu Bedenken gebe ich allerdings, dass das maschinelle Fräsen zwischen den Pflanzen durch den Mulch deutlich erschwert wird. Allerdings ist der Boden durch die Senfwurzeln sowieso sehr locker.

Die hier beschriebene Methode ist vielleicht nicht jedermanns Sache, aber vielleicht konnte ich dem ein oder anderen Lust machen, ein wenig mit Zwischenfrüchten zu experimentieren.

Wie wärs mal mit Ringelblume, Tagetes und Co. zwischen den AGs?

Blumenstrauß für die Frau Gemahlin gibt's dann kostenlos dazu...

Viel Spaß! *Raimund Burghardt*

Grussen aus Deutschland

Wieder neigt sich ein schneereicher Winter dem Ende zu und wir können es kaum mehr erwarten unsere Kerne in den Boden zu stecken. Fleißig wurde geschattet, line-ups ausgebrütet, Kerne getauscht, bei Auktionen mit geboten, neuer Blattdünger bestellt oder im ganz geheimen das Patch auf Vordermann gebracht. So entdeckt man sogar in dem ein oder anderen Tagebuch neue Gewächshäuser, die uns eine spannende

Saison 2010 einläuten! Robert Jaser hat mit seinen 1360lbs in 2009 gut vorgelegt, die es heuer zu schlagen gilt. Das wird nicht leicht, aber ich verspüre bei der deutschen Kürbiszüchtergemeinde einen gewissen Drang nach noch mehr...nicht zuletzt angeheizt von Mehdi Dahos 1611!! Kommt der neue Europarekord 2011 aus Deutschland? Wir haben unsere Hausaufgaben gemacht...soviel steht fest! An den Kernen sollte es jedenfalls nicht scheitern. Es wird so alles wachsen in Deutschland, was Rang und Namen hat: 1161 Rodonis, 901 Hunt, 904 Stelts, 1385 Jutras, etc. Ja sogar von einem 1068 Wallace hört man...das Beste eben was zur Zeit an Kernen auf dem Markt ist. Manche Züchter versuchen sich auch wieder an einem Squash, andere planen schöne orange crosses, wieder andere wollen eigene Kreuzungen ausprobieren oder haben Gefallen an anderem Riesengemüse gefunden. Kurzum, es wird wieder spannend für jeden von uns und alle starten wir wieder wie jedes Jahr mit den gleichen Voraussetzungen: Einem kleinem Kürbiskern, der uns viel Arbeit bescheren wird, aber auch soviel schönes mit sich bringt und uns alle zusammenschweißt. Auf diesem Weg möchte ich auch noch ein dickes Dankeschön loswerden an Christian Schöner und Janni Höllein, die unermüdlich und mit viel Engagement unser deutschsprachiges Forum



betreiben und ständig verbessern, ja sogar in nächstlanger Arbeit einen erste internationale Auktion auf die Beine gestellt haben. Vielen,

vielen Dank dafür und macht weiter so. Ohne euch wären wir nicht da wo wir heute sind!

Ich wünsche euch allen bestes Kürbiswetter und alles erdenkliche Glück, damit eure Träume wahr werden und wir uns gegenseitig auf dem nächsten Wiegen Beglückwünschen können. Auf zur neuen „personal best“, „growem big“ und vor allem habt viel Spaß dabei!

Raimund Burghardt

Growing brains

Precaution:

This article should have been on the opinion page of the newsletter.

Don't read this article if:

You have high blood pressure;

You are extremely non-intelligent;

Your mother-in-law is extremely smart and you don't like her...



Pumpkin, squash and other giant vegetable growers have been discussing the main reasons for success for years. The one says it is the seed, the other says it is the fertilizer and a third person says it is the weather and another the soil or climate.

Some growers only have success once. Others have many national and world records, producing great results almost every year, and often in some of the worst conditions possible. So what is the real reason?

A few growers know the real answer. The major reason for success is...brains. While other growers are following all kinds of trends, such as mycorrhizae, compost tea, wormeries, etc, this little group of exclusive growers sit back and smile. They don't follow trends. They are miles ahead of the rest. They think up their own solutions. Within minutes of studying new

trends, they know if it will work or not and sometimes have figured it out long before it becomes a trend. These growers have many things in common. They are (horticulturally) intelligent to very intelligent, perfectionists, dedicated, creative and odd.

Intelligence cannot only be measured by IQ, but also by the amount of creativity, the level of abstract thinking and the ability of thinking up things that haven't been discovered yet. And in the world of giant vegetable growers there are a handful of these growers and they seem to be collecting all the records.

Pumpkin growers nowadays never grow a world record twice, although some also do very well in other fields such as long gourds and grow a WR or an almost WR there. In the bigger world of giant veg, some growers have grown up to 18 world records. I have had the privilege of corresponding with or reading about several of these WR growers, and they were all the same: perfectionists with brains.

