



Muskmelon

Honeydew melon





Watermelon



# Melons

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- Muskmelons are often mistakenly called cantaloupes, but the true cantaloupe is a small, warty fruit and is not usually grown in the U.S.
- All cantaloupes are muskmelons, but not all muskmelons are cantaloupes.

	
Cantaloupe (musk variety)	Charentais (Cantaloupe)
orange flesh, netted skin	small variety, orange flesh, smooth skin

# Melons - Varieties

<b>Muskmelon</b>	<b>Watermelon</b>	<b>Seedless watermelon</b>
Ambrosia Caravelle Hale's Best Israeli Magnum 45 Mainstream Mission Perlita TAM Uvalde	Allsweet Black Diamond Charleston Gray Crimson Sweet Jubilee Mickylee Mirage Royal Jubilee Tendersweet	Tiffany Tri-X 313
		<b>Honeydew</b>
		Honey Girl Sweet Delight TAM Dew

# Melons – Site Selection

- Vining crop that requires a lot of space
- Not well suited to small gardens
- Muskmelons can be grown in small gardens if the vines are trellised and the fruit is supported
- Grow best in deep, well-drained, sandy or sandy loam soil with plenty of organic matter
- Prefer soil with a neutral pH
- If the soil is too acidic, the plant will drop their blossoms

# Melons – Planting

- Warm-season crops that are easily injured by frost
- Plant seeds in hills with 6-8 seeds per hill planted at a depth of 1 to 1 ½ inches
- Place hills 2 to 3 feet apart for muskmelons and honeydew; 4 to 5 feet apart for watermelons
- Place rows of muskmelon and honeydews 6 to 8 feet apart; rows of irrigated watermelon 10 to 12 feet apart; rows of un-irrigated watermelon 12 to 16 feet apart

# Melons - Fertilizing

- Watermelons
  - Require a high phosphorus fertilizer (10-10-10)
  - Apply 4 pounds per 1,000 square feet when planting
  - When runners on vines are about 6 inches long, scatter 2 to 3 pounds of fertilizer per 60 to 90 feet of row
- Muskmelons and honeydews
  - Apply 2 to 3 pounds of high phosphorus fertilizer (10-10-10) for every 60 to 70 feet of row at planting
  - When vines begin to run, make application with a high nitrogen fertilizer

# Melons – After Planting

- Plants break through the soil 10 to 12 days after planting
- Thin to 3 to 4 plants per hill
- Once plants have 2 to 3 leaves, thin again to 2 plants per hill
- Melon plants have separate male and female flowers on each plant
- Bees must be present to cross-pollinate the flowers

# Melons – After Planting

- Watermelon fruit size can be increased by pruning melons to 2 fruit per plant for large varieties or 4 to 6 fruits per plant on smaller varieties
- Pruning also increases the size of muskmelon fruits, but is not usually needed






**Figure 1.** One method of support for melons grown on a trellis.



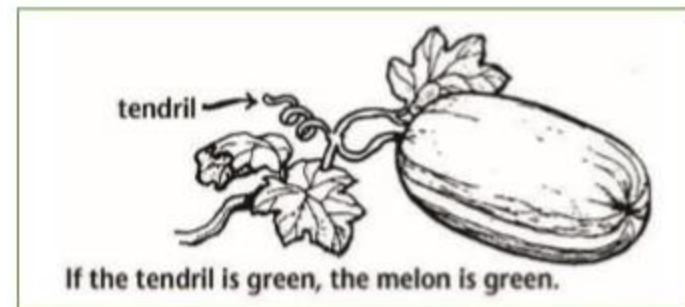
# Melons - Insects

Before using a pesticide, read the label. Always follow cautions, warnings and directions.

Name and description		Control
	Spider mites: barely visible to naked eye; spiderlike; suck juice from undersides of leaves; may form tiny webs; leaves lose color	beneficial insects strong blasts of water insecticidal soaps neem oil
	Cucumber beetle: Adult 1/8 inch long; yellow to black with black spots or three stripes on back; feeds on stems, leaves and fruit; transmits bacterial wilt; larvae bore into root and stem below soil line	Sevin® pyrethrins
	Aphids: 1/2 inch long; soft bodied; green, pink, red or brown; usually on undersides of leaves; suck plant juices	neem oil insecticidal soaps

# Harvesting Watermelons

- Signs of ripeness:
  - Dull sound when thumped – often inaccurate
  - Color change of rind – ripe melons often lose their glossy color
  - Change in color of soil spot – the spot where the melon rests on the soil takes on a creamy, streaked color
  - Death or drying of the tendril – the tendril near the point where the melon is attached to the vine dries when ripe – most dependable sign
- Use knife to cut watermelon from vine



**Figure 6.** A melon is ripe when the tendril nearest the vine is dry.

# Harvesting Muskmelons

- Harvest when fruit rind changes to a yellowish-orange color, the stem begins to separate or slip from the fruit, and the odor gets strong
- If left long enough, the stem will naturally separate from the fruit – known as “full slip”
- Use full slip fruit within 36 to 48 hours as it will soon spoil
- For best quality, harvest at “half slip” stage when the stem is partially separated from the fruit

# Harvesting Honeydew Melons

- Harvest when skin begins to turn yellow and the end of the fruit opposite the stem (blossom end) begins to soften

# Harvesting - Melons

- Do not harvest too early because the sugar content does not increase after harvest
- Muskmelon can improve in flavor after harvest but this is caused by mellowing of the flesh
- Most melons require 80 to 100 days from planting to harvest