

Starting Triploid (seedless) Watermelon Seed

Two general methods that have been used successfully by growers are as follows:

A. T Jiffy-7 peat pellet – no soil necessary

1. Place 2 seeds of seedless and one seed of pollinator per expanded pellet.
2. Make certain the seed are pushed far down into the pellet.
3. Keep pellet moist after planting but do not over water during the first 72 hours.
4. Keep in a warm room for about 7 days at 75 – 80 degrees F.
5. When first sprouting is observed, remove to full sunlight.
6. Prevent seedling elongation by providing full sunlight and somewhat lower temperatures.
7. After 20 – 25 days set plants into field.
8. Liquid fertilizer is recommended at the time of transplanting.
9. Select seedless fruit by distinguishing differences from pollinator.
10. Only vine-ripened seedless fruit will give good quality melons.
11. Always provide sufficient pollination. The method of seeding gives adequate pollinators for this process (2-1 ratio seedless and pollinator).

B. Peat pots and compost prepared by the grower.

1. Place 2 seedless seeds and 1 pollinator per pot (3"x3"x4").
2. Use fumigated soil that has been thoroughly moistened.
3. Lay seed on surface of moist, fumigated, composted soil.
4. Cover with 1" of pure sand, preferable sterile.
5. If compost is very moist do not add water for the first 72 hours.
6. Keep pots at temperatures of 75 – 80 degrees F.
7. After first seedlings appear, water by sub-irrigation. Do not allow pot to stand in water. Avoid top watering.
8. Give as much full sunlight as possible and somewhat lower temperatures, this is better than continued dark and high temperatures.
9. After 20-25 days set plants in field. Do not allow top edge of peat pot to remain exposed to air above soil.
10. Liquid fertilizer is recommended at time of transplanting.
11. Pick only vine-ripened fruits and select the seedless by the distinguishing differences from the pollinator.
12. Good pollinator populations are necessary, and this method provides the necessary pollination (2-1 ratio seedless and pollinator).

- Any diploid watermelon (open pollinated or hybrid) will work as a pollinator. Most prefer recognizable differences to help in the harvest selection.
- Most failures in starting plants are related to too much water.