(Highly) intelligent people are often seen as arrogant. They know everything better. They are a bit odd. The problem is, they usually DO know everything better for the simple reason that their brains work totally different than other people's. Their brains work much quicker, have much more information available (which they pick up automatically) and their brains can connect, sort and distill information far better, faster and easier than "normal" brains. They are also very smart in many different fields, and can couple all that information together for one task, such as growing giant vegetables. One thing is pretty much impossible though. A true brainy person cannot be arrogant. The reason for this lies is a characteristic common to all highly gifted people: perfectionism.

A perfectionist often has psychological problems. The reason for this is that a perfectionist is never perfect enough for

himself. Eventhough everybody thinks he has done an incredible job, the perfectionist will know he has made a little mistake here or there and be disappointed in himself. For this reason, he cannot be arrogant. Many brainy people even have an inferiority complex. They only see their own faults. Either they become shy and quiet or try to overcome their disappointment in themselves in the opposite way. But perfectionism is exactly the reason they grow so many world records.

Just a short story to illustrate. I know a grower that grew two world records in the past few years. This grower totally smashed the old world record for a certain vegetable and was so disappointed with the weight that his wife, also at the weigh-off, thought that something had gone wrong and he had not gotten the WR. She only found out hours later when somebody else informed her about it. Later this grower was described as arrogant, while the grower himself didn't even celebrate his WR because he felt he had failed. A few years later the grower set a new world record and was disappointed he had failed to reach the maximum percentage heavy the charts had given.

While some growers grow for fun, for money, or for honour, perfectionists grow to achieve perfection. And they have fun while doing it but at a much more serious level. No beer here. Analyzing, making growth charts, keeping a diary. Working things out ahead of time. Taking pictures. Reading. Taking time to think things through. Paying attention to the smallest details. This is called internal motivation. This person's character demands of him perfection. Money and fame is external motivation (not interesting to a perfectionist). The level of perfection caused by external motivation cannot get close to that of internal motivation. Internal motivation causes other parts of the brain to work.

A perfectionist never leaves things till tomorrow. He addresses even the smallest of problems. He pays attention to things "normal" growers don't even see or think about. He thinks up things that other growers don't even think about. He is creative and thinks up solutions to problems other growers don't even see. He smiles friendly at growers who follow trends. Trend followers will never succeed or exceed because they only do what everybody else is doing. To win, you need to do what nobody else is doing.

Climate, seeds, soil, weather, etc, are all very important factors, but a brainy grower will manipulate them. Why are most of the world records from the United Kingdom and Alaska, a cold, wet climate and an extremely short growing season with a constant risk of frost? Certainly there are much better climates? Why are the results of neighbouring growers so drastically different although the soil, seed, climate, years of experience, etc, are identical?

Fortunately for the "normal" people (are there normal people in giant veg growing?), many world records are held by "normal" people, but if you are going for multiple records, I'm afraid those "odd balls" have an advantage.

So next time you call them arrogant snobs that know everything better, realize that they probably DO know everything better but the only person that doesn't believe that is that person himself. And if you don't understand them, don't worry, they don't understand you either...

Bradley Wursten

Did you know an average person has an IQ (Intelligent Quotient) of 90-110? People with a 110 are called smart. 110-120 is called superior intelligence, 120-140 is called very superior intelligence. Everything above that is called genius. But usually they are just called "odd"!

HEAVY PARSNIPS

EGVGA member, Peter Glazebrook of England, holds the world record for heavy parsnip, 13.0 lbs (5.9 kg).



Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*) is related to the carrot. In fact, in Roman and Greek times, it was difficult to tell the difference because carrots back then were either white or purple, and only much later the more popular

colour of orange, although there are now many more colours as well.

Originally parsnips were grown in the Mediterranean area and were the size of baby carrots. The Romans took the parsnip up north and noticed they got bigger the further north they came. In this time the parsnip, along with the turnip, were very important food sources. Later the potato would almost completely replace both vegetables.

Parsnips like short seasons and need frost to obtain a good taste. Giant parsnip growers do their best to make the season as long as possible, starting their season usually in January or February.

Parsnips like sandy, loamy soil and will not grow big in other types such as clay. Do not use fresh manure!

They are best started off in January inside. Although the young plants can take quite a bit of frost, make sure they don't have to as it will slow down growth. In general giant parsnips are always grown inside, but they will do well outside as well.

Grow them in raised beds (take a look at how long the WR parsnip was) or in barrels.

For my raised beds I use 1/3 peat, 1/3 sand and 1/3 poor soil. I make the raised beds in the fall and let it settle during the winter.

The pH level does not seem to be too critical for parsnips. I make sure it is about 6 pH. A bit higher or lower is not a problem.

If you have received parsnip seeds in your EGVGA seed pack (about 5 or 6 seeds), you can start them all off and later plant out the best ones. At room temperature it will take about two weeks for the seeds to germinate.

Once the seedlings has reached about 10 cm, you can transplant them to the raised bed. Just poke a hole in the soil with a stick and carefully put the seedling in it. Water the hole to close it. Transplanting will cause the parsnip to grow more than one root, which will cause the parsnip to grow much heavier.



Because of the sandy soil, parsnips will need watering every day if inside.

A balanced feed can be used every other week from mid-summer to harvest.

