



MADE
in Champaign
County

Rachel Coventry, Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch

Growing up on the centennial farm and popular attraction Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch, Rachel Coventry, granddaughter to founders Paul and Joyce Curtis, has an affinity for agriculture. But it was her time in the Peace Corps, from 2009–2011, where she developed her skills as a beekeeper. While part of the crop extension sector in the Peace Corps, she signed up for beekeeping training after a growing interest and understanding of how pollinators helped her family's farm back home.

Upon her return to Champaign, Rachel joined her grandparents and parents working on the farm, taking over the beekeeping as part of her responsibilities. She worked with local master beekeeper Maggie Wachter to further develop her techniques, including learning how to properly winterize a hive. As a result, her annual hive losses declined from 70% to 10%. Through these skills, and due to the diverse fauna and flora within the 3-mile radius foraging ground around the hives, Rachel has harvested gallons of honey for Curtis Orchard visitors to take home and enjoy.

While she's won prizes before for her honey, it was the prize of World's Best Tasting Honey from the Center for Honeybee Research in 2017 that gained her the most notoriety. "We're able to maximize what's available for bees from spring through fall, from native plants to apples, peaches and cherries, to get the unique flavor in our honey," explains Rachel. "It's really a community effort though, as our neighbors have planted additional flowers and native plants that have helped as well." She likes to enjoy the honey on peanut butter sandwiches, with yogurt, granola, tea, creamed honey and the honeycomb itself. Her favorite component of winning top prize comes from educating the public on the importance of pollinators of all kinds and encouraging the planting of flowers and native plants to help fight declines in the honeybee population. "Turns out I'm a doctor for bees despite never seeing myself as a scientist. It's always changing, and bees don't complain!" Rachel's honey can be purchased from Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch during their season from July 20–December 20, and offseason by appointment.

Fall Adventures

Fall brings cooler temperatures and vibrant colors throughout the Midwest, but here, it brings corn mazes, pumpkins, apples and more. Check out these top attractions this fall!

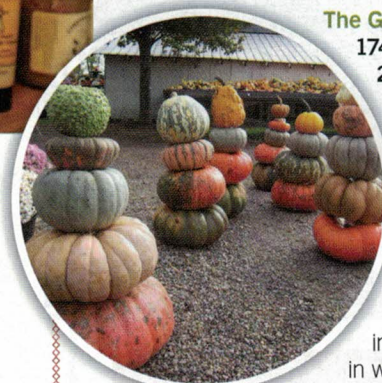
Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch 3902 S. Duncan Rd., Champaign 217-359-5565 | curtisorchard.com

Escape to the country at Curtis Orchard. This farm features apples, pumpkins, a large country store and The Flying Monkey Cafe. Shop for specialty food and gift items and take home fresh apple cider and honey voted "best tasting in the world." Try their famous donuts and pies, along with great meals in September and October. Entertainment options include apple and pumpkin picking, a giant slide, giant jump pad, corn maze, air cannons, petting zoo, pony rides and more. Pick-your-own apples and pumpkins. Open: July 20–December 20. See website for hours and activity availability.



The Great Pumpkin Patch

1749 County Road 1900 N., Arthur
217-543-2394
the200acres.com



The Great Pumpkin Patch is proud to invite guests to see over 300 varieties of pumpkins, squash and gourds from over 30 countries around the world; all grown here on our farm. The Great Pumpkin Patch loves what they do and takes great interest in providing beautiful surroundings in which to educate our guests about the Cucurbit family. Numerous premier

displays, over 5,000 hardy mums, various mazes and gardens grace the grounds. They exhibit their love for diversity, through not only plants, but animals—featuring several goats, pigs, exotic chickens, rabbits, a llama and an alpaca. There are several places to eat and drink on the farm and lots of entertainment on the weekends. Open September 10–October 31.

Hardy's Reindeer Ranch 1356 County Road 2900 N., Rantoul | 217-893-3407 reindeerranch.com

Hardy's Reindeer Ranch offers a unique attraction for young and old alike. Pick a pumpkin in the pines, browse through the quaint gift shop, try your luck at figuring out the mysteries of the 10-acre Cornfusion maze, and most importantly, kiss a real Alaskan reindeer! From November through December the reindeer ranch is transformed into a Christmas wonderland. The store is reminiscent of days gone by with a pot-bellied stove, twinkling lights and wonderful smells. The western style banquet facility is available for a "Wild West" BBQ or outdoor weenie roast. Group entertainment packages are available. Open August–December; call for seasonal hours.

