

Watermelon growing. How to plant, grow and harvest water melons

Being a highly nutritious fruit, the quality and quantity of watermelon produced is determined by the technology and agronomic practices used by the farmer.

Being an annual herbaceous plant, watermelon belongs to cucurbitaceae family and holds a scientific name of *Citrullus lanatus*. Planting process begins with planting seeds in seed beds and as plants grow up to 8cm of height, main leaves start to show up.

Watermelon management

10-12 days after germination, cotyledons start to wither. To prevent diseases in plastic nurseries, graft the seedlings using pumpkin stalks as a way of increasing resistance to fusarium wilt and other fungal diseases found in soil. Time between sowing and transplanting vary from 30-40 days from point of initial sowing in seed bed.

Additionally, Transplant seedlings soils with root interact, cover with soil and water to stabilize plant and facilitate root taking process. One month after planting, watermelon begin to develop trailing stems and leaf stalk branches out.

Carry out 2nd watering 10-12 days after the former takes place. After melon putting on many leaves, ridging is done. Pruning is done and first pruning is done as 4-6 true leaves appear.

Similarly, same process is repeated with secondary branches. With second pruning, only only 2 main branches are left and when branches have 5-6 leaves, debudding is carried out to

allow formation of secondary branches.

Cover soil with compost plastic polythene or sand to maintain soil temperatures and soil humidity. During flowering, first flowers to appear are male followed by female ones which grow from main branches and secondary shoots.

Furthermore, for pollination, human substances are applied in green houses to cause fruit to grow. It is manually controlled phenomenon influenced by conditions in green house together with light intensity available. Earliest variety begin to fruit at 1.5 month and at 2 months, stalks will be of 1 metre long. From this time crop require prolonged warmth.

Finally, harvesting day depend on variety grown, area, time of sowing and crop system used. Best time for harvesting is during morning.