

New Innovations in Pumpkins

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The ornamental pumpkin acreage North America expanded considerably between 1980 and 2000, with the larger pumpkins in the 12 to 25 pound range having the largest contribution increased sales. Expansion in the 21st century appears to be more in terms of variation in types of pumpkins. One of the first of the novelty types was that of introducing the warty trait into large pumpkins. Our focus at UNH has been to introduce novel color types into new varieties. For example, medium size pumpkins with white rind and good robust handles were non-existent up to 2009. We have developed the variety Moonshine to fill this void. Our immediate improvement in the Moonshine variety will be to release a Moonshine hybrid with intermediate powdery mildew resistance (PMR). Next we plan to develop more size variability in the white pumpkins. A new introduction with limited seed availability this fall will be a yellow pumpkin, 'Sunlight', which will be in the small pumpkin class and also have PMR. A larger yellow pumpkin will soon follow that introduction in the coming year or two. Finally, we currently have another long-term project to develop different striping patterns into pumpkin.