If growing in a greenhouse or in hot weather, it is usually smart to add a mulch layer around the plant to keep the moisture in the soil.

Be careful when digging up parsnips. They have many, many roots (if grown properly). Because the soil in a raised bed is not compacted, it is best to use your hands to carefully dig and lift the parsnip out of the ground.

Brush the soil off the roots. Make sure no soil is left in between the roots. It is best to use warm water to help you. The parsnip must be sound and the leaves must be cut off as close to the shoulders as possible.

By Bradley Wursten (Photo: Norm Craven WR 2003)

Greetings from Luxembourg

Season Opening 2010

„Nach der Saison ist vor der Saison“ schrieb ich am Ende meines Beitrages im Herbst. Doch auch wenn der eigentliche Saisonbeginn noch einige Wochen entfernt ist, so haben zumindest einige der Luxemburger Züchter sich in den letzten Monaten bereits mehr oder weniger ausgiebig mit ihrem Hobby befasst, sei es mit der Patchvorbereitung, der Informationsbeschaffung und –Auswertung (schließlich haben wir alle hier noch viel Nachholbedarf), ... und natürlich mit der Auswahl der richtigen Samen.

Und in einem guten halben Jahr weiß dann jeder ob die Mühe sich gelohnt hat und (zumindest) ein neuer persönlicher Rekord die Saison 2010 krönt, sei es bei den Kürbissen, Marrows, Sonnenblumen, ... oder natürlich beim EGVGA-Gemüse des Jahres 2010, den Beetroots.

Ich wünsche jedenfalls jedem Züchter hier in Luxemburg oder sonst wo (vor allem natürlich allen EGVGA-Mitgliedern) eine neue persönliche Bestmarke, den ein oder anderen Rekord und (hoffentlich) einen „Bring-the-WR-(back)-to-Europe“.

Auf Wiedersehen in
Ludwigsburg!

Tom Delles

national coordinator for
Luxembourg



English Summary

Real season opening is still some weeks ahead, but preparation tasks fill the cold winter months. The results will be seen in autumn. I wish everyone here in Luxembourg or elsewhere (especially all the EGVGA-members) a new PB or even a new national or European record. And maybe / hopefully someone will get a „Bring-the-WR-(back)-to-Europe“.

Hope to see you all in Ludwigsburg!

De
Groeten
Uit
Nederland

Een koude winter. Weinig buiten te doen. Zelfs in de kas weinig te doen. Binnen in huis wel druk. Pastinaken, wortels, bieten, noem maar op, allemaal gezaaid. De echte drukte begint voor iedereen in april natuurlijk. Nog een maand.

Iwan Horde is druk bezig. Achter de schermen. Intratuin vond de Nederlandse Kampioenschap geweldig, maar helaas éénmalig. De karakter was té regionaal. Iwan had een briljant idee. EcoStyle. Wij gebruiken veel van hun producten zoals beendermeel, bloedmeel en kalium. EcoStyle enthousiast. Zij contact opgenomen met Welkoop. Zij ook enthousiast. Binnen no-time een adresje, in Beilen (Midden-Drenthe). Niet naast de deur voor iedereen. Twee uur rijden vanuit Rotterdam, Noord-Holland en Ameland. Voor mij wel dichtbij. Om de hoek bijna.

In april gaan wij daar even kijken. Hopelijk gaat het door. Zonder TV. Ons eigen feestje. Van harte welkom. Wij houden je op de hoogte. Tot dan, succes en veel plezier!

Bradley Wursten

PS. NL gaat de squash WR terugbrengen! Toch?

MEMBER INTERVIEW

Mehdi Daho of France smashed the European pumpkin record last year. A good reason for an interview. Here is Mehdi in a conversation with **Jos Ghaye** of Belgium.

Hi Mehdi,

Congrats on your European record 730kg (1611lbs). and thanks for sharing your knowledge with us, EGVGA members.

Where do you live? And what does your pumpkin patch look like? Backyard?

Thank you, It's been a fantastic moment at Kasterlee pumpkin weigh-off.



I live in a little village called Spay near Le Mans in the Pays de la Loire region in France. I grow pumpkins in big polytunnels.

Great! How many years you 've been growing giant pumpkins?

2009 was my second year. For my first season in 2008, I grew 6 pumpkins up to 731lb.

Wow! 1611lbs is amazing for a second year grower! Did you grow other vegetables before?

Yes, I grow vegetables since many years now but not giants.

Where did you find info about growing big pumpkins ?

I learnt a lot with the Holland DVDs and www.bigpumpkins.com.

I would like to thank Joel Holland, Fabrice Boudyo, Joe Pukos, Chad Revier and all my others friends for all the tips they gave me.

How big was your plant?

850sqft per plant.

That's big! How big is your greenhouse?

In fact, I bought a big polytunnel but it was impossible to keep it in a single piece. So I cut it and built 3. The smallest one is for normal veg and I use the second and the third ones for growing giant pumpkins. The tunnel is 8m wide.



Cool... Let's talk about soil now... How did you prepare the soil? And when? Spring? Fall?

