

The Market Minute

Jessica King, Local Foods Coordinator

UNION COUNTY FARMER'S MARKET MONTHLY UPDATE



Pumpkins, More Than Décor!

Fall wouldn't be the same without pumpkin pies, pumpkin carving or pumpkin picking at a local patch. In fact, pumpkins are so popular in the Fall that many North Carolina farmers plant between 1 and 5 acres of the crop as a source of additional income each year. Larger growers in North Carolina plant between 10 and 100 acres of pumpkins and count on this crop as a portion of their annual income. This amounts to about 3,000-4,000 acres of pumpkins being grown in North Carolina each year.



Pumpkins can range in weight from less than a pound to more than 1,100 pounds. In 2019 a 1,506.5 pound pumpkin set a new state record at the North Carolina State Fair's great pumpkin competition!

Aside from using them to decorate or win competitions, pumpkins are a great source for numerous vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

The bright orange color of some varieties reveals they are loaded with important antioxidants such as, alpha-carotene, beta-carotene and beta-kryptoxanthin.

Studies have shown that these antioxidants protect skin against sun damage and lower the risk of cancer, heart disease, eye diseases and other conditions.

UNION COUNTY FARMER'S MARKET MONTHLY UPDATE

Pumpkin is loaded with nutrients that can boost your immune system. For one, it's high in vitamin A. Studies show that vitamin A can strengthen your immune system and help fight infections. Conversely, people with a vitamin A deficiency can have a weaker immune system. Pumpkin is also high in vitamin C, which has been shown to increase white blood cell production, help immune cells work more effectively and make wounds heal faster. Aside from the two vitamins mentioned above, pumpkin is also a good source of vitamin E, iron and folate — all of which have been shown to aid the immune system as well.

When preparing a pumpkin remember you can cook the seeds too! An average-size pumpkin contains about a cup of seeds, which can be roasted and eaten as a nutritious snack.

With pumpkins in season here in Union County, visit your local farmers market or pumpkin patch today to pick out your Fall décor or next side dish for a meal!

Pumpkin Patches Near You!

Aw Shucks Farm

3718 Plyler Mill Rd, Monroe, NC
(704) 709-7000

NonCents Farm

307 Ridge Rd, Monroe, NC

Hunter Farm

13624 Providence Rd, Weddington, NC
(704) 846-7975

Wise Acres Organic Farm

4701 Hartis Rd, Indian Trail, NC
(704) 628-6232



**We are open every Saturday 8am-Noon at our downtown Monroe location
805 Skyway Dr.**



N.C. Cooperative Extension is an
equal opportunity provider.



Market Open
Saturday's
8am-12pm