

HARVESTING

Time to harvest depends on variety and conditions under which the crop is grown. Do not let the size fool you. Melons should only be harvested when ripe. If you reap too early, the inside color and taste will be wrong. Here are some tips on recognizing time to harvest:

- ◆ The tendril as the stem begins to dry.
- ◆ The portion of the fruit resting on the ground turns from pale white to creamy yellow.
- ◆ When tapped, a ripe melon gives a dull sound, green melons give a sharp metallic sound.

The fruits are cut off the vine with a sharp knife.



*Produced by the
Communication Unit
Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries*

WATER MELON PRODUCTION



*Adapted from the CARDI
Fact sheet of March 1992.*

WATER MELON

Duration 12-14 weeks

Water melon grows best in the dry season in areas where irrigation is possible. In the wet season, the crop is attacked by numerous pests and diseases which increase production cost, reduce yields and quality of fruits harvested.

If planted in the wet season, plant on lands that are free draining, where there is a lot of sunshine available to the plants. This results in firmer, sweeter and finer flavored fruits.

The crop enjoys newly cleared lands, rich in humus.

RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

- ◆ Sugar baby
- ◆ Crimson
- ◆ Charleston

LAND PREPARATION

1-2 weeks before planting, clear the land of all weeds and plough 6-9 inches deep. Add well rotted pen manure if soil is not rich in humus. Level off and prepare ridges or mounds to provide good drainage in heavy rainfall areas.

PLANTING

Spacing: holes 8-10 ft. apart on ridges.
mounds 4-6 ft. apart.

Plant 3 seeds in holes dug 1/2-3/4 inches deep. Thin out later to 2 of the healthiest plants per hole. It takes just under 1 lb of seeds to plant 1 acre.

3/4"-1/2"
deep



FERTLIZING

At planting, add 1 small match box of a complete fertilizer (NPK) to each plant especially if no pen manure was available at land preparation.

Make a second application of a nitrogen rich fertilizer after flowering is said to enhance growth and fruiting.

A good fertilizer programme to follow **after germination:**

2 weeks-	1 oz. NPK per plant
4 weeks-	2 oz. NPK per plant
10 weeks-	3 oz. NPK per plant

PEST AND DISEASES

The same pests and diseases affecting cucumbers will affect water melon as they belong to the same family.

Some common pests problems are:

- ◆ Root Knot Nematodes
- ◆ Fusarium Wilt
- ◆ Bacterial Wilt
- ◆ Downey Mildew
- ◆ Powdery Mildew
- ◆ Mosaic Virus

For more information on the control of pests and diseases, please contact the Plant Protection Unit at Tel: 456-1283 or talk with you Agricultural Extension Officer.

WEED CONTROL:

Water melon cannot completed with weeds. Weeds cause weaker plants, encourage pests and diseases and reduce the amount of sunshine available to the crop. While hand-weeding may appeal to most persons, the following chemicals can be used effectively:

Pre-emergence: Dacthal

Post-emergence: Fusillade controls grasses for 3-6 wks.