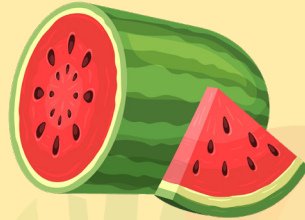


Watermelon



Sun: Plant in full sun (6 to 8 hours). Plant in hills spaced 5 feet apart or 1 plant per 5- to 7-gallon container (See the Plant section below). Plant in April after any danger of frost has passed and in mid-June.

Soil: Amend with organic matter to create a well-drained soil. Avoid planting in unamended sandy or heavy clay soils. If the soil test shows pH is below 6.2, apply lime in January or February as recommended. If the pH is above 6.2, apply a pH-neutral calcium supplement, such as gypsum. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup gypsum per plant to prevent blossom-end rot.

If growing in a container garden, amend each pot with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup gypsum. For proper drainage, use potting mix and ensure containers have drainage holes. Alternatively, consider using self-watering containers.

Water: Keep soil consistently moist but not saturated. Apply 1 to 2 inches of water each week and more during hot summer days. Avoid wetting leaves to prevent fungal disease. Mulch helps retain moisture.

Plant: Direct sow seeds about 1 inch deep in raised hills or containers to ensure good soil drainage. When sprouts are 4 to 5 inches tall, thin to remove all but 1 or 2 sprouts per hill or container. Plants will not grow well or produce if overcrowded. Transplants are not recommended.

Fertilize: In the absence of a soil test, apply an all-purpose fertilizer (8-8-8 or 10-10-10) at planting according to label directions. Reapply beside plants, 4 to 6 inches from the stem (side-dress), when vines begin to run.

Insects/Diseases/Weeds: Scout plants frequently for insect/disease damage. Use insecticidal soap (for soft-bodied insects) or Bt dust or spray (for caterpillars, or worms). Spray fungicide regularly to suppress common fungal diseases. Always follow label instructions. Mulch inhibits weeds and diseases.

Harvest: Harvest at 80 to 90 days, when fruits are full size, have a dull appearance, a yellowish color is present where the melon touches the ground, and there is a dead tendril or curl near the point where the melon is attached to the vine. Harvest time varies depending on the variety.

Other: Listen for a dull, rather than metallic, sounding thump if you use a thump method to test ripeness.

Visit www.aces.edu/go/growmore for more information.

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