

JUNIOR JUBILEEE WATERMELON CONTEST

#JrJubilee2024

When & where to plant?

Jubilee Watermelons take about 90 days to produce a ripe melon, so be sure to plant no later than March 22nd. Since you can store a ripe melon for 1-2 weeks in a cool place you might consider staggering planting dates to give you more watermelons to choose from for your contest submission!

Pick a place to plant your seeds with lots of sunlight (6+ hours/day), well-drained soil, and enough space for runners to spread 5-feet!

Garden beds:

Loosen soil in bed and mix in 2 to 3-inches of compost.

Create 6 to 10-inches tall x 3-feet wide flat top mounds.

Mulch beds with black plastic or groundcover cloth or 2-3-inches wood mulch. Mulch warms the soil and reduces weeds.

Plant 5 or 6 seeds spaced evenly around each mound (if using cloth or plastic mulch cut a 3-inch diameter circle before planting seeds).

Raised bed or container planting:

Use raised bed soil or potting soil for best results.

If your mix does not contain fertilizer, add at the rate in instructions on fertilizer label.

Plant 2 seeds 1-inch deep, 2-inches apart.

Fertilizing

It's hard to be specific about exactly how to best fertilize your watermelon plants. Every soil is different and there are many kinds of fertilizers, but most types can be effective if used properly.

If your fertilizer comes with directions for your growing environment (in the ground, raised bed, container, etc.) follow those directions.

If there are no directions to follow, call us at 850-638-6180 and we can help.

Getting the fertility just right is key to growing big melons and figuring out what works best for you and your plants is part of the fun!

Basic tips regarding fertilizer:

1) You'll need to incorporate some fertilizer in the soil/growing medium before you plant (unless it is already in your potting mix).

2) Your plants will need to be "side dressed" with more fertilizer about 30 days after sprouting.



JUNIOR JUBILEE WATERMELON CONTEST

#JrJubilee2024

Watering

Water regularly but make sure the soil is draining and not staying wet. Try to water under the leaves instead of on top to reduce disease.

Remember water roots not leaves!

Thinning plants and fruit

About 2 weeks after sprouting (when seedlings are 4 to 5-inches tall) remove the weakest plants by pinching/cutting the tops off. Crowded plants do not perform well so this gives the strongest ones more space to thrive.

On mounds, leave the 3 strongest plants; in pots/raised beds choose one of each pair of seeds planted to keep.

As plants start to flower, start watching for small watermelons to form. Remove all but 1 or 2 per plant. This lets the plant put more energy into a larger melon!

As the watermelons start to get larger make sure they are not in a position to put strain on the vine - you might need to adjust so that the melon does not come away from the vine before it is ready to pick.

Pests

Check regularly for insects or disease - if you need help call us at 850-638-6180.

Keep your beds weed free taking care not to damage watermelon vines.

Harvest

About 80 to 90 days after planting, watermelons will begin to ripen. Check for ripeness by looking at the tendril closest to the melon - when it turns brown the watermelon is ripe. Pick ripe watermelons and store in a cool place until ready to eat or submit for your festival entry!

Share your progress on social #JrJubilee24

**Submit up to 2 entries with Log Sheet
at the Washington County Agriculture Center
1424 Jackson Ave, Chipley, FL
Wednesday, June 19th 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. CDT or
Thursday, June 20 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. CDT**

*2024 Panhandle Watermelon Festival
Chipley, FL
June 21-22, 2024*

<https://www.panhandlewatermelon.com/>

