

Pumpkin 10 Ways

Johnson Inc. is committed to doing the right thing for the environment and is pleased to share some fun ideas on what to do with your pumpkin, keeping your Halloween green.

Pumpkin Planter

After Halloween, simply fill the pumpkin with some potting soil until it is about one third full. Please note, some extra packing of the soil may be needed depending on the carving. Once this has been completed, place your plant in the pumpkin and fill it with more soil. This will last as a festive planter for days, but you can also plant the whole thing right in your backyard.

Did you know? Pumpkin naturally decomposes and also fertilizes your plants!

Pumpkin Stock

Use the stringy pieces that surround the seeds to make some pumpkin stock. Place these in a pot filled with water and boil for 30 minutes until the water begins to change colour. To add more flavour, add in other vegetables like celery or carrots. Once this has been completed, strain your stock.

Did you know? Pumpkin stock is great for soups or casseroles and you can freeze it for later use.

Pumpkin Face Mask

Use about five teaspoons of **pumpkin puree**. To puree pumpkin, clean out the seeds and stringy parts of the pumpkin and place it, cut side down, in some water in a baking dish. Roast in the oven for about 90 minutes or until the flesh is tender. Scoop out the flesh and puree in a food processor. Add three teaspoons of brown sugar and a splash of milk. Mix it all together and once it has cooled, apply it to your face in circular motions, avoiding the eye area. Relax for up to 20 minutes.

Did you know? Pumpkins are rich in zinc and vitamins A, C and E and is great for consumption and your skin.

Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

Place clean pumpkin seeds on an oiled baking sheet. Stir them around and coat them with oil. Once roasted, throw some salt on, or if you're craving something sweet, switch it up with some brown sugar and cinnamon.

Animal Treats

Did you know? Old jack-o'-lanterns and pumpkin seeds are perfect foods for deer and birds.

If you live in an area where there are deer, cut your jack-o'-lantern into fourths and place the pieces in a field, away from your house. To feed the birds, place all unwanted pumpkin seeds in a bird feeder or container.

Pumpkin Candy

Clean out the pumpkin, ensuring you remove all candle wax and smoke burns. Cut the pumpkin into smaller chunks and carefully remove the skin with a vegetable peeler. Once the skin has been removed, cut your pumpkin into bite sized pieces and place the pieces in a saucepan. Add just enough water to cover them, cover the pot and bring to a boil.

After the pumpkin begins to soften, stir in one cup of brown sugar. You can also add other spices including cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg or cloves. Cover everything with the lid again and continue to boil until the sugar forms a syrup. Leave to soak overnight and then place the pieces on wire rack to dry. Once dry, sprinkle with sugar if desired. Enjoy!

Pumpkin Butter

Place two cups of pumpkin puree with 1 cup of brown sugar and 1 cup of water or apple cider in a pot. You may also add other spices including cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and ginger, as well as salt. Stir all of the ingredients together and bring to a boil. Turn down the heat and allow the mixture to simmer for 25 minutes. Once your pumpkin butter has cooled, store it in a glass jar in the refrigerator and use it for breakfast.

Pumpkin Milkshake

In a blender mix 1 cup of vanilla ice cream, ¼ cup of milk, 4 tablespoons of cooled pumpkin puree and a dash of any of the following: pumpkin pie spice, vanilla or nutmeg.

Buy Local

Buy your pumpkin at a local farm or farmer's market rather than buying one from a big store or supermarket – those pumpkins have likely been shipped a significant distance.

Compost

Compost your jack-o'-lanterns, together with food scraps and fallen leaves, for great soil for next spring. If you don't have your own compost, take advantage of your local pumpkin recycling programs. For more information, visit your city's website.

* *Be careful about eating or feeding any pumpkin, even to wildlife, that has been carved for very long. Mouldy pumpkins are hazardous and should be placed in the compost and not consumed.*

* *If you have any suspicion that your pumpkin has been nibbled by animals or contaminated in any way from sitting outside, do not use it for consumption.*