Pumpkins are a common sight this time of year. This fruit of the fall is often used in decorating the interior and exterior of homes, but can be an integral component of cooking and baking as well.

Little thought is given to pumpkins and their makeup. But pumpkin aficionados who want to know more about these delicious gourds can dig into the following facts.

Pumpkins are a member of the squash family that grow on long vines close to the ground. Before pumpkin fruit grows, brightly colored flowers will form and then turn into pumpkins. Pumpkins adapt to many climates and are grown on all of the continents except Antarctica.

In Colonial times, settlers and natives alike relied on pumpkin as a staple of their diets. The British saw the possibilities of pumpkins as a food source and brought seeds back to Europe to enjoy as well.

Pumpkins are comprised of several parts. The pumpkin is covered in a skin that surrounds the pulp, or the meaty part of the pumpkin. The stem is at the top of the pumpkin and connects to the vine. Tendrils are thin pieces of vine that tether the pumpkin to the ground to protect it from the wind and weather.

The inside of the pumpkin is known as the cavity and can contain seeds and fibrous strands. The bottom of the pumpkin is known as the blossom end because that’s where the flower started before the pumpkin formed.

Most varieties of pumpkins are edible, but some taste better than others. Once pumpkins turn orange they can be eaten. People bake the meat into pies, soups and stews. It can also be used in breads and cakes. Pumpkin puree can replace the oil in cake recipes much in the same way applesauce can. Adding pumpkin to recipes provides a healthy way to increase nutritional value.

There are many interesting pieces of trivia regarding pumpkins. Here are some things to ponder.

—Pumpkins were once believed to eliminate freckles and were also used as a remedy for snake bites.

—In 2007, people in Boston earned the world record for the most lit pumpkins with 30,128 twinkling jack-o-lanterns.

—Thousands of people participate in pumpkin chucking, an event where air cannons propel pumpkins thousands of feet. Each year, people compete to see who can launch a pumpkin the farthest.

—On Sept. 25, 2010, people in New Bremen, Ohio broke their own record when they baked a 3,699-pound pumpkin, surpassing their prior record of 2,020 pounds.

Pumpkins are a seasonal delight to many come the fall. But in addition to being delicious, they’re also interesting.

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