

PEST & DISEASE CONTROLS

Treat the watermelon seeds with appropriate fungicides to minimize early development of diseases in the field.

Dust or spray the young plants regularly with any suitable insecticides as soon as the false leaves have spread. At the seedling stage, watermelon are easily attacked by insect pests.

HARVESTING

Harvest watermelon fruits when mature enough to be sweet. Generally, it takes a watermelon fruit to mature 35 to 40 days from pollination depending on the variety. The old method of determining maturity of watermelon is by “thumping” with a finger. A dull or hollow sound is an indication of maturity. The most practical index, however, is when the color of the lower part of the fruit that rests on the ground changes from white to creamy yellow. Harvest fruit with a sharp knife.

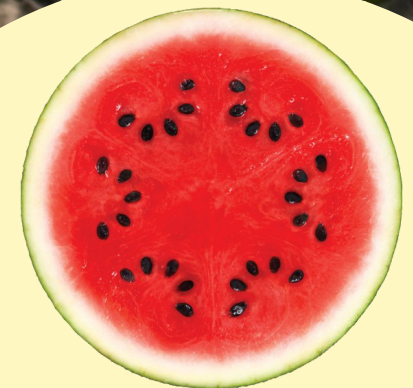
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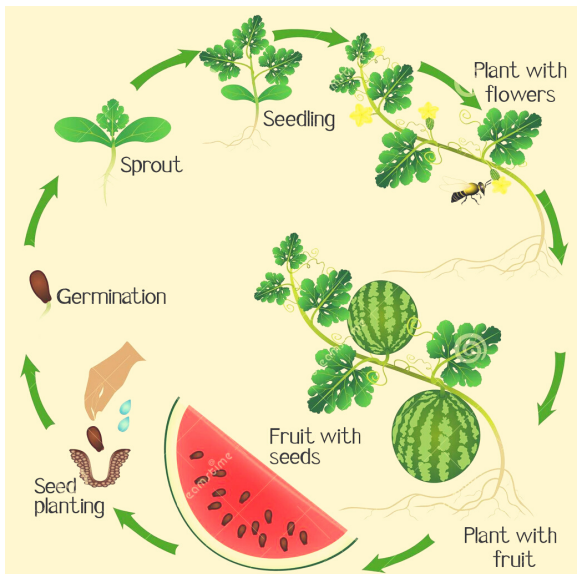


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WATERMELON

PRODUCTION GUIDE



HOW TO GROW WATERMELON

Planting season is from October to January. In some parts of the country, planting is done as early as August to produce an off-season crop which commands better market price.

CULTURAL PRACTICES

Plow land at least 20 cm deep to increase soil aeration. Plow and harrow 2-3 times for early growth and development. These are done several weeks in advance of planting to condition soil. Though this is quite expensive. Labor cost of weeding will be reduced. Planting and spacing- Watermelon is grown from seeds directly planted in the field. Plant 3-4 seeds to a hill, 2.5 cm deep. Distance of planting ranges from 1.5 x 1.5 to 2.5 x 2.5 meters apart, depending on variety.

FERTILIZATION

Watermelon is generally grown in rotation with other crops; it is necessary to use manure or any soil improving crop to maintain organic matter in the soil. Apply 10 to 15 tons of manure per hectare. Apply complete fertilizer at the rate of 100 to 150 kilograms per hectare at planting time by hand placement 5 to 8 cm below the soil and 5 to 6 cm away to the side where seeds are placed. If plants show signs of yellowing, apply sidedressing of nitrogenous fertilizer.

Watermelon has a spreading hairy, tendril-bearing vines reaching 3-5 meter long. Leaves are oblongovate 8-20 cm long with 3-7 lobes. Flowers are monoecious, yellow in color and about 2 cm in diameter. Fruits are large, green-mottled or deep green. Introduced hybrids and varieties produce much bigger fruits, shapes varying from globular to oblong.

SOIL AND CLIMATE

Watermelon prefers a well-drained sandy loam soil rich in organic matter and which has not been previously planted with watermelon.

Watermelon requires more aeration than any other kind of crops, so the field must have good drainage to obtain good yield. In areas where growing season is short, light soil is

desirable for early harvest. It grows satisfactorily in heavier soil if properly cared and managed.

Watermelon is tolerant to a wide range of soil acidity with soil pH 5.0 to 6.8 to successful growth. A long period of warm, preferably dry weather contributes to growth. A temperature of 25 C is ideal for growth and 25°C is the best temperature for fruit setting.

After plants are well-established, thin to one to two plants per hill. Alternate plant is planting in continuous rows and thinning the plant to a distance of 1.5 to 2.0 meters. When plants have 3-4 leaves, thin to one plant per hill.

CULTIVATION & IRRIGATION

Cultivate and weed to check weed growth. Any implement may be used for the purpose. Avoid injury to roots while cultivating.

Watermelon may suffer injury when exposed to a long period of drought. Apply irrigation water when necessary. Frequent light irrigation 5-6 times during growing season is beneficial. During early stage of growth, irrigate sparingly since too much water tends to hinder root development.