Pumpkins ! Pumpkins !

What to do with pumpkins when the season is over

More that 1.9 billion pounds or 80% of pumpkins grown in the US end up in landfills each year. That generates 7500 tons of methane emissions or the equivalent of 45,000 cars.

More climate friendly ways to dispose of pumpkins

1. Do not put pumpkins in dumpsters or trash

2. Donate your pumpkins to farmers or chicken owners for feed. Make sure that they are clean of any wax or paint.

3. Compost in your garden beds by cutting the pumpkins in small pieces and burying the pieces in the garden. Pumpkins are high in potassium and nitrogen and add nutrients to the soil. Make sure they are clean of paint, wax, stickers or any non-organic material. They can also be buried whole.

4. Make pumpkin puree by cutting and cleaning the pumpkin, baking at 350 for about 30-40 min. Scoop the cooked pumpkin and place in food processor. Can be frozen in measured portions for future use.

5. Make bird feeders by scooping out the insides and cutting the top off about 1/3 -1/2 from the top. Place a dowel through the pumpkin and repeat in the opposite direction so you have 4 perches. Tie rope to the perches to hang and fill with seed.

6. Place in a yard waste container for collection. Recycling pumpkins reduces the carbon footprint, benefits gardens with nitrogen and potassium and provides food for wildlife.

How to help your pumpkins last longer

Whether you carve a jack-o-lantern or just display your pumpkins whole, you can make them last longer by doing these simple things.

1. Keep them in a cool, dry and shady spot away from direct sunlight.
2. Before carving, clean them with a mild bleach solution or white vinegar solution.
3. Apply petroleum jelly to the cut edges to seal in moisture.
4. Use LED lights instead of candles to prevent heat build up
5. Store your Jack-o-lantern in the refrigerator when not on display or put them in a cool place.
6. Use peppermint oil or cayenne pepper to keep animals away.
7. Place your pumpkins on a pedestal to prevent condensation from accumulating on the bottom and helps to keep it dry.

Don’t forget to harvest the seeds for roasting! Full of magnesium, zinc and iron, phosphorus and potassium as well as a great source of fiber and contain antioxidants, vitamins B and E. Just don’t heavily salt them. 😊