

Monteagle couple grow giant rutabaga



By Michael Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Karl and Dawn Douglas from Monteagle grew a giant rutabaga in their home garden. Rutabagas (*Brassica napus*) are a type of oblong root vegetable similar to turnips, although rutabagas are actually the result of a cross between turnips and cabbages. They have a slightly bitter taste and are usually yellow or purple in appearance. While they've grown turnips on and off for years, as well as other produce, this rutabaga in particular is the largest they've ever seen to date, and they invited Bancroft This Week along with Mary Milne from Moose FM to come and take a look at it at their home on Oct. 28.

On Oct. 28, Karl and Dawn Douglas cut the turnip from their garden at their home in Monteagle. This impressive vegetable measured 12 inches across and 39.5 inches in circumference. While they haven't weighed it yet, both Dawn and Karl had trouble picking it up and carrying it, and a certain Bancroft This Week reporter also found it to be quite hefty. As Karl said at the time, "it's certainly not hollow!" Dawn says that strange things came up in their garden before this giant turnip. "The first time I moved here, I got bored so I went and dug a hill of potatoes. Well one was almost five pounds and was big as my waist. It hit the [news]paper," she says. As to what spurred such a large rutabaga from their garden, Karl said it must have just been the year with the amount of rain they had. He says they don't use any fertilizers that may have accounted for this giant piece of produce. "We do have good soil," he says. Dawn thought that the way the summer had been, with the temperature fluctuations, the rutabaga got all mixed up. "It didn't know whether it should grow and we got a lot of rain this summer. We let Mother Nature do her thing," she says. As for what they'll do with this big rutabaga now that it's been cut out of their garden, Dawn told Bancroft This Week that she has no idea. "It's the size of a pumpkin. I would say not as tall but it's big. Maybe I'll cut eyes out of it and put it out for Halloween."