

# How to Grow Cantaloupe and Melons



You may grow Cantaloupe in the vegetable garden. But, no doubt about it.....they're a fruit. And a deliciously juicy fruit at that! Also, they are called melons and Muskmelons, and they are a crop that requires a lot of garden space, and warm temperatures. This versatile fruit is so tasty, that it's served at breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack time, too. Cantaloupe has a sweet, musky taste, and is mouth watering delicious. It's popular in the home garden, but requires a lot of space. Is your garden space limited? Try the "bush" types that grow on shorter, more compact vines.

We recommend growing a few cantaloupes, and some Honey Dew melons. The combination looks and tastes great.



## How to Grow Cantaloupe and Melons:

Cantaloupe prefers full sun and a rich soil. They like warm weather. Soil should be kept moist. You will want to plant cantaloupe after the last frost in your area, when the soil begins to warm. Planting in "hills" is common. Sow cantaloupe and melon seeds four to six seeds per hill. Sow 1/2 to 1 inch deep. Space the hills four to six feet apart. If you choose not to hill, sow seeds three to four inches apart. Row spacing should be five to six feet. Seedlings can be started indoors. We recommend using peat pellets to help to minimize transplant shock. After germination, thin and keep the three or four healthiest plants. The more compact "bush" types may tolerate closer spacing. Fertilize plants regularly. Plants need a lot of water. Give them a good soaking once or twice a week. Train vines, as needed to keep them from crossing over each other. Be vigilant to insect and disease problems. Treat problems early. Melons are a tender annual. Frost will quickly kill the plants. If frost is predicted, cover the plants.



## Harvesting:

Days to Maturity: Approximately 75 to 95 days, depending upon variety. Melons are ripe when the stem begins to dry out. The end of the melon is soft when pressed with your thumb. A melon is over ripe when it is soft all over. Melons can be picked just prior to ripening. Melons store unrefrigerated for about a week, and keep for weeks in your refrigerator.



## Insects, Pests, and Disease:

Among the most common insect problems are the cucumber beetle and the squash vine borer. Of these, borers are the most damaging. Read insecticide labels to make certain it is effective against borers. Treatment before the emergence of insects is recommended.