New World Record for Giant Pumpkin, 2010

Don Langevin and Jules Janick

A new world record was achieved on October 8, 2010 when Chris Stevens of New Richmond Wisconsin, USA, brought in a 1,810.5 pound (821.4 kg) giant pumpkin at the Stillwater HarvestFest and Pumpkin Weigh off in Stillwater, Minnesota (Fig. 1). The 2009 record was broken by 85.5 pounds and the trend line since 1979 persists (Fig. 2). The weight of competing pumpkins at sanctioned contests for 2010 is astonishing: 433 exceeded 1000 pounds, 300 exceeded 1100 pounds, 186 exceeded 1300 pounds, 63 exceeded 1400 pounds, 28 exceeded 1500 pounds, 11 exceeded 1600 pounds, 2 exceeded 1700 pounds, and one exceeded 1800 pounds. In the last 17 years the record was broken 15 times indicating that 2000 pounds and then 1000 kg is within striking distance.

Figure 1. Chris and Amy Stevens and their daughters Kailey and Amber celebrate their world record pumpkin at the Minnesota weigh-off.

Figure 2. World records of pumpkin fruit weight, 1857 to 2010. The red squares are the 2009 and 2010 records, posted after the last article (Janick, 2008), indicating that the trend line since 1979 continues.

REFERENCES

ABOUT THE AUTHORS
Don Langevin is the historian of giant pumpkins and the author of two books on how to grow them: How-to-Grow World Class Giant Pumpkins I, II, and III (1993, 1998, 2003) and How-to-Grow World Class Giant Pumpkins the All-Organic Way (2009), all from Annedawn Publishing, Norton, Massachusetts, 02766, USA. Email: annedawn@comcast.net
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The Marigold: History and Horticulture

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Marigolds (Tagetes spp., Asteraceae) are some of the most commonly grown and beloved ornamental bedding plants in the world. Their bright colors, very ease of culture, and ubiquity lead some sophisticated gardeners in Western countries to avoid them. The residents of Mexico and India have no such ambivalence. They adore them unconditionally. In Mexico, their center of origin, marigolds have religious significance. Catholic ritual has been superimposed on ancient Aztec practices, and the marigold flowers known as flor de muertos (flower of the dead) are used in the Day of the Dead celebrations associated with All Souls day. In more rural areas the plants still have culinary and herbal uses. In India, marigolds are one of the most important flowering plants. They are widely used in wreaths, sold everywhere, and common in many Hindu religious rites and ceremonies, as well as for culinary, industrial, and medicinal purposes. The way in which this foreign flower became so popular is not well understood, but there is no doubt that its golden color and vigorous growth symbolized the life giving force of the sun.

USES
In the United States, the marigold is a widely used bedding plant and some of the largest users of marigolds are public parks (Fig. 1). Parks need organized displays of reproducible flowers in clear bright colors making very forthright statements. Sturdy hybrids answer this purpose. Among their other virtues marigolds are remarkably resistant to the noxious gases in city air.
Decocations of the flower heads are used as a tea in rural Mexico. Some are stimulating and