

Can you grow Australia's heaviest Watermelon?



Yates

Watermelon Challenge



Junior Landcare



PROJECT KIT

What you will need

- A vege patch
(or similar area suitable for growing watermelons)
- Gardening Gloves
- Shovel and spades
- Watermelon seeds
(You will receive these in the post in October if you have registered your participation in the challenge on www.juniorlandcarechallenge.com.au. In fairness to all participants only the Yates Candy Red variety are eligible for this competition)
- Watering Can/ Bucket and Water
- Sturdy Shoes
- Hat and sunscreen



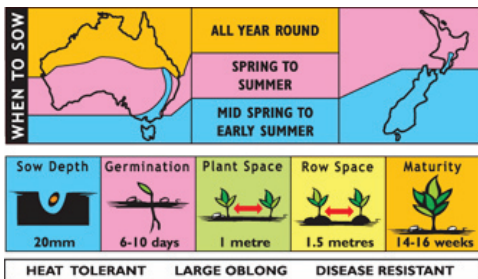
Planting Guidelines

Watermelons need plenty of warm weather so choose a sunny spot in the garden and plant during Spring to give them maximum exposure.

We recommend planting your watermelon seeds as soon as possible after you receive them in the post.

Watermelons need plenty of room to grow so build the soil up into mounds approximately 1 – 1.5 metres apart.

Water the top of the mounds well and then while the soil is still moist, sow three or four seeds in the top of each mound approximately 2cm deep and water gently again.



Soil Preparation

Soil makes it possible for plants to grow. Soil supply nutrients, water and other elements to growing plants – check out our soil factsheet on our website for more info. Healthy plants need healthy soil so before we even begin planting we must ensure that our soil is in top condition.

It is a good idea to dig some compost, animal manure (eg Yates dynamic lifter) or blood and bone meal (eg Yates Blood & Bone) into your soil to provide the most nutritious environment for your watermelons to grow.



Pollination

Watermelons have male and female flowers but only the female flowers will grow melons. Female flowers have a miniature melon at the base.

In order for the female flower to grow a melon it must receive some pollen from a male flower.

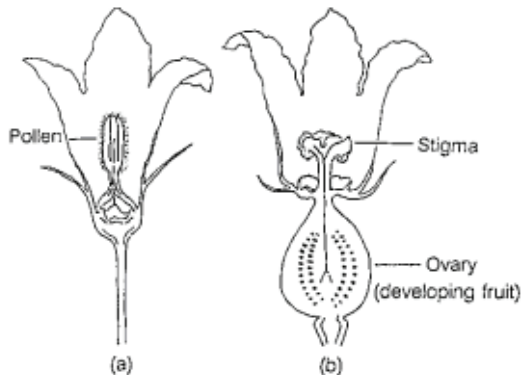


Figure 1. Typical male (a) and female (b) watermelon flowers.

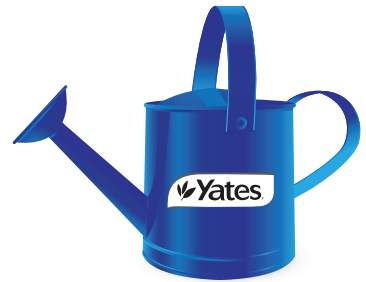
This is called pollination. In nature female flowers are pollinated by bees which deposit male flower 'pollen' onto the 'stigma' of the female flower. If you want to, you can help to pollinate the female flowers by using a paintbrush to gently remove pollen from a male flower (the ones without the mini melon at the base) and brushing it into the middle of a female flower. See diagram of watermelon flowers above.

Growing Guidelines

After the seedlings come up (6- 10 days) decide which are the two strongest and pull out any others. This will give those two plants enough room to grow.

