



THE PERFECT PUMPKIN!

By Tanya Hammond

One of the great joys of the fall is in early October when children and parents get ready to pick up their perfect pumpkin to carve or decorate. Pumpkins make for great decorations on porch's and roadsides when decorated and carved. Here are some ideas to help you when you bring home your perfect pumpkin to decorate.

From mini pumpkins to giant pumpkins, Styrofoam to farm fresh and everything in between, you can create the pumpkin of your dreams. Fake pumpkins ready for carving or decorating can be found at the local craft store and for fresh pumpkins check out local farm stands including Lanscroft Farm on Hwy #2, just west of Rapid Valley, Mensens Farm in Soperton, Wendy's Country Market in Lyndhurst, various locations in Brockville, including local garden centres, grocery stores and of course the Farmers' Market.

Depending on the age and ability of the person doing the decorating, you can vary the difficulty of your design. For toddlers, something as simple as a stack of stickers to place on a pumpkin can be all that is

needed. Remember, small hands like to be able to manipulate the item they are creating, so mini pumpkins might be a good fit for those younger than four. You could even let kids use vegetables like carrots, radishes and peas to make faces using toothpicks to stick on the funny faces.

As kids get older, the idea of creating something scary sounds more appealing, so helping them create a monster jack-o-lantern out of a giant pumpkin might be the fright they are looking for. You can of course, do all of the cutting necessary, letting them

scoop the seed and "guts" as they like to call it, out of the pumpkin. You could even help them make a smaller jack-o-lantern and put it inside the mouth of the giant one so it looks like the big one is eating the little one. Another creation that an older kid might enjoy, is helping create a mouse infested pumpkin. No not real mice, although I'm sure kids would find that more fun! Purchase a number of small rubber mice and arrange them so that they look like they are crawling in and out of holes in the pumpkin.

No kids, No problem! Halloween isn't just for kids; it's also for kids at heart. For the adult who just wants to get creative, you can coat a pumpkin with chalkboard paint and then drill small holes into the face of the pumpkin in a dotted outline of whatever image you choose. Leave the same amount of space between each hole and once you place your candle inside, your pumpkin will look similar to the lite-brite toy that we used to play with.

If black isn't the colour of your choice, then choose a white pumpkin to decorate. Paint a black spider's web on it with a big black spider sitting on it. Feeling more like an artist? Then purchase a Styrofoam pumpkin and get inspiration from the pumpkins on display at pumpkin inferno at Upper Canada Village in Morrisburg, On.

Looking for something a little less challenging and perhaps more stylish? Then carve out mini pumpkins and insert votive candles in them. This makes a nice display when grouped together or when lighting a path to your front door. Make your pumpkin a cute decoration and a clever trick or treat dish by filling it with lollipops standing straight up. Cover each lollipop with a simple facial tissue with a string around it and mark little faces on them so they look like little ghosts.

The ideas are endless, so let your creativity flow and just have fun. I'm sure your pumpkin will be perfect! **LH**

