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The N.C. State Fair  
OCT. 12-22, 2023

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# STATE FAIR NEWS RELEASE

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## **Winners announced in giant pumpkin and watermelon competitions**



RALEIGH – A North Carolina State Fair record was set and the largest watermelon grown anywhere in the world this year were crowned champions in the specially sanctioned giant pumpkin and watermelon contests on Tuesday. This contest, hosted by The Great Pumpkin Commonwealth, is open to competitors from other states. There is a separate contest for the largest North Carolina pumpkins and

watermelons, and growers from North Carolina can enter both contests. Fairgoers can see and photograph these giant beauties in the Agri Supply Expo Center at the N.C. State Fair, Oct. 12-22.

This year the top seven pumpkin growers all had pumpkins weighing more than 1,000 pounds. Winners in the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth Competition are: Robert Cyrus of Wayne County, West Va. placed first with a 2,124-pound pumpkin. Chris Rodebaugh of Greenbrier County, West. Va. placed second with a 2,025-pound pumpkin. Albert Rodebaugh of Nicholas County, West. Va. finished third with a 1,736-pound pumpkin.

State Fair pumpkin winners are: Hinzy C. Williams of Nash County who won the blue ribbon with a pumpkin weighing 1,097 pounds. Donald Murphy of Lenoir County who won the red ribbon with a 1028.7-pound pumpkin and Wake County's Cameron Jernigan earning the white ribbon and third-place honors with a 865.3-pound pumpkin.

"We have an award-winning display this year," said April Blazich, horticulture superintendent. "I think our visitors will really enjoy seeing these pumpkins and watermelons on display this year and that's the benefit of hosting the special competition. By weight, this is definitely the largest competition of this type we have ever had at the fair. When you come to the fair, you expect to see jaw-dropping things. These competitors fulfilled that this year."

Watermelons also had an impressive showing, with the 308-pound watermelon grown by Chris Kent of Sevier County, Tenn. claiming the title of the heaviest watermelon grown anywhere in the world this year. Todd Dawson of Wake County finished second in the sanctioned competition with a watermelon weighing 299.4 pounds. Hinzy C. Williams' 273.7-pound watermelon finished third.

Dawson claimed the blue ribbon in the State Fair watermelon contest, Williams claimed the red ribbon and the white ribbon went to Patrick Vanbeck of Wake County with a 251.8-pound watermelon.

The Great Pumpkin Commonwealth is an international organization that promotes growing giant vegetables. The top three winners in pumpkins take home between \$1.50 and \$3 per pound. The top three winners in watermelons are awarded between \$3 and \$6 per pound. This year's event was sponsored by Agri Supply.