

Ghosts, Ghouls, Goblins and Pumpkins

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Next week, many of your doorsteps will be greeted by trick-or-treaters. Halloween has always been one of my favorite holidays to celebrate, due in part to seeing the creative costumes kids decide to wear, carving pumpkins, and the retelling of spooky stories. No matter which characters may grace your doorstep this coming week, the tradition of Halloween can be enjoyable for all ages.

My background in agricultural communication is based in qualitative research, which essentially means that I have participated in research studies that evaluate written and spoken words. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, now famously referred to as the Brothers Grimm for their collection of children's stories, were also qualitative researchers who were interested in researching and preserving German folklore and stories. The Brothers Grimm traveled throughout Germany and interviewed people they encountered to collect information on the tales of the region.

The collection of stories was never intended to be used as children's stories, but rather as a study of folklore. According to National Geographic writer, Isabel Hernández, the Brothers Grimm fairy tales were much more gruesome in their original retelling and required extensive editing before they were considered appropriate for children's literature. Some of the Grimm's stories include Rapunzel, Hansel and Gretel, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, and Rumpelstiltskin, among others. So if you see any of the characters from these stories on Halloween, you can thank two pioneering qualitative researchers.

Beyond the characters we see for trick-or-treat, pumpkins are another highlight of Halloween and fall. While Illinois ranks first in the nation in pumpkin production, Ohio is one of the top 6 states for pumpkin production in the United States along with Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and California. In Ohio, there are 6 to 7 thousand acres of pumpkins planted annually. The pumpkin industry in Ohio generates an annual value of production in excess of over 10 million dollars.

There are dozens of hybrids of pumpkins, but according to Jim Jasinski, Associate Professor and Extension Educator for Ohio State University, the best kind of pumpkin to carve for Halloween is, of course, the biggest one. Jasinski coordinates the pumpkin research trials at the Western Agriculture Research Station near South Charleston, Ohio, where he raises over 20 hybrids of pumpkins for research projects. Jasinski recommends pumpkins like Baby Pam, or sugar pumpkins, for pumpkin pie making. However, the selection of decorative pumpkins is mostly personal preference.

Finally, I hope every trick-or-treater has a safe Halloween this year. Happy haunting to all this Halloween and may your Ohio-grown pumpkin look frightfully delightful on your porch. For

more information about OSU Extension programming, contact the Highland County Extension office at 937-393-1918 or visit highland.osu.edu.

Upcoming Programs:

Beef Quality Assurance and Transport Quality Assurance trainings will be held on Monday, October 28, 2019, in Xenia. BQA will start at 5:00 P.M. and BQA transport will be held at 6:30 P.M. The cost for BQA training is \$10.00 per person. Transport BQA is free to attend. Contact the Greene County Extension Office at 9370372-9971 or email corboy.3@osu.edu by October 24 to register.