In fall, I sent a soil test. Then I added well rotted chicken and cow manure, followed by gypsum, a few weeks later. In spring, depending the soil test, I till blood meal for quick Nitrogen, "corn" meal for slow release Nitrogen, Bat and sea bird guano and bone meal for phosphorus, Melasse de betterave for Potassium and different others organic powders or meals for minerals. I'm 100% organic. I use also some rooting enhancer, seaweed, BRF, fishmeal etc...

Which root enhancer did you use? And what's BRF?

No no no, That's secret, sorry.

C'mon, tell it to European growers please !!!!

It's a product called Osiry1 made by Solabiol with a similar working of endo mychorrizal fungi.

BRF means Bois Rameal Fragmenté. You crush young branches and spread it on the patch. It brings nutrients, sugar, proteins, minerals, Lignines etc... The soil structure is well improved because the worms come up to eat it. So the result is more worms tunnels, more oxygen, better water circulation, more humus, less weeds, less "lessivage" and plenty of mychorrizae.

Did you add any 'commercial' Mycchorizae as well?

Yes I use also the endo mychorrizal sold by Joel Holland.

Good. .. thx..

Didn't you forget something from the previous question?

LOL Yes, In the fall I added also some humic and fulvic acids to the soil.

What was biggest change you made in growing in 2009?

In 2008, I grew with very basic technics and not much care.

In 2009, I built the polytunnels, buried the vines and added the different meals helped by the soil test results. The tunnel helped a lot. More heat and excellent protection against hail, rain, wind, animals...



Did you use any chemical ferts?

Not at all, only organic liquids like seaweed/fish.

How about diseases?

What did you do about PM, aphids, spidermites, etc?

I sprayed every week milk on the whole plant to prevent PM. I prepared also some purins to prevent the disease, when you are organic, prevention is the key.

For the insects like aphids or spidermites, I spray a black "savon" used to clean the floor at home. It's made with olive oil and kills the insects by asphyxie. For the caterpillars, the bacteria Bacillus Thurengiensis is very effective. Again, some purins prevent the insect invasion.

I will also probably try a natural dirt to kill them. You spread it around your whole plant and every insect which will walk on it, will die (by blocking articulations).

Natural dirt?

Yes a special dirt very fine which blocks the articulations of the insects. So they die.

How did you water? And how often?

I use a drip system and water every 2 or 3 days depending on the temperature.

Which pruning pattern did you use ?

All my secondaries have the same length, like a flag shape. The secondaries after the fruit are shorter. I allow 6 or 8 tertiaries to grow back from the first secondary.

Did you bury any vines?

Sure, I bury each vines with endo and some compost.



And 'natural' dirt on top?

Yes endo, compost and the top soil.

When did you pollinate, and how old was the fruit when you picked it?

I pollinated the 4 lobes flower on the 30th of June with several 992.5 Glasier males.

When I picked the fruit, it was 116 days old and still growing.

What do you think was the biggest factor in growing that big?

I believe many factors helped the fruit: excellent weather conditions up to the harvest, the greenhouse, the excellent genetics, the balanced soil, the non-chemical program, luck and the huge root system. More roots means more nutrients, and water absorption. So, I use plenty of endo mycorizal when I bury the vines and try to avoid soil compaction at the maximum. I strongly believe this super root system was a big part of the success.

Well ... I won't argue with you on this one...lol What's the plan for 2010 ?

For 2010, I will just try to respect the same fundamental rules: regular watering, spraying very often, avoiding compaction etc...
I will also test a couple of new products.
I also plan to grow many different giant veg like carrot, parsnip, cabbage, radish, melon, cantaloupe, tomato, long gourd, onion, beetroot etc...

Wow... seems like you will be busy this summer. lol ! Any idea about your pumpkin lineup yet?

Nothing is sure yet, there are so many good seeds out there.
I still don't know if I'm going unproven or proven.
Need to start to think seriously now...

Thanks a lot for this interview, Mehdi and the best of luck for 2010 season!



*Mehdi and Jos celebrate Mehdi's new ER pumpkin.
Jos celebrates twice even though Mehdi's pumpkin beat his as the heaviest European pumpkin for 2010.*



Erstes „Crazy-Growers“ Treffen in Braunfels

Am 06. März 2010 fand das erste „crazy-growers“-Züchtertreffen in Braunfels (Hessen) statt.



Trotz erneutem Wintereinbruch haben es alle 18 Teilnehmer pünktlich zum Treffpunkt auf dem Marktplatz geschafft. Nach einem kleinen Rundgang durch den Ort, bei dem uns Chris u. a. einen in Deutschland selten vertretenen Mammutbaum zeigte, spazierten wir geschlossen zum Schloss Braunfels, wo wir in den Genuss einer geführten Besichtigung kamen.

