

532,4kg pumpkin crowned champion in Heidelberg

Piet Lotz, a farmer from Riversdale in the Western Cape, was crowned the 2018 champion at the 8th annual Giant Pumpkin Festival in Heidelberg this weekend with a pumpkin weighing in at an astounding 532,4kg.

His monster pumpkin was a little short of the current South African record of 556kg set by Hugo le Roux in March 2017.

“It’s fourth time lucky for me. I entered the competition on three previous occasions, but my pumpkins never passed the 300kg mark. This year’s conditions weren’t ideal for breeding giant pumpkins and I was afraid that my pumpkin was once again going to weigh too little,” said an elated Lotz after being revealed as the 2018 winner.

The winning pumpkin was grown from special hand-selected pumpkin seeds - Dill’s Atlantic Giant - supplied by Shoprite and Checkers to all competition entrants. Imported from Canada and especially bred for size, the seeds aren’t treated or genetically modified in any way and is the variety of choice for those wishing to produce pumpkins in excess of 300kg.

Second place this year went to Elizna Lotz with her 438kg pumpkin, followed by Pinkie Swart’s pumpkin at 365,8kg.

As champion of the 2018 Giant Pumpkin Competition, Lotz received R14 000 in cash while second and third place received R7 000 and R3 500 respectively. Prize money was sponsored by Shoprite and Checkers. Additional prizes were also awarded for the prettiest and ugliest pumpkins.

In keeping with Heidelberg’s strong community spirit, all proceeds from this two-day festival are ploughed back into the town.

Previous winners of the Heidelberg Giant Pumpkin Competition:

YEAR	NAME	WEIGHT OF PUMPKIN
2017	Corné van Greunen	519,5kg
2016	Louwrens van Deventer	373kg
2015	Pinkie Swart	483,6kg
2014	Pinkie Swart	497,5kg (former SA record)
2013	Johan du Plessis	417,5kg
2012	Henry du Plessis	390kg
2011	Johan du Plessis	349,2kg

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