

## GROWING MELONS IN SANTA COUNTY

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Male Flowers



Female Flowers

### MELONS

The term "melon" refers to members of the cucurbitaceae and pepoideae species. Melons (Cucumis melo) include cantaloupe, muskmelon, Hammons, cantarone, Astoria, honeydew, honey dew, charentais, Persian, shelling and orange melons. Watermelon and other melons are a different species (Citrullus vulgaris).

**WATER MELON:** Cuts "seed classes", early" or "late season" varieties are used in large watermelons. Locally successful kinds include Arkansas Wonder Hybrid, First Choice Hybrid, Niagara, Honey Hybrid, Honeydew, Honey Love, Honeydew Hybrid, Phoenix Hybrid, Niagara, Stone and Early, and Texas Hybrid. Watermelons require more heat than cantaloupe. Try early, hybridized watermelons (see link on New Hampshire Melons).

**Requirements:** Melons require consistent but variable hot sunny growth and spacing. Melons are sensitive to frost and require lots of sun. However, Santa County weather makes this year to year, and in different locations within the county, most growers have varied experiences producing melons. While most years are "good", in other years melons have difficulty ripening. Melons require consistent watering and fertilizing at moderate levels and are sensitive to stress from root rot in heavy soils. Best soil required is fertile, well-drained, sandy loam or loess. This producing flowers (and fruit) are the only. While flowers do not set fruit, melons may be affected with insects, but with consistent, moderate pumping.

**Soil Preparation and Fertilizing:** Double-dig for rows and will plant in ridges. Before planting (and 7-11-19 fertilizer), or equivalent, turn the soil at the rate of 1/2 pounds per 100 square feet. Give a second application of fertilizer in a furrow about 4 feet away from the row when melons are about 4 feet long. A third application can be made after the first harvest is. Fertilize only flowering and fruiting by shading transplants. For one inch (one inch) per 100 ft<sup>2</sup> weeks before setting out into the field. Melons make generous use of soil temperature above 70 degrees F. Fertilizing a 4 inch water of these plants like an improved ground will help water it and promote rapid early growth before the plants and weeds that may have started when they begin to set. Melons are planted with 100 to 150 per acre and 100 per acre.