Danach ging es weiter zum Brauhaus Obermühle. Dort wurde natürlich erst einmal das hauseigene „Schlawinerbier“ probiert, die ersten Kerne getauscht und die folgenden Präsentationen vorbereitet und schließlich vorgetragen:

1. Chris Schöner informierte über die im Aufbau befindliche Genetik-Datenbank. Die Programmierung wird durch den Erlös der Seed-Auktion finanziert. Um die Datenbank möglichst umfangreich zu füllen, wird sicher noch die Hilfe aller Züchter notwendig sein.
2. Peter Bohnert präsentierte uns mit wunderschönen Bildern einen Rückblick auf seine Kürbissaison 2009. Hierbei sparte er auch nicht mit Tipps und Erfahrungen, u. a. zu bekannten

Hausmittelchen wie Kaffeesatz in Riesenmengen oder auch weniger bekannten Mitteln wie Wasserglas aus der Apotheke. Natürlich kamen bereits zu diesem Zeitpunkt die ersten Diskussionen zu den neuen „Wundermitteln“ wie Mykorrhiza oder CO₂-Düngern (Lithovit) auf. Dieses Thema wurde dann in der folgenden Präsentation wieder aufgegriffen.

3. Oliver Fox (Biologe und Betreiber unseres Partnershops „inganashop.de“) informierte über verschiedene Möglichkeiten, die Wachstumsbedingungen für unsere Pflanzen möglichst optimal zu gestalten. Hierbei wurde lebhaft über Sinn und Unsinn verschiedener Mittel sowie mögliche Alternativen diskutiert.

Zwischendurch mussten wir natürlich mal etwas gegen den Hunger unternehmen und wurden auch hier nicht enttäuscht.



Ein weiteres Highlight war dann die Live-Auktion der verbliebenen Seed-Packages aus der letzten „crazy-growers“-Auktion. Hier konnte man noch ein Schnäppchen machen, da der Eröffnungspreis bei nur 1 Euro lag. Natürlich „maischtete“ Chris Schöner auch diesen Tagesordnungspunkt vorbildlich. Auch wenn er wahrlich nicht auf den Mund gefallen ist, drängte sich mir der Verdacht auf, dass er das schon mal gemacht hatte (zumindest am Abend vorher vor dem Schlafzimmerspiegel 😊).

Aber auch Oliver Fox kam nicht mit leeren Händen. U. a. verteilte er Kerne von mehreren Tomatensorten für die er sich im Gegenzug nur ein Foto für seinen Internet-Shop wünscht. Außerdem gab es verschiedene Chili-Samen und einen ganzen Eimer voll „Stevia“-Samen, mit denen sich alle Teilnehmer versorgen konnten. Hierfür an Oliver auch ein herzliches „Danke schön!“.

Und auch diejenigen, die resistent gegen den Chili- und Tomatenvirus sind, konnten auf Ihre Kosten kommen und sich günstig mit

verschiedenen Düngern und Pflanzenstärkungsmitteln eindecken. Allerdings könnte es bei denjenigen demnächst Streit mit den Nachbarn geben... Ich sage nur „Fish-Mix“.



Als weitere Überraschung hatte Chris eine Verlosung organisiert, bei der niemand ohne Preis nach Hause gehen sollte. Die Präsente ließen das Züchterherz lachen, auch wenn sich nicht alle Ehefrauen/Freundinnen die Freude über die GPC-T-Shirts, Chili-Kerne, Seed-packages usw. anmerken ließen.

Zum Abschluss gab es noch ein Pokerturnier, bei dem jeder ohne Einsatz mitspielen und tolle Preise gewinnen konnte. Selbst hierfür hatten die Organisatoren gesorgt. Als Hauptpreis gab es die neueste Ausgabe des „How-to-grow“-Buches.

Danach wurde natürlich noch bis in die Nacht gefachsimpelt und diskutiert.



Ein großer Teil der Teilnehmer, die bis zu 560 km Anreise auf sich genommen haben, haben natürlich auch in Braunfels übernachtet. Also hat man sich beim Frühstück wiedergesehen. Danach haben einige noch die Gelegenheit genutzt, sich Wetzlar mit der hübschen Altstadt

und dem beeindruckenden Dom anzuschauen. Gegen Mittag traten dann auch die letzten Züchter ihren Heimweg an.

Im Namen aller Teilnehmer auch auf diesem Weg nochmals „Vielen Dank!“ an alle Mitwirkenden, natürlich vor allem an Chris und Nicole, die mit der Organisation hervorragende Arbeit geleistet haben.

Und „nach dem Treffen ist vor dem Treffen“ – Chris hat schon viele tolle Ideen für 2011.

Ich hoffe, wir sehen uns in Braunfels!

Andreas Wild

ENGLISH SUMMARY

First "Crazy-Growers" meeting at Braunfels, Germany

On March, 6th 2010 we held the first "crazy-growers"-meeting at Braunfels (Hessen).

Although it started snowing heavily again the night before, 18 participants made it to the meeting point in time. First we walked to Braunfels Castle for a guided tour.

