

YOUNG EXPLORERS

PUMPKINS

We carve them for Halloween and serve them in pies for Thanksgiving. But pumpkins are good for more than just carving and eating!

PUMPKIN SCIENCE

Pumpkins are native to Mexico. They are members of the gourd family, related to cantaloupe, watermelon, and zucchini. Pumpkins can be smooth or warty. They can be orange, red, white, or even green. They come in many shapes and sizes. And they offer a great way to play around with density.

A pumpkin can be heavy, right? Do you think that means it will sink or float? Why? Get a pumpkin (or even better, a few different pumpkins), a tub of water big enough to put your pumpkins in, and try it out. What happened? Were you surprised? Find out how a pumpkin's density affects its ability to sink or float on the Young Explorers page on our website.

FEED THE BIRDS

A carved pumpkin makes a great bird feeder! All you need is a hollowed-out pumpkin, some string and wooden skewers, and bird seed.

Visit our website for step-by-step instructions on how to build a pumpkin bird feeder.

PUMPKIN COMPOST

After Halloween is over, pick a part of your yard that isn't regularly visited by people, pets, or the lawn mower (ask mom or dad first!). Put an uncarved pumpkin on the ground and sprinkle a few handfuls of dead leaves on top. Visit the spot every few weeks to see what happens. You may find a new pumpkin vine growing next spring!

A HALLOWEEN TRADITION

We can thank the Irish for Jack-o-lanterns. Traditional stories said that bad spirits needed to be scared away at Halloween, and carving scary faces in turnips did the trick. When the tradition came to America, people found that pumpkins were bigger and easier to carve.



PUMPKIN CARVING STENCILS

For fun and creative designs to carve on your pumpkin—including an owl, bat, and even the Mass Audubon logo—check out our printable stencils online.