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Oakland Tribune, The (CA)

Berkeley: One ton of pumpkins plucked from front yard

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Cassie Harwood Oakland Tribune

Trick or treat came early to a Berkeley residence, where approximately one ton of pumpkins were stolen from the front lawn Wednesday. Bruce MacDermott, who lives at the corner of Ashby and Piedmont avenues with his wife, Dana MacDermott, said 11 Atlantic Giant pumpkins "ranging from 75 to 400 pounds each" were removed from the couple's front yard early Wednesday morning.

The couple host an annual pumpkin carving party for friends and neighbors, using extra large gourds from a family member's Santa Cruz pumpkin patch. Atlantic Giant pumpkins can grow to over 1,000 pounds each.

MacDermott said he came outside around noon Wednesday to find a number of his pumpkins missing, replaced with scrapes on the sidewalk where they may have been dragged, and two four-inch stems. "I don't know how they moved them, but they certainly were determined," he said, adding that it takes a minimum of four people to lift the massive plants.

"We don't know if it was some kind of fraternity prank or whether it was somebody who wanted to sell them some place," he said. The couple filed a police report, and are rethinking carrying on their Halloween tradition, though they plan to carve the remaining pumpkins. "You put so much energy into something, and to have people come by and callously take it away — it's very disturbing," MacDermott said.

Anyone with information about the missing pumpkins can call the Berkeley Police department at 510-981-5900.

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