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# How to Grow Honeydew Melon Plants: The Complete Guide



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# Planting, Growing, and Caring for Honeydew Melons

By [Andy Wilcox](#)

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personal-sized compared to a watermelon.

Learn how to plant, grow, and care for  
tasty honeydew.

## About Honeydews

Sweeter than cantaloupes and muskmelons,  
with firmer flesh, honeydews are a summer-  
time favorite for those in the know.

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Unfortunately, the selection at the grocery  
store can be slim, and depending on the area,  
you may not find any at the farmer's market  
(or someone beat you to them). Fortunately,  
they are easy to grow at home.

While melon seedlings can sometimes be  
found at garden centers in spring, these fruits  
are so easy to grow, so there really isn't much  
reason not to plant them from seed. You'll  
save money and have a much more extensive  
selection of honeydew varieties to choose  
from. Order your seeds early; the best honey-  
dew melon varieties often sell out quickly.

Honeydews, like many cucurbits, can have is-  
sues with wilts and mildews. Fortunately, dis-  
ease-resistant varieties are available to help  
mitigate the issue. If your area commonly has  
problems with powdery mildew or bacterial

gardener's chapter or the County Extension  
agent near you.

#### ADVERTISEMENT



*Honeydew melon growing in grow bags.*  
Credit: R.Nithat

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- [Seed Libraries at Public Libraries Are Growing](#)

**DI ANTINC**

Honeydews love light, slightly sandy, well-drained soil but still need moisture. A neutral pH of about 7.0 is ideal. Add a bit of compost for some fertility—melons are heavy feeders.

Plant them in a sunny spot in hills, with room to spread. Alternatively, they can be trained to climb a trellis, but you'll want to support the melons as they form. Vertical melons make a dramatic garden focal piece and save space.

### **When to Plant Honeydews**

Plant honeydew melons about two weeks after your last frost once the soil has warmed. If starting seeds indoors, 2 to 3 weeks before your last frost is sufficient. Trying to transplant melons older than four weeks can stress them, and you don't want melons crawling all over your seed starting area.

### **How to Plant Honeydews**

Honeydews are typically direct-seeded right into the garden, but you can also start them inside a few weeks before your last frost to give them a head start.

## ADVERTISEMENT

**To plant honeydews:**

- Prepare the soil by adding some compost and working in, building small hills a bit bigger than a dinner plant and several inches tall.
- Sow seeds  $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 inch deep in hills, 3-4 seeds per hill.
- Space hills about 36 inches apart.
- Thin to 1-2 plants per hill after the first true leaves have shown. Use scissors to snip them off and avoid damaging the remaining plants' root systems.

**Tip:** *If transplanting melons grown inside, take care not to disturb the roots. Harden them off like other seedlings and wait to transplant until about two weeks after your last frost date.*

## GROWING

Honeydews will spread and sprawl around like other melons. Be sure to give them enough space.

- Mulch under/around your melons to keep the weeds down and the soil moist. A layer of mulch will also reduce soil splash, which can carry wilt diseases, and give your melons a nice dry spot to lay on as they grow. They'll be clean and attractive.
- Keep the soil moist when the plants are young. Dig your finger under the mulch. If the soil feels dry and warm, turn on the irrigation.
- Don't provide extra water after fruits are softball-sized (unless the vines are wilting or you're in a drought). Overwatering can lead to bland fruit.

## Types

- 'Snow Leopard' is a more petite, personal-sized melon, with fruits averaging about two pounds. It has small, dark green varie-

- ‘Earli-Dew’ is an early-ripening variety with a short season for northern gardeners. Ready in about 80 days.
- ‘Full Moon’ is a strong-performing hybrid melon with larger 3-4 pound fruits that are creamy white on the outside and pale green on the inside.
- ‘Sweet Reward’ is a canary yellow hybrid with large 5-pound fruits and super-sweet flesh. Great for smoothies.

## HARVESTING

- Honeydews are ready to harvest when they have turned a creamy white—for white versions—or a bright yellow for other varieties.
- They should be firm and heavy for their size, and the stem end should yield slightly when pressed.
- You’ll need a knife to cut the stem. Honeydews don’t pull free or “slip” from their vines until they are overripe.
- Honeydew melons can be stored after cut-



or cut up and frozen in freezer bags for mood-lifting winter smoothies and treats.

## GARDENING PRODUCTS



## PESTS/DISEASES

- [Powdery mildew](#)
- [Fusarium wilt](#)
- [Cucumber beetles](#)

## WIT AND WISDOM

- Not only are honeydews a refreshing treat on a summer day, but they are high in

- Honeydews like heat, so northern gardeners may need to start them early or use plastic mulch to warm the soil before and after planting.
- Honeydews need pollinators for fruit sets, so if you use row covers to protect from insects, you'll need to remove them when the flowers open.

## FRUIT

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Andy Wilcox



Andy Wilcox is a flower farmer and master gardener with a passion for soil health, small producers, forestry, and horticulture. [Read More from Andy Wilcox](#)

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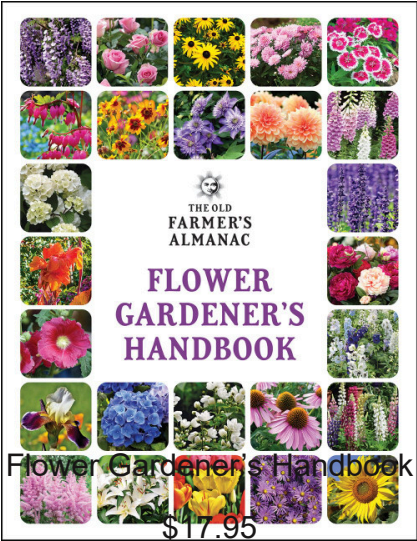
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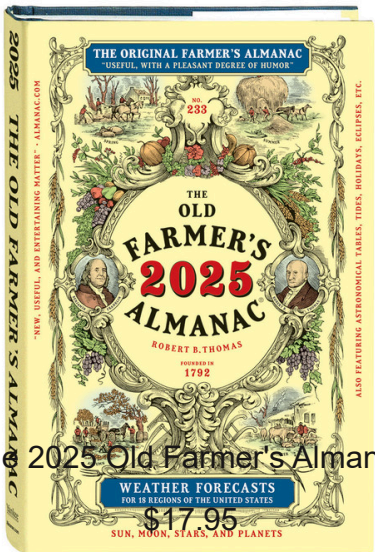
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