

Honeydew Melons



In 2005, Yuma County melon growers produced over 750 acres of honeydew melons valued at over \$5.2 million.

Honeydew melons, like all melons, are members of the cucurbit (gourd) family along with squash and cucumber.

Honeydews are thought to have their roots in West Africa and were first cultivated over 4000 years ago.

The United States ranks third behind China and Turkey in honeydew production.

Arizona ranks second in honeydew production behind California.

Yuma County is the number one producer of honeydew melons in Arizona.

Per capita consumption of honeydew melons has increased each decade since the 1960's.

The Northeast consumes 3 times the amount of honeydew melon than those in the Southeast.

The average honeydew melon weighs about 6 pounds.

Honeydew is the sweetest of all melons and is a good source of vitamin C and potassium.

An average person consumes about 3 pounds of honeydew per year.

Honeydews require sunny, hot, dry days to ripen properly.

Honeydew melons are harvested about 3 months after planting.

Bees are necessary for pollination and proper fruit set.

According to a USDA, an estimated 30 percent of honeydews are consumed away from home in restaurants.

Honeydew melons have a smooth, white to greenish-white rind and have either a green or white flesh.

A popular breakfast and salad bar item, the consumption of honeydew is nearly twice as large as for either cantaloupe or watermelon.

As with cantaloupe, the emergence of year-round demand has helped fuel a large demand for imported melons, primarily during the winter months.

From December to April, honeydew availability in the United States depends almost entirely on imports from Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Honduras.

Honeydews are ready to harvest when the rind turns completely white or yellow.

Unlike cantaloupes, honeydew melons will not separate easily from the vine when mature.

Mature honeydew melons will continue to ripen for several days at room temperature after they are picked.

Immature melons will not ripen after being harvested from the vine.

Honeydew vines produce both female and male flowers.

Each vine produces from 3 to 4 fruit.

Melons retain best quality for up to 21 days following harvest.

Only female flowers can develop into melons.

Female flowers are distinguished from male flowers by the tiny bulb at the base of the flower.

Honeydews are a versatile treat and used as an ingredient in salads, side dishes, entrees and even drinks.

There are two types of honeydews, one with green flesh and the other with orange flesh.

Honeydew melons are fat and cholesterol free, low in sodium, and high in vitamin C.

Honeydew is one of the few melons that can continue to ripen once picked.

Honeydew should be kept cool but should not be chilled as the fruit is injured when stored at near freezing temperatures.

Honeydew takes relatively longer than most melons to ripen. When fully ripe, the flesh turns from green to white, is exceptionally juicy and has a melt-in-your-mouth texture.

Honeydews are also known as Temptation Melons.

Many melons originated in the Middle East and gradually spread its popularity across Europe. Honeydew melon seeds were transported to the United States by Columbus and eventually cultivated by Spanish explorers in California.

Honeydew melons are in the same gourd family as squashes and cucumbers. Most melons have similar structure to winter squash with thick flesh and inner seed-filled midsection.

The sweetest of all the melons and averaging five to six pounds, honeydew melons have a creamy yellow rind when ripe and pale green flesh. It's best from June through October, but is available year round.

Honeydew melons are related to squash and cucumbers, and are thought of as vegetable, but botanically speaking they are fruit.

Honeydew melon can be eaten fresh raw as is or in fruit salads and drinks.

This sweet, succulent member of the muskmelon family was prized by ancient Egyptians thousands of years ago, and ages before that in Persia, where the muskmelon is thought to have originated. Luckily for American honeydew enthusiasts, the melons are now grown in all parts of the Southwest including Yuma, Arizona.

The slightly oval honeydew is distinguished by a smooth, creamy-yellow rind and pastel green flesh that's extraordinarily juicy and sweet. It ranges in weight from 4 to 8 pounds.

Perfectly ripe honeydews will have an almost indistinguishable wrinkling on the skin's surface, often detectable only by touch. Choose one that's very heavy for its size. Underripe melons can be ripened at room temperature. Wrap ripe melons in a plastic bag and refrigerate up to 5 days.

A faint sweet smell indicated ripeness. Blossom end (the end opposite the stem) should be slightly soft.

Like most melons, honeydews taste better if left unrefrigerated for a few days. Whole ones keep fresh for up to one week when refrigerated. Store cut melons with seeds in plastic bags. Eat within a few days.

You may eat every part of a melon, even the peel. Seeds can be dried, roasted, or pressed into seed oil. Honeydew melon rind can be cooked or pickled.

Quality honeydew melons are waxy yellow color on the outer skin. Avoid honeydew melons that are too firm or too soft. Also avoid if you detect dark bruising or green colored skin. The stem area should be slightly soft.

Honeydew is a great source of foliate that has become well known for its power to forbid birth defects and is of great importance to women of childbearing age.

Honeydew melon is fat-free, cholesterol free, low in sodium, yet delivers 100 percent on the critical energy component found in functional foods.

The nutritional value of honeydew melon makes it an excellent choice for both weight control and general health. Honeydew melon helps prevent cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancer.

Honeydew melon belongs to the *Cucumis melo* which includes the crenshaw, casaba and other mixed melons.

Honeydews are harvested by maturity and not by size. Maturity is difficult to judge because no clear abscission (slip, separation) from the vine occurs. Maturity classes are grouped predominantly by changes in 'ground color' from greenish to cream with yellow accents. Mature fruits are well-shaped nearly spherical and uniform in appearance.

Storage life is typically 12-15 days at 45°F for up to 21 days.

Source authorities vary in the reported optimum storage and shipping temperatures for honeydew melons. Most recommendations use 45°F as the optimum handling conditions.

Fresh-cut honeydew melons rapidly absorb odors.

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