Making Your Pumpkin Last: 5 Tips

It’s fall ya’ll! My favorite season! Unfortunately, it’s been a lot warmer than years past thus far. And while that may be good news for those wanting to extend the gardening season,

it’s bad news for fall decor.

Whether you put out pumpkins to celebrate fall or Halloween, they’re a fun way to accessorize the front stoop. I think I’ve put out a pumpkin every year of my life, except for last year when Halloween was virtually canceled where I live.

Sadly, the unusually warm weather means that pumpkins are rotting faster than ever. So besides putting it out at the last minute, what are some tips for making your pumpkin last longer?

Making your pumpkin last longer

It’s time to carve, paint, and otherwise decorate pumpkins! But if you want to decorate this season, you’ll have to battle both warm weather and hungry squirrels.

Here are some tips for keeping that pumpkin around until November 1st:

Pick the right pumpkin.

Choose a pumpkin that’s free of holes, scrapes, cuts, dents, or odd dark spots. Blemishes will cause your pumpkin to rot quickly.

If you have the option, pick your own pumpkin! (This is also way more fun than grabbing one from the grocery store). Since it’ll be going from the field straight to your home, it won’t get bounced around like pumpkins that travel long distances.

Stop touching it.

The more you touch a pumpkin, the higher the chances are that you’ll knick or scratch it in some way. The more cuts and scratches a pumpkin has, the faster it’ll rot into oblivion.

That means carving also speeds up the rotting process. If

you’re having trouble keeping pumpkins looking good-as-new, consider painting this squash-family fruit instead of cutting into it.

Put it in the right spot.

Plop a pumpkin in a moist patch of dirt, and you’ll end up with a soggy, mushy mess in no time. The ideal spot for a pumpkin is dry and out of direct sunlight—a covered porch, for example.

Dry it out.

To make sure the kiddies get to admire your pumpkin carving skills at Halloween, make sure to thoroughly clean out the insides of a pumpkin and then dry it out before slicing and dicing. Less goopy, moist parts mean fewer opportunities for mold to grow.

Grab the vaseline.

Rubbing a dried, carved pumpkin with vaseline helps seal the surfaces and prevent mold growth.

Bottom line

Your pumpkin will rot eventually. And while some of these things can slow the process, others are out of your control (like outdoor temps and humidity). Consider taking it in every night if you really want to protect that pumpkin—especially from squirrels and other nibblers.

Another way to deter hungry pests is to keep the pumpkin off the ground. Use a small table or another elevated surface to keep it out of reach. It’s not a foolproof protection method, but it’s better than nothing!