

Caring For Your Carved Pumpkin



A Halloween Tradition — carving the family pumpkin to create a one-of-a-kind Jack-O'-Lantern. First, the excitement that builds as you gather the kids to go to the pumpkin patch, and then, the actual hunt to find the perfect pumpkin. Perhaps, you've found 2 or 3, and it's time to take them home and decide on a face. Each member of the family is a budding artist with their own design ideas in mind. Ideas are sketched out and decided on, and then the carving begins — in the end, a family project to be proudly displayed. However, that spooky Jack-O'-Lantern can take a turn for the worse after a couple of days as it starts to rot. Below are some hints on slowing down the natural processes of dehydration and break down...

Making Your Pumpkin Last

1. Wait at least a week to 10 days before Halloween to carve your pumpkin. Keep it in a cool, dry dark place until you are ready. A refrigerator is great if you have the space and it doesn't dip down to freezing.
2. Keep the skin of the pumpkin intact until you are ready to carve it. Bacteria, mold, fungi and other creatures will start the "break down" process as soon as they can get into any openings in the skin.
3. Clean the surface of your pumpkin with a damp cloth before carving.
4. Keep in mind, simple designs expose less cut areas to the air to rot. Lots of carving marks hasten the rotting process.
5. If you are using a candle, make sure you leave a Vent hole in the top of the pumpkin to allow the heat to be released. Only light

the candle when absolutely necessary — it hastens the rotting process. Glow sticks and battery operated candles are better for the pumpkin and safer for trick-or-treaters

6. Mom and Dad this Step is for YOU!

After you are finished carving the pumpkin, spray all the open surfaces, including the inside with the following solution to kill much of the bacteria and mold that will cause rotting.

Mix 1 Tablespoon of bleach with a quart of water and put in a spray bottle — clearly marked, PLEASE.

Allow this spray to dry on the pumpkin for about 20-30 minutes.

7. Next, rub all the cut surfaces with petroleum jelly to “seal” the pumpkin and slow dehydration.

8. To prolong the life of your new JackO’-Lantern, keep it out of the direct sun and keep it cool (not frozen) on hot days. Misting the inside with water each day will help keep it hydrated and using the bleach spray mixture (and allowing it to dry) at any signs of rot will help stave off the bacteria and mold.

Happy Halloween!

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