Then we met again at the little brewery "Obermühle". There we tried some of their beer, started talking pumpkins and seed swapping and prepared the following presentations:

1. Chris Schöner informed about the planned genetics database. The programming is paid by the proceeds of our seed auction. To fill the database with as much data as possible we will need a lot of support from all growers.
2. Peter Bohnert presented beautiful pictures about his pumpkin season 2009. He told about his experiences, including known household remedies like coffee in large quantities but also about even lesser-known resources. Of course at that point of time first discussions started on the new "wonder drugs" such as mycorrhiza, or CO2 fertilizers (Lithovit).
3. Oliver Fox (biologist and manager of our partner shop "inganashop.de") informed about different ways to make the growth conditions for our plants as optimal as possible. This was a

lively discussion about the sense and nonsense of various fertilizers etc. and possible alternatives.

Another highlight was the live auction of the remaining seed packages from the latest "crazy-growers' auction. Here some people could still make a bargain, since the opening price was only 1 euro. Of course Chris did a great job again. I think he must have done this before, at least the night before in front of the bedroom mirror.

But Oliver Fox did not come empty-handed, either. Among other things, he distributed seeds of several varieties of tomatoes only for a photo for his Internet shop. In addition, there were various chilli seeds and a whole bucket full of "Stevia" seeds, which could provide all participants. For his generosity a heartfelt "thank you Oliver".

And even those who were resistant against the chilli and tomato virus could buy different fertilizers etc. for special prices.

Chris had organized a raffle in which no one should go home without a prize. The presents were laughing the breeder's heart, even if not all wives or girlfriends showed their joy about the GPC-T-shirts, chilli seeds, seed packages etc.

At the end there was a poker tournament at no costs. The organizers had provided prizes for this purpose. The main prize was the latest issue of the "how-to-grow" book.

Then of course we talked till the morning hours.

Most of the participants stayed in Braunfels. So we met again at breakfast. After that some of us visited Wetzlar with the pretty old town and the impressive cathedral.

On behalf of all participants "Thank you" to all who helped to make this a special weekend, especially to Chris and Nicole, who have done outstanding work with the organization.

Chris has got a lot of great ideas for 2011.

So cya in Braunfels next year! *Andreas Wild*

A Breath of Fresh Air

An article on CO2 for giant vegetable growers by Reforestation Technologies International

While we want less carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, plants actually want more. In fact, plants perform at their best when the CO2 level is more than 3 times the atmospheric level! The optimal level of carbon dioxide for plants is 0.1% while the atmosphere contains 0.03%. RTI's CO2 sets the carbon dioxide level your plants need for peak photosynthesis performance, resulting in significantly increased growth. As Phil Hunt, Past President of the Giant Vegetable Grower's of Ontario, reports, "CO2 helped us go from a personal best 1187.5 lb. pumpkin to an incredible 1678lbs! This is a new Canadian Record & the 3rd largest pumpkin ever grown in the World – an accomplishment we are very proud of. Our club, the GVGO, had 5 growers try your product this season, and along with us smashing the Canadian record, another member grew a new World Record squash & 2 others grew new personal best weights. This was a great year for giant vegetable growers considering the weather was the coldest & worst we've had since we started growing in 1991."

So what is CO2, exactly? It is a calcium carbonate (CaCO3) solution that you apply topically. The calcium carbonate enters the leaf cells through the stoma. Within the cell, the plant separates calcium carbonate into its elements - calcium and CO2. Since the CaCO3 conversion occurs inside the leaf, there is no change in CO2 levels -outside the leaf. After dissolving the natural compound, the plant uses the calcium to strengthen its cell walls and make them more pliable. Importantly for giant vegetable growers, this increased cellular strength and exibility reduces the likelihood of your fruit splitting as it grows or when pressure is applied.

Plus, with increased cellular wall strength, the plant can keep stomata closed and retain water, thereby decreasing your plant's water requirements up to 75%. Along with increased plant resiliency comes increased growth. The most exciting aspect of CO2 is its ability to naturally increase the rate a plant creates its own food, accelerating the growth process up to 50%. Overall, CO2 increases plant growth while decreasing the likelihood that your prized vegetable will split. All naturally. Giant vegetable growers know that to grow big, you can't waste time. Get started now with CO2!

About the Company: RTI is a Californian biotech firm dedicated to growing natural champions. Visit www.reforest.com, call 1-800-RTI-GROW, or email info@reforest.com for more information.



GIANT PUMPKINS Grown With *Pumpkin Pro*

- Higher Yields
- Reduction in Root Disease Pressures



Extreme Gardening

By Reforestation Technologies International

What Is Xtreme Gardening?

To begin with, it could help you grow the “World’s Largest Vegetable!” For three consecutive years, Giant Pumpkin Record Holders Ron Wallace (1,502 lbs in 2006), Joe Jutras (1,689 lbs in 2007) and Steve Connelly (1,568 in 2008) have used Xtreme Gardening Mycorrhizae, beneficial microbes that supply most plants with an increased level of moisture and nutrients. Xtreme Gardening Products can assist home gardeners to achieve a record in their own garden.

“RTI’s pumpkin pro is the mycorrhizae used to produce the worlds largest pumpkin three-years in a row. Every leaf node from beginning to end was trenched, treated and buried using Pumpkin Pro. The big difference we noticed is that later in the season the pumpkins were able to maintain a “top” weight for a longer period of time and also our pumpkins grew into the month of October. Something that has never seemed possible before in our area.”

