

Pumpkins, pumpkins and more pumpkins

Written by Chris Lee

Fall not only brings golden leaves, corn harvest and cooler temperatures, it also brings the sights of Halloween.

This is evident eight miles southeast of Holyoke where “Pumpkins and More” is located.

“Thousands,” Jackie Thompson said. She doesn’t know the exact number but knows there are a lot of pumpkins on the ground on their four and a half acre pumpkin patch.

Three years ago, Jackie visited a pumpkin patch near Brule, Neb. with some of her family, and the idea was born. She thought it would be fun to run a pumpkin patch. With the help of her husband Toby and daughter Emma, along with numerous other family members, the dream became a reality last year.



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In their second year, the Thompson family is enjoying pumpkin season. Pictured from left are Emma, Toby and Jackie Thompson amid thousands of pumpkins at “Pumpkins and More” southeast of Holyoke. —Enterprise photo

Unfortunately, the weather put a big damper on the dream the first year. Colder temperatures mixed in with an early snow and lots of rain, the first year wasn't what they hoped for.

They didn't let it get them down as they planned for a new year and hoped for a better outcome. And so far, the first two weekends have been promising, Jackie noted.

The Thompsons use a corn planter with sunflower plates to plant the pumpkin seeds on a 36 inch bed. “It's kind of like sugar beets,” Toby said. He mentioned they go in afterward and fill in holes by hand. Last year the seeds were planted in May. This year, the Thompsons held off until early June to get the seeds in the ground.

One of the major duties is controlling the weeds throughout the summer, Jackie said. There aren't varieties of pumpkins that will stand up to fertilizer so the weeding is done by hand. But before they even get to that point, the pipes need to be in place as they water the pumpkins via flood irrigation.

The Thompsons noted numerous family members have helped them along the way, and MV Equipment also has provided a Gator to help transfer pumpkins from the patch.

Numerous varieties were planted including Howden Biggie (“The big ones,” Toby said.), Jack-o-Lantern, Spooky, Magic Lantern, Cinderella Red and White Lumina. Additionally, numerous varieties of gourds and Indian corn were raised.

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The Thompsons also grow garden vegetables and sweet corn during the summer.

“Pumpkins and More” opened for business at the end of September. The final day to purchase pumpkins will be the Saturday before Halloween, Oct. 30.

The Thompsons said they have already taken some pumpkins to retailers near Denver. Jackie noted pumpkins they sell here for \$6 are selling for triple that amount in the mountains. They hope to slowly expand the business in the coming years. Additions such as providing pumpkins to more area stores, corn mazes and even pumpkin launches are all ideas they hope to incorporate.

Jackie said this Saturday, Oct. 23 they will host a “Carve Your Own Pumpkin” day at the patch. They have also been offering hay rack rides to patch visitors.

“It’s family fun,” Jackie said. There are multiple signs and even hay bales that make for good photo opportunities.



Numerous signs are placed throughout the pumpkin patch to help visitors get in the Halloween spirit. —Enterprise photo

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Even with the good turnout so far, many more pumpkins are waiting to be plucked from the patch. "Pumpkins and More" is open Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday from 1:30-5 p.m. and Monday-Friday from 2-6 p.m.

To get to the patch, go five miles south on Highway 385 and turn east on County Road 12 for three miles before turning south on County Road 45. Signs are placed along the way to help.

For questions call Jackie at 580-2707 or Toby at 580-0581.