

9 March 2024

Gourd Almighty! Pumpkin prodigies pummel Ekka record with giant win

In a battle of super-sized proportions, Toowoomba's Downlands College smashed the long-standing Ekka record by over 100 kilograms to take out top honours at the Royal Queensland Show's iconic Giant Pumpkin Competition presented by Pillow Talk at the Brisbane Showgrounds today.

The secondary school students' ginormous 368.5-kilogram entry beat the Ekka record for heaviest pumpkin of 261.5kg set back in 2015.

More than 10 mega pumpkins were placed on super-sized scales today with Downlands College blitzing the competition by 109.5 kilograms.

The College's other entry was also enormous, weighing in at 337.5 kilograms – the second heaviest in the competition's history.

Downlands College takes home \$2,850 in prize money which includes this year's new bonus prize of \$1,000 for the heaviest pumpkin over 350kg.

It's the second time in the competition's history that a school has managed to edge out veteran growers in the Open Class category, after Downlands College won the title of Champion Heaviest Pumpkin of Show last year for the first-time.

Downlands College Agricultural Science teacher Jeff Buchanan said he felt their competition entry this year was the best they have ever produced.

"There is so much excitement among the students, as well as a real sense of achievement when they see what they have produced stacking up against other growers and school entries," Dr Buchanan said.

"The students are excited they have done better than before and they have been putting in the work with 30 barrel-loads of compost and a fertigation program for the pumpkins.

"This comes as part of the process to get the kids interested in plant science."

Ekka's most famous giant pumpkin growing family, the Frohloff's from Minden took out top honours in the open class.

Geoff's Frohloff's 259kg entry won first place, while his son Tony took out third place with a 155kg entry, while Jim Baxter's 164.5kg entry came second in the open category.

Judging was held outside of Ekka dates in August again this year to take advantage of the premium pumpkin growing season.

School students joined the veteran growers, with the competition curriculum-aligned for Foundation to Grade 8, planting the seed of knowledge about the importance of agriculture.

Those who want to enter the competition next year, can sign up for their free Atlantic Giant pumpkin seeds at the Show or visit ekka.com.au to secure their seeds.

The crowning of the Ekka's first Grand Champion for 2024 signals the official countdown to Queensland's largest and most loved annual event, which is now just 154 days away.

2024 EKKA GIANT PUMPKIN COMPETITION PRESENTED BY PILLOW TALK RESULTS:

Pillow Talk Champion Heaviest Pumpkin of Show – Downlands College – 368.5kg – NEW EKKA RECORD!

Pillow Talk Heaviest Pumpkin – Open Class:

1st Geoff Frohloff – 259kg
2nd Jim Baxter – 164.5kg
3rd Tony Frohloff 155kg

Pillow Talk Heaviest Pumpkin – Youth Class:

1st Downlands College – 368.5kg
2nd Downlands College – 337.5kg
3rd Wilsonton Agricultural Field Study Centre – 48kg

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