

Recycled water protects pumpkin yield

Natalie Jacewicz 1:49 p.m. PDT October 16, 2015



(Photo: Natalie Jacewicz/For The Salinas Californian)

October visitors to Borchard Farms find both the familiar and the exotic, often in the same fruit. Simple yellow gourds rub elbows with multicolored varieties whose twists seem more alien than plant. And then, of course, there are the pumpkins.

“I like climbing on them. I like to jump on them and say, ‘Boo!’” 4-year-old Faith says during a brief respite from running around the farm’s pumpkin patch, complete with bouncy castle.

According to farmer Tom Borchard Jr., shoppers can expect a plentiful selection of seasonal pumpkins and gourds thanks to recycled water. Like many farms in the area, Borchard Farms uses water distributed by the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project.

CSIP, according to the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency, was designed to address a decades-old groundwater problem. As early as the 1944, Monterey County agriculture had pumped so much water from underground aquifers that seawater began to ooze into the groundwater supply. The compromised water threatened farming and Salinas residents.

Treating wastewater helped slow the problem. If farmers use recycled water for their crops, they use less groundwater. With a higher water table, less seawater contaminates underground aquifers. As of 2013, recycled water irrigated 12,000 acres of farmland.

Because they require only a moderate amount of recycled water, Borchard’s pumpkins are relatively protected from the drought. But a longer drought could present challenges, because some river water is needed to mix into recycled water, he explained.

“We can’t handle a drought for many more years,” he said.

Though Borchard hopes the El Niño will help, he’s concerned some of the rainwater will be wasted because of inadequate collection and storage capability.

“We don’t have enough measures in place to capture the water we do get. We’re going to get this water, but if we don’t use it, we’ll lose it,” he said.

But for now, Borchard Farm’s visitors – roughly 10,000 between September and October – will find a bountiful variety of pumpkins for purchase.

For the visitors who want to make their decorations pop, farm manager Belinda Serrato has a tip:

“I like to wash them and lacquer them,” she explained, as she dunked a gourd into a bucket of water. “They look really, really pretty, and they last a long time.”

Borchard Farms is open throughout October from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. at 142 Rodgers Road, Salinas. Saturday (Oct. 17), the farm will host its Annual Giant Pumpkin Weigh Off.

Read or Share this story: <http://bit.ly/1RN8fct>

25% OFF

28% OFF

25% OFF

28% OFF

29% OFF

~~\$400~~
\$79.99

TOP VIDEOS

MORE STORIES



Brown veto shortchanges Medi-Cal

[\(/story/news/2015/10/18/brown-veto-shortchanges-medi-cal/74188170/\)](/story/news/2015/10/18/brown-veto-shortchanges-medi-cal/74188170/)

Oct. 18, 2015, 2:49 p.m.

[\(/story/news/2015/10/19/santa-rita-school-board-race-heats-up/74244948/\)](/story/news/2015/10/19/santa-rita-school-board-race-heats-up/74244948/)



My Kitchen - Pumpkin Quiche

[\(/videos/news/2015/10/21/74355002/\)](/videos/news/2015/10/21/74355002/)

Oct. 21, 2015, 2:45 p.m.

Santa Rita school board race heats up
[\(/story/news/2015/10/19/santa-rita-school-board-race-heats-up/74244948/\)](/story/news/2015/10/19/santa-rita-school-board-race-heats-up/74244948/)

[\(/story/news/2015/10/19/santa-rita-school-board-race-heats-up/74244948/\)](#)

3000 SERIES SELF-STORING STORM DOORS

\$297 Andersen
Was \$317

More Options Available. U.S. Only. (203149252)

SHOP NOW >

THE HOME DEPOT
More saving.
More doing.