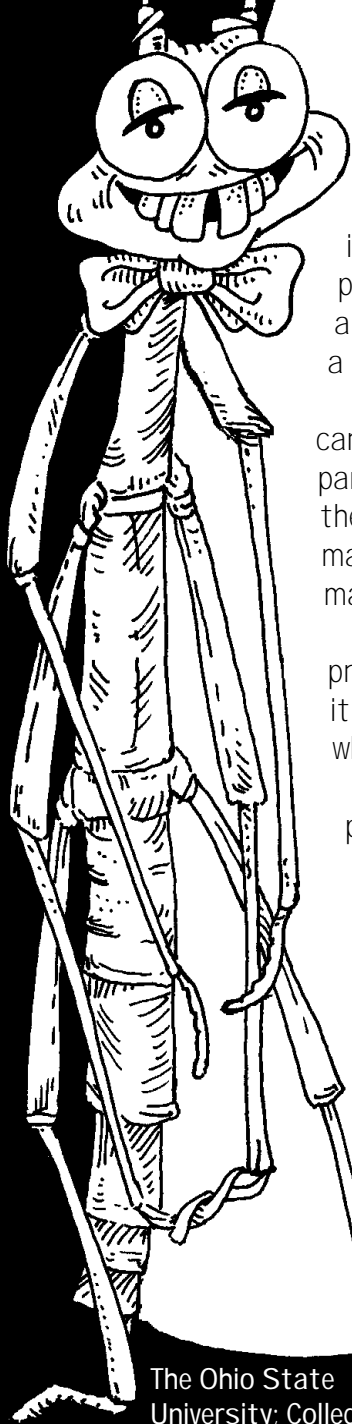


Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



Dear Twig: What's the glop inside pumpkins called?

Well, I've always called it glop, too. But I checked with my scientist friends and they told me the technical term is "endosperm." Endosperm is the flesh around fruit seeds.

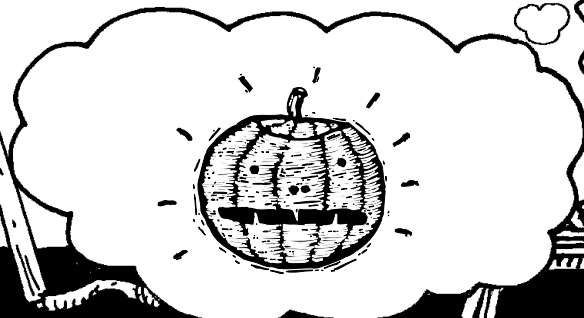
What does that mean? It means that a pumpkin is a fruit. Yep! Specifically, it's a type of fruit called a pepo ("pee-poe"). Pepoes are fleshy with a hard rind and many seeds, which, if you add "orange," describes a pumpkin to a T.

The part of the rind that you cut through when carving a jack o' lantern is the mesocarp. The inner part of the rind is the endocarp. The endocarp is where the seeds and the endosperm are produced. Juice is made here, too. The juice makes things slimy. The slime makes things gloppy. The result is sticky fingers.

What does endosperm actually do? It might protect and nourish the seeds, an important job. And it might make the fruit more attractive to animals, who, in eating the fruit, help spread the seeds around.

Not all pumpkins are gloppy inside. Ripe ones are pretty dry. And some varieties are gloppier than others. How do you know which is which, since all of them are orange? Cut one open and reach inside. If the sound you hear is "splort" you'll know!

Twig



The Ohio State
University College
of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences



For the week of
Nov. 11, 2001

By Kurt Knebusch
(330) 263-3776
knebusch.1@osu.edu

Hey Editor!

Bob Precheur, associate professor, and Matt Kleinhenz, assistant professor, Department of Horticulture and Crop Science, Ohio State University, provided information for and reviewed this column.

Section of Communications and Technology News and Media Relations

2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1044
(614) 292-2011

203 Research Services
Building
Wooster, OH 44691-4096
(330) 263-3775

All educational programs conducted by Ohio State University Extension are available to clientele on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, age, disability or Vietnam-era veteran status.
TDD# 1 (800) 589-8292 (Ohio only) or (614) 292-1868