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When it came to this year's 4-H Pumpkin-Growing Contest, eight of the state's Top 12 pumpkins were grown by students from Union County.

transplant their pumpkins, then fertilize them, and they would follow the growing season and manage their pumpkins. Each student only got one pumpkin, so it required a lot of effort for them to complete the project.

"They have to watch for rot. We had a lot of rain in the summertime, and when that happens, it brings a lot of powdery mildew, which leads to rot. We had two or three students actually lose pumpkins because of that."

Students also had to maneuver the pumpkins and clip off the additional ones growing beside the large one to make sure that their pumpkin did not strangle itself on the vine, according to Jennings.

Students were not completely reliant on themselves for the project and had the help of Patrick Fix and Tim Grizzle, who are current state record holders for the largest pumpkin grown in Georgia at 1,306 pounds.

With the experts on her side, Holbrook's 644-pound pumpkin set the all-time record for the 4-H event.

"I think it's a big deal that we have the state winner," said Jennings. "The pumpkin was 644 pounds, which beat the state record set 11 years ago."

Jennings thanked Frank Riley of the Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D Council for being the local sponsor of the project, and he also thanked Union County for allowing the students to use a select portion



Reagan Covington came in Third Place in the state with her 479-pound giant pumpkin.

of land to grow the pumpkins on at the Farmers Market.

With the project being a great success this year, Union County 4-H plans to continue bringing students into the event in future years, hoping to get more students involved with the program.

"We plan on doing this

again in the spring, and we plan on recruiting 4-H'ers that are probably still in the middle school and high school range because of how labor intensive it can be," said Jennings. "It's not just putting the seed in the ground and walking away, you actually have to care for it."

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