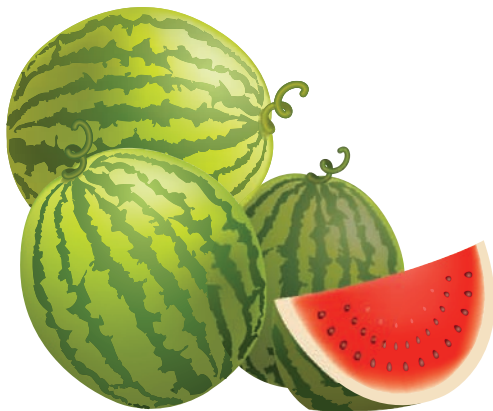
Plants need nutrients to grow - just like people. You may like to feed your watermelons every two weeks with some fertiliser (eg. Yates Thrive Soluble Plant Food).

Keep your watermelon plant well watered. It's best to water in the morning at the base of the plant where it meets the soil, keeping the leaves as dry a possible. Once a melon is full sized you can give it less water – it will become sweeter.



Harvesting

Pick your melon when its underside turns a yellow or cream colour and it makes a hollow sound when you slap it.



Store your watermelon in a cool dry place until Monday 5th March. If you are selected as a finalist you will need to present your watermelon for verification by a Landcare or Yates representative.

Tips for Growing Giant Watermelon

Put some mulch around the melon, covering the surrounding soil, with plastic. This will warm the soil and help absorb the heat (especially helpful in cooler areas). Other suitable mulches are straw or compost.

Fertilise every 2 weeks with Yates Thrive Soluble Plant Food at half strength. Change to Yates Thrive Flower & Fruit when the plant starts to flower.

Only allow each plant to develop one melon – that way it will concentrate all its energy on that fruit.

Water well when young and reduce watering when the melon is a good size.



Remember – Wash your hands well after gardening. Wear shoes to protect your feet. Wear a hat and sunscreen.

Monitoring

You will need to monitor the progress of your watermelon growing and record its weight and circumference measurements on the upload zone on our watermelon challenge website to stand a chance of winning the competition.

To enter the creative photo category, upload your best watermelon photo. You can log into our website anytime after October 2011 and upload photos of your watermelon as it's growing to show us its progress.

To be eligible to go into the running to win one of the awesome prizes be sure to enter your final measurements before the challenge closes at 5pm (EST) on Friday 24th February 2012.

Important Dates

2011 - July 4th

Registrations open.

2011 - September 25th

Registrations close 5pm (EST).

2011 - October

Seeds posted out early this month.

2012 - February 24th

Final measurements must be logged into the secure zone of the website.

2012 - February and March

Finalists will be verified by a Landcare or Yates representative.

2012 - March 5th

Winners will be announced.

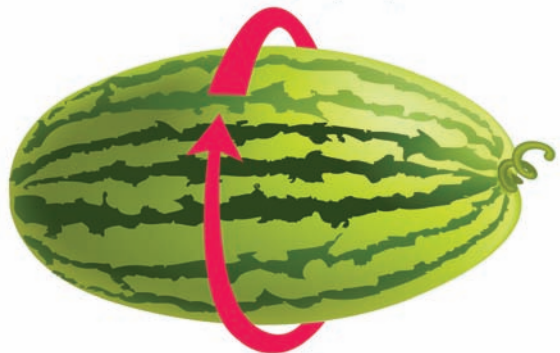


Judging Criteria

Judging criteria will be based solely on the weight of the watermelon.

In the event that two or more watermelons are the same weight judges will also use circumference measurements to establish the winner.

Measure the **widest** part of your watermelon's circumference in centimetres(cm)



Prizes

Individual/Family Prize



Nintendo Wii
Mario bundle
+ Yates garden
pack
+ Junior Landcare
goodie bag

School/Youth Group Prize



Sony Camcorder
with built in
projector
+ Yates garden
pack
+ Junior Landcare
goodie bag

Creative Photo Category Prize



DMAG 1-year
subscription
+ Yates garden
pack
+ Junior Landcare
goodie bag

The 2011 Watermelon Challenge is proudly sponsored by:

