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Pumpkin shortage could mean no Christmas pies

Sarah Gilbert

 Nov 19th 2009 at 8:00AM
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Filed under: **Food, Shopping**

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sarah gilbert

News from Illinois and other Midwestern pumpkin farms has me worried I'll have to add more security to my front walk. My front yard, relieved this spring of its burden of grass, is a wild mess of corn stalks, bean and tomato vines, sunflowers, asparagus ferns, and pumpkins. My kids have already eaten one pie and two loaves of pumpkin bread from the gourds grown right here. Come December, we could be the only ones for blocks eating pumpkin pie; **food giant Nestle says** a rainy Midwestern growing season means they've lost what was left of a small harvest; and there will be no more Libby canned pumpkin shipped after Thanksgiving.

Nestle controls an incredible 85% of the U.S. pumpkin crop destined for canning, and it's located on 5,000 acres of farmland in Illinois. The crop was **looking 15% to 50% smaller than normal at the end of the summer**; and then came the fall rains, which destroyed what remained. Typically, Nestle cans the late bloomers from the 2009 crop in October and November to stock shelves for Christmas and the first half of the next year.

Because of the crop failure, after November store shelves will be bare of canned pumpkin; and the fresh pumpkin season is almost over, so consumers will be stuck buying other, hardier squashes, like acorn, hubbard and kabocha squash, and learning to cook the squash into puree, on their own. Most stores questioned by the *LA Times* said they **wouldn't be raising** prices due to the shortage.

It's a good year to be a gardener and a scratch cook; if that's you, as America's second favorite pie disappears this month, you may want to share your wealth.

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Megan Cottrell

Mar 13th 2010 8:00AM

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Mar 12th 2010 5:00PM

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Josh Smith

Mar 12th 2010 4:30PM

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Geoff Williams

Mar 12th 2010 4:00PM

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Every year, I used to make some statement full of bravado, like, "OK, by December 31, 2002, I will have lost 30 pounds." Or: "It's 2004, but by 2005, the world is going to see less of me." ...

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