

Stacker Stakes Instructions

HOW TO USE:

1. WASH YOUR PUMPKINS!

- Using soapy water, scrub every exposed inch of your pumpkins, paying special attention to crevices. Rinse well.
- For the longest-lasting stack--dip, spray, or wipe with a 10% bleach solution.
- Allow to dry COMPLETELY before stacking. Moisture is rot's best friend!

2. DESIGN YOUR STACK

- Choose pumpkins that have fairly even height all around. It is difficult (and maybe dangerous) to stack overly lop-sided pumpkins unless you are lucky enough to find sets that even each other out once assembled. That can even be super cute!
- Decide the order of your pumpkin stack. If your pumpkins are different sizes, this is fairly simple; largest to smallest, bottom to top. You can also make a lovely stack with similarly-sized pumpkins of varying color.

3. PREPARE FOR STACKING

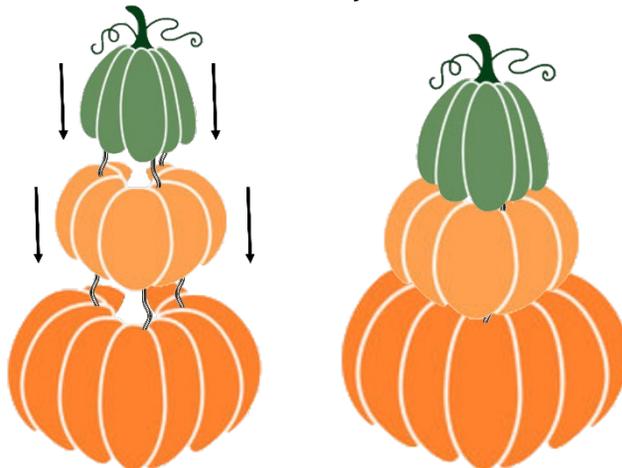
- Trim stems of all but top pumpkin. Treat cut part with bleach solution. Allow to dry. If stem has deep holes fill with caulk, hot glue, or petroleum jelly.
- Dry-fit your stack rotating the pumpkins to figure out how they best fit together. Make inconspicuous marks to indicate the proper rotation. Do not skip this step! You will need to dismantle the stack in order to insert the stakes. Once you take it apart, you WILL NOT remember the direction they fit best. Fine dry- and wet-erase markers work great for marking.
- Dismantle your stack, leaving the lower two pumpkins. Look for three, ideally equidistant, places the pumpkins touch the most and mark them. Here at the Farm, we place our stakes so that you can see how they work, but you may want them to be hidden, so placing them

where the pumpkins are touching will hide them best. (No one need know how *you do your magic!*) Repeat with each pumpkin in your stack.

- Dismantle stack and pre-punch holes in your pumpkins where you've marked. You can use the stakes, tapping gently with a hammer for tough skins.
- Punch your holes perpendicular to the level of the ground. This will make it easier to line up and connect your pumpkins without causing more damage than necessary trying to line up strange angles. The more damage sustained, the quicker your stack will succumb to rot.
- Some pumpkin skin is thicker and harder than others. If you do not pre-punch, you may find it difficult or impossible to get the stakes through the harder skins without damaging fruit with softer skins.

4. STACK YOUR PUMPKINS!

- Place stakes in base pumpkin up to the bend in center.
- Guided by your marks, carefully place the next pumpkin in the stack.
- Repeat until your stack is finished.
- Stand back and admire your work!



TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

KEEP YOUR STACK FRESH:

- Rub petroleum jelly over any nicks, scratches, or other damaged areas. Push petroleum jelly into your punched holes and around the stakes. This helps to prevent drying out which causes collapsing and keeps juices from seeping out and attracting pests. We have been known to use clear silicone caulk and PVA glue with excellent results for the plugging of holes.
- To help stave off rot, spray your pumpkins daily with 10% bleach solution. Add a couple squirts of peppermint castile soap to the spray if you begin to notice pests getting too close to any of your pumpkin creations.
- Keep out of the soil to stay away from pests and moisture.
- Made a tabletop stack with the MiniStakes? Throw your stack in the fridge overnight to keep it fresh.

KEEP YOUR STACK EXTRA STABLE:

- If you can line up a couple of the stakes in what will be the rear of the stack AND you plan to place the stack against something stable, you can use the stakes to add **extra** stability to the stack. The simplest way is to run a piece of twine around a couple of the stakes in the back and connect them to a stabilizer. We like to use a short length of perforated hanging strap to secure to wood posts that are buried in the ground. The hitch here is that you have to plan for this and thread the stake through it *while* you are stacking.
- If you plan to stabilize, you can also build your stack so that it is aligned against the rear of the stack instead of centering each pumpkin atop one another, requiring the need for longer (and more noticeable) tethers. Your stack will still appear to be a pyramid from the front and sides!

LATE IN THE SEASON AND NOT DOING ALL THAT?!

You can still build a stack without all the washing and preparation, especially if you only need it to be up for a week or so. Just jam some stakes between some pumpkins and GO!