PLANT FACT SHEET

Cucumis melo L.

GENUS *Cucumis* **FAMILY** Cucurbitaceae

COMMON NAMES Melon, Canteloupe, Honey-dew

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Leaves, Vegetable

The ripe fruit are eaten raw. They are also dried, candied and made into jams, jellies and preserves.
The seeds are sometimes eaten. They are roasted. The seeds are blended with fruit juice to form a drink.
Sometimes the immature fruit are cooked as a vegetable.
The seeds contain an edible light oil.
The young leaves are eaten as a potherb.

DESCRIPTION

A pumpkin family plant. It is an annual climber with tendrils. It grows to 0.5 m high and spreads to 1.5 m across. The stems are soft and hairy and often angled. The leaves have lobes and often a wavy or toothed edge. They are on long leaf stalks. The leaves are often hairy underneath. The tendrils are not branched. The flowers are yellow and funnel shaped with expanded lobes. The male flowers occur in clusters and are produced before the female flowers. The fruit is round, mostly with a rough or streaky skin. It is green or yellow inside. The fruit is edible. Different kinds of melons occur. Some have a hard warty scaly skin. Others have a network of fine ridges over the surface.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is not suited to places with high rainfall. They suit hot dry places with a fertile well drained soil. It needs a sheltered sunny position. It is drought and frost tender. A temperature range of 24-28°C is best but much higher temperatures is tolerated. Mostly they are grown below 500 m altitude in the tropics. In PNG it has been recorded up to 2,100 m above sea level. A pH of 6-6.7 is best. Acid soils are not suitable. It can grow in deserts and arid places. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

They are grown from seed. The seeds are planted about 1-4 cm deep. Plants need to be 1-2 m apart. Seedlings can be transplanted when about 10-15 cm high.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants are ready 3-4 months after planting. Yields of 20 kg per10 sq m is average.

NOTES

There are about 25 Cucumis species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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