



4-H Club Sample Agenda - Pumpkins!

Agenda Outline

WELCOME

While people are checking in, play one of the videos in the "[Additional Resources](#)" section below.



MEETING PURPOSE

Brainstorm club project ideas and learn about pumpkins!

BUSINESS (5-10 MINUTES)

Remember if too much business is planned, members might not come back! Below is just a sample. See other [optional business items](#) on our Leading a 4-H Club web page.

- [4-H Pledge](#)
- Roll Call: Guess how much of a pumpkin is water? (reveal at end: Answer 90%)
- Recap what we did last time
- Decide on a club project
- Celebrate any member accomplishments!

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY - [Pumpkins!](#) (30 MINUTES)

[RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY](#) (10-15 MINUTES)

[REFLECTION](#) (5 minutes)

- How did we do?
- How did we live out the 4-H Pledge today?

REFRESHMENTS

Roasted pumpkin seeds



Educational Activity - Pumpkins!

4-H project area

Agronomy, Horticulture, Fruits, Plants and Soil Science

What it is

Expand your knowledge of pumpkins—specifically, the different varieties and growing processes.



Why it matters

Pumpkins are good for many things besides Halloween.

Getting started

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

- Clear Plastic Cup
- Permanent marker
- Paper Towels
- Cotton Balls
- Pumpkin (Pumpkin Seeds)
- Water source
- Paper envelope

Prep for participants:

- Give your member enough notice to bring a pumpkin to your next 4-H Club meeting. As a leader, you might want to have a couple of extra ones just in case someone does not bring one.
- Go out to your local farmer's market or pumpkin patch and pick out your very own pumpkin and use the seeds from the pumpkin in this lesson.
- If meeting virtually, be sure to let them know all the materials (besides the pumpkins) they should gather for the meeting.



Background

Pumpkins are not vegetables; they're fruits! Pumpkins, gourds, and other varieties of squash are all members of the family **Cucurbitaceae**, which also includes cucumbers, gherkins, and melons. Pumpkins have been grown in America for over 5,000 years.

Pumpkin plants have long, sprawling vines that cover the ground. Pumpkin seeds are planted sometime between the last week of May and the middle of June. After seeds are planted, they will sprout (**germinate**) in 7-10 days, depending on the variety. During this time, seeds need moisture and warmth. Once seeds have germinated, they will send up their first leaves, called seed leaves (or **cotyledons**).

Pumpkin seeds can be saved to grow new pumpkins the following year. While growing, pumpkins require a lot of moisture and sunlight. It takes about 90–120 days after planting for a pumpkin to reach its full size. Pumpkins are picked in October when they turn bright orange.

Pumpkins are a good source of nutrition. They are high in fiber and low in calories, fat, and sodium. The seeds are loaded with vitamins A and B and potassium. The seeds are very high in protein and are an excellent source of B vitamins.

[PDF version](#) - Pumpkin varieties

How to do it

1. At the meeting, cut the pumpkins open. Have the members clean out their pumpkins, keeping the seeds. If meeting virtually, make sure parents/adults are present for cutting
2. Rinse off and dry your seeds. Or, if available, you can buy the seeds in the store.
3. Make sure each person has clear cups, a paper towel, some cotton balls, and four pumpkin seeds. Keep the rest of your seeds for storage.
4. Have them tear or cut a three-inch wide strip from the paper towel that will serve as a liner for the inside of the cup. Trim the sheet if there is a lot of excesses so that there is only one layer around the inside.
5. Fill the center of the cup with cotton balls. Thoroughly dampen the cotton by setting the container under a dripping faucet. The cotton will moisten the paper towel. **No water should sit in the bottom of the cup—dump out any extra.**
6. Insert the pumpkin seeds between the cup and the paper towel. You can place some of the seeds with the pointed end up, and some with the pointed end down.



7. Label your cup with a permanent mark and set it on a sunny windowsill. Water enough every day to dampen the cotton balls (make sure there is no water at the bottom of the container) and watch for the seeds to grow.
8. With the other seeds, make sure they dry out on both sides. That will take about a week. Once dried, put them in a paper envelope for storage for the coming year to plant. You could even label and date your envelope.
9. Reflection Questions
 - Will you need to relocate or transplant your pumpkin?
 - What are some ways you can enjoy your pumpkins rather than carving them for Halloween?
 - What is the difference between a pumpkin and a gourd?
 - How can your club share seeds with others to grow their pumpkins? What would it look like for your club to distribute seeds? Could you use that for member promotion?
 - How can your club raise pumpkins and share it with others? Have members ask the food shelf if they would take pumpkins.

Recreation Ideas

Guess the weight of the pumpkin: Weigh pumpkins ahead of time. Have the answer. Then have the members guess how much each weighs. You can use slips of paper, hand voting, or other methods of voting.

Pumpkin Ring Toss: Space pumpkins out and put points by each one. Using a hula hoop, have the member throw to see if they can ring the pumpkin and get points. (You can do this virtually. Just let the members know ahead of time what they need to do to set it up at home.)

Pumpkin mini-golf (in-person only): Ahead of time, carve out some pumpkins. You could create a pumpkin mini-golf course with challenges.

Additional Resources

- Learn about canning pumpkins: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hft-zbqxeLM> (Libby's 100% Pure Pumpkin From Farm to Can)
- Learn about uses for pumpkins: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7j17iyL634g> (America's Heartland: Uses for Pumpkins)
- Pumpkin Facts
 - Illinois is the top pumpkin producing state in the nation, with nearly 500 million pounds of pumpkins harvested each year.



- The size of a pumpkin depends on water, temperature, insects, diseases, pollination, fertility, soil type, plant, weeds.
- Bees and other insects help pollinate the pumpkins. Some insects are harmful, and some insects (like bees) are helpful. Farmers try and spray to kill harmful insects when there aren't flowers, and good, beneficial insects aren't present.
- Pumpkins are ready to harvest when they are the right color and have the right rind readiness. But remember, they can be a lot of different colors.
- Pumpkins sold at farmer's markets and grocery stores. Many of them are sold to companies like *Libby's* to make pumpkin puree.
- If you liked this activity, check out 4-H Ag & Hort Afternoon Adventures. See <https://extension.umn.edu/projects-and-more/4-h-agronomy> for future topics and dates.

Sources

<https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/lessonplan.cfm?!pid=131> (Ag Classroom, Pumpkins Not Just For Halloween Lesson Plan)

<https://extension.umn.edu/vegetables/pumpkins-and-winter-squash> (U of M Extension, Growing Pumpkins and Winter Squash in Home Gardens)

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