

# Muskmelon, Oriental

## Varieties

Contact Manitoba Agriculture and Food's Vegetable Specialist for variety recommendations.

## Spacing

In row spacing between 18 to 24 inches (45-60 cm) and between row spacing of 60-72 inches (150-180 cm). Plant population should be between 3,600-5,500 plants/acre.

## Planting

Muskmelons are extremely frost sensitive. Transplants are a must for muskmelons to reach maturity in Manitoba. Start transplants indoors on April 15 for field planting in late May to early June. For earlier maturity, the use of black plastic mulch is recommended to increase soil temperature and retain soil moisture. The use of plastic mulch also helps to control weed populations. Transplants should be hardened off for two to three days prior to being placed out in the field.

## Soil and Fertility

Muskmelons grow best on well drained sandy to silty loams, but will produce adequately on well drained heavier textured soils. The optimum soil pH is 6.0 – 6.8.

For specific fertility recommendation have your soil tested. Samples should be taken at depths of 0-6 inches (0-15 cm) and 6-24 inches (15-60 cm)

For general fertility recommendation refer to Muskmelons, Table 10, in the *Guide to Vegetable Crop Production 2003*.

## Irrigation

Muskmelons require an average of 1 inch (25 mm) of water per week. During flowering irrigation should be scheduled so as not to interfere with bee activity and pollination in the morning and early afternoon.

## Soil and Fertility Requirements

Optimum soil pH is 6.0-6.8.

## Pest Management

### Insects and Diseases

Melons, like cucumbers, are susceptible to a wide range of insect and disease problems. Refer to the *Guide to Vegetable Crop Protection 2003* for registered insecticide and fungicides/bactericides.

### Weeds

Refer to the *Guide to Vegetable Crop Protection 2003* for recommended herbicides.

## Harvest and Post Harvest

Days to maturity 70-80 days from transplant. Melons are harvested at full slip, when gentle pressure applied between the fruit and stem base allows easy separation.

Muskmelons should be removed from the field and cooled as soon as possible, and can be held at 10° – 12°C. Storage temperature below 10°C can cause chilling injury.