

Rockmelon

Cucumis melo · *Cucurbit* family

DIFFICULTY Moderate
TYPE Annual, warm-season trailing vine
MATURITY 12–14 weeks



SUN
Full sun



WATER
Regular, eased
off near ripening



SOIL PH
6.0–7.0



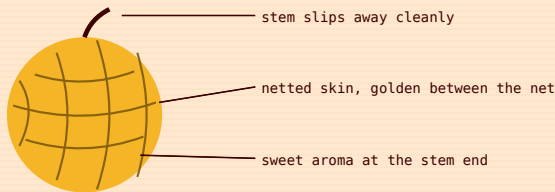
SPACING
60–90cm apart,
1.5m between
rows



DEPTH
2cm

01 Ripe and ready

Rockmelon (cantaloupe) is a “slip” melon: when it is ripe the stem lets go of the fruit with a gentle push. The netting stands out and the skin turns golden between the net, with a sweet aroma at the stem end.



02 Planting

METHOD	Sow 2–3 seeds per mound into warm soil, or in pots 3–4 weeks earlier in cooler areas, then thin to the strongest.
SOIL	Rich, free-draining loam with plenty of compost, on raised mounds.
TIMING	Sow once soil is above 18°C — September to December in most zones, from August in the subtropics.
SPACE	Allow about 1.5 m ² per plant, or trellis the vines and sling the fruit.

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

04 Problems

- **Powdery mildew** — white coating on leaves in warm, humid weather; water at soil level and avoid crowding.
- **Downy mildew** — yellow angular leaf spots with grey fuzz beneath after wet weather; improve airflow and remove badly affected leaves.
- **Fruit flies** — sting developing fruit; bag or net fruit and clear fallen produce.
- **Fruit rot** — fruit resting on wet soil rots from below; mulch or sit fruit on a tile or board.

03 Growing care

- Water regularly at the base, easing off as fruit ripens so flavour concentrates.
- Mulch to keep fruit off damp soil, which reduces rot.
- Feed with compost at planting and a potassium-rich feed once fruit forms.
- Pinch out vine tips once several fruit have set.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Stem slips from the fruit with gentle pressure, netting is raised, skin turns golden and the stem end smells sweet.
METHOD	Lift the fruit; ripe ones slip cleanly from the vine. If you have to tug, it is not ready.
CURING	None needed; fruit softens a little after picking but gets no sweeter.
STORAGE	Whole: about a week at room temperature, 1–2 in the fridge. Cut: 3–4 days, wrapped. Cubes freeze for smoothies.
PRESERVING	See Dehydrating (drying rockmelon pieces as a chewy snack) for ways to keep a harvest surplus.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY	AVOID NEARBY	ROTATION NOTE
Corn Nasturtium Radish	Potato	Avoid following any cucurbit for 3–4 years to limit wilt and mildew.