Ron Wallace



Thad Starr wins Half-Moon Bay Pumpkin Weigh-Off for two years running with the help of RTI’s mycorrhizae.

But Xtreme Gardening is Far More!

Many fertilizers and pesticides used by homeowners and gardeners can be toxic to the soil and the environment. Chemical fertilizers dissolve easily into solution when applied to the soil. Only 10% to 20% is used by plants, the rest is lost to the groundwater or taken away in runoff to pollute streams, rivers and eventually the ocean where they add to the increase in size of the dead zones that poison fish and destroy marine habitat. These salt based fertilizers also sterilize the soil, killing many of the beneficial microbes that plants require to live in a healthy environment.

Beneficial soil microbes provides an approach to gardening gardening that produce world record results while **protecting the environment**. The foundation of the product line is a combination of beneficial microbes and environmentally safe fertilizers. Nutrients and moisture in the soil are taken up more efficiently by plants, resulting higher yields and the opportunity to lower water usage. When a landscape or garden has been transformed into by introducing beneficial soil microbes, an additional 30% more CO² is removed from the atmosphere by plants inoculated with mycorrhizae. When mycorrhizae is combined with another beneficial microbe called azospirillum, a significant amount root growth results.

Editors note: I hope to be using both RTI mycorrhizae and CO2 this year in an attempt to get the WR squash back to Europe. I will also try both products on several other types of giant vegetables. Do note that mycorrhizae has no effect on beetroot or cabbage! (BJW)

Börje Gustavsson - miljöinnovatör

If you don't understand Swedish, you might think this is an article about a millionaire named Börje Gustavsson. My Swedish is not much better, but I think it means "environmental innovator", someone who is trying to make a difference in the environment.

This is more or less a picture documentary of a unique giant vegetable grower who has introduced several new ideas in the pumpkin and giant vegetable world. Börje was the first European grower to grow three pumpkins over 1000 lbs, but before that he had grown many other types of giant vegetables.

One of his greatest achievements to innovate the environment is the soil drill, called the "skurupborren", "Skurup" being the town where the drills are made and "borren" which is Swedish for "drills". Used especially in third world countries it is also used by some of the leading pumpkin growers in Europe, such as Anders Lilja and Jos Ghaye. I have started using it this year too.

Take a look at an innovator and learn about soilization or if your Swedish is up to date, *jordisering*. (BJW)

By Anders Lilja

It's now over 30 years since Börje Gustavsson from Sweden started to produce his soil drills. The drills are sold all over the world and some of the most known pumpkin growers in Europe use the drills with very good results.



The drills can be used for many things but as a pumpkin grower you can use it for deep loosening the soil and as Börje calls it "soilisation". That means that you make holes in your pumpkin patch with the drill and fill them up with kitchen garbage, garden waste, manure or whatever you can get your hands on.



Water in the hole and let it be a moist holding nutrient pit that the pumpkin roots love to feed on.



Börje himself is probably one of the most experienced pumpkin growers we have in Europe. He has been growing big pumpkins longer than most, over 15 years.



In 2001 he set the European record with his 757lbs Gustavsson, it was grown from the famous

1007 Brown 00 seed that also produced the 898 Knauss. The plant that produced the 757lb pumpkin had over 1600 kg of pumpkins on that single plant. Incredible, but a proof that his soilisation strategy works.



In 2003 he was the first grower to grow a pumpkin over 1000 lbs in Europe.



In 2005 he had something real good going on the 1420 LaRue seed but unfortunately it split on him, it was on its march for way over 600 kg when it split. It weighed 1061 lbs.



For Börje it has always been everything or nothing because he always only grows one plant every year in his small garden.



Unfortunately he had no luck the last few years with pumpkin that either split or stopped growing. In 2007 he grew his PB of 1091 lbs from the 1502 Wallace seed, but also that pumpkin didn't grow especially good for him, it grew for over 120 days and was still growing when cut.

In 2009 he set a kind of a record with having a pumpkin taping 104cm/41 inches as a ten day measurement, unfortunately that pumpkin stopped growing after the mainvine rotted off.

But when all fits for him he will definitely be one of the ones that can grow a European record.

Over the years he has been the one to watch and learn from in Europe. He was the first to start using a homemade plastic greenhouse



over his pumpkinplant, something that most European top growers do nowadays.

He has also introduced the millimeterclock to pumpkin growing. A perfect tool to tell when a pumpkin stops gaining weight.



He was also the first one to grow his pumpkins on scales so you can tell exactly how much they gain.



Börje told that when a pumpkin does not expand anymore it doesn't gain more weight. So as some growers think that a pumpkin can still put on weight inside after stop expanding is totally wrong.

He was also the one that taught us to train the stem away from the vine with a rubberband directly after pollination. Not many diaries on Big Pumpkins have taught us so much over the years as his. If there was a hall of fame in

pumpkin growing in Europe, Börje should be the first to get in there I think.



If you want to learn more about Börje and his drills, his homepage is www.skurupsborren.se or check his old diaries on B.P. There's a lot to learn. Feel free to email him. His English is perfect! He can send his drills all over the world and his service is prompt! Recommended!!!

Some quotes from Börje himself:

I pee in large cans every day. I pee directly in the watering can. Once a week I empty the can and pour the urine into tubes, to make sure that the pumpkin soil gets the maximum of nutrience.



If you want to grow 'em big, there's no time for sleeping!





GREETINGS FROM FINLAND

Long and record snowy winter is almost over in Finland and its time to look for growing season again. Even Southern Finland has gotten almost one meter of snow but finally it is starting to melt down and the sun is shining... A few growers have already started their season, giant onions have been growing over three months already, some giant tomatoes have been sowed a while back and some even are waiting for giant parsnips to pop out of the pot.



We have a few more growers in Finland than last year and varieties we are growing here are wider than ever before. Basically we started with pumpkins but now more and more people are trying long gourds, giant tomatoes, marrows, beetroots etc. This year we will also see at least one giant watermelon growing in greenhouse. That would be something to show on Septembers weigh-off if Armi succeeds with it. Fingers crossed here! Tall sunflowers, tall corn in couple of places. I feel that we are on right track. Our records might be small comperad to WR´s or ER´s but weather we are dealing with here is major limiting factor. What comes to pumpkins we have now one greenhouse with heating cables on already so now we might see that 1000 pumpkin grown in Finland. I might have forgotten a lot but when season getting longer we will see for sure some great results I bet! First ER to Finland this year? If you ask me maybe with tomatoes:)



10.3.2010 was a remarkable day in giant vegetable growing in Finland. First in the morning Tuija Osmala was

live on national radio talking about growing giant vegetables. A few hours later we had the first Suomen Jättikasvisyhdistys (Finnish Giant Vegetable Association) meeting. It was time to put that club up to get more and more people into this insane hobby;) After our club meeting we had also growing seminar for new growers. I held that seminar with help of Kaarina, Tuija and Armi. Four people and 5 FIN records on stage:)

I wish all growers in Finland as well as in other countries a very successful season, grow big ones and remember to have some fun while growing, some point of season almost everyone are stressful for a while. In the end we have weigh-off and then we can have some rest. Or figure out what to plant next season;) BTW, after our weigh-off we are going to see someone paddle with a pumpkin for the first time ever in Finland or even better, we might see how EGVA President tries a slalom with a pumpkin... Bet on it... Either way it will be fun to watch:)

Cheers,

Miika Mäntyniemi

People ask, "What do you do with the pumpkins?". This is Mehdi Daho's answer.



The 2009 Top Atlantic Giant Pumpkins

By Al Eaton

There were 16 official AGs grown over 1500 lbs in 2009, from 1503 to 1725 lbs.

Where grown? OH-4 PA-2 IA-2 MN-2 WI-2 Canada-1 France-1 RI-1 WA-1

Which year mother seed grown? 2008-3 2007-10 2006-3. There were 12 different mothers.

A look at the ancestors behind these top 16 with 12 different mothers, will give a pretty good look at the top AGs in the modern gene pool. From the thousands of seeds started each year the following are the survivors at the highest level. Note that these AGs may show up in various generations of the mother's pedigree and the first number is the number of occurrences.

2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
4-1385 Jutras	3-985 Werner	7-998 Pukos	8-1420 LaRue	14-1068 Wallace
2-1207 Young	2-1450 Wallace	2-1231 Pukos	8-1446 Eaton	8-1180 Daletas
2-1161 Rodonis	1-1093 Hunt	1-1333 Connolly	1-778 Liggett	7-1301 Eaton
1-901 Hunt	1-904 Stelts	1-812 Hilstolsky	1-1253 Sperry	7-1104 Hester
1-1524 Liggett	1-1446 Werner	1-1432 C-P	6-1370 Rose	
1-1236 Speakman	1-878 Hilstolsky	1-1139 Sherwood	2-664 Liggett	
1-1180 Pukos	1-1073 Carlson-Petersen		1-1030 Armstrong	
1-1272.5 Hilstolsky	1-1308 McKie		1-822 Hester	
1-1556 Werner				
2002	2001	2000	1999	1998
8-842 Eaton	18-898 Knauss	19-845 Bobier	6-846 Calai	6-865 Mettler
4-1097 Beachy	7-1260 Weir	11-1048 Cox	3-981 Gervais	4-780 Eaton
2-1005 Mombert	1-445 Liggett	11-1007 Brown	3-837 Waller	3-914 Wentzell
1-500 Carlson	1-695 Handy	7-712 Kuhn	3-723 Bobier	

These are the ancestors of the 1500+ AGs within 4 generations and 11 years. All of them are survivors while thousands of others are not, for many known and unknown reasons. Even if they occur only once it means they contributed genes to one of the top 16 AGs in the world in 2009.

Over the winter months most growers are striving to choose and obtain the best seeds possible, in their opinion, for spring planting. This list, on the other hand, looks back to see where the best ones have come from. I hope those growers who may not know that one of their past AGs made this list, are proud to see it there.