

Winter Squash or Pumpkin

1. Climatic Conditions:

Winter squash is a grown generally in Rainy & Winter season crop. The best sowing times are June-Sept & January in India. It grows well in warm & humid conditions. Under very hot & dry climate, the growth of plant is restricted & fruit setting is affected resulting in poor yields. Also such climate can be conducive for development of certain viruses.

2. Soil Requirement:

Muskmelon thrives best on sandy or sandy loam soil with pH 6 to pH 6.8, good fertility and drainage. The location should be free from nematode and disease.

3. Planting:

It can be sown directly by dribbling the seed 1inch on raised bed or seedlings can be prepared & transplanted after 15-20 days. Spacing is important factor. As the plant grows well, row to row distance can be 5m, while plant to plant can be 60-75cm. The beds shall be properly pulverized for easy growth of roots.

4. Fertilizer Requirement:

Per acre dose is as follows. Apply 8-10 tons of well decomposed compost in the beds & mix well. Apply fertilizer like DAP 100Kg + MOP 50kg as basal dose. Side dress with Ammonium sulphate 50Kg when plant is at 8-10 leaf stage. Again side dress with 10:26:26 100kg along with secondary nutrients mix 10kg & micro-nutrient (mix) 2 Kg when flowering is started.

5. Irrigation:

As water content inside plant is more, it requires sufficient quantity of water. The amount & frequency of irrigation can be steadily increased during vegetative growth stage. During flowering & fruit setting, the water shall be controlled so that plant blooms well. Again amount & frequency of irrigation can be steadily increased during fruit development stage. Start reducing the water when majority of fruits attain maximum size & show maturity signs.

6. Plant Protection:

Generally the plant is strong as compare to other cucurbits. Still Insect pests like Leaf Miner, Fruit Fly, Aphids, Thrips, White Fly can attack. So preventive sprays of proper insecticides like Cartaf hydrochloride, Chlorpyrifos, Fipronil, Acephate, Acetamaprid can be conducted at right stage and curative sprays can be given if infestation is above ETL.

In rainy season, there are chances to develop diseases like Blight & Downy Mildew, for which preventive sprays of Bavisteen, M-45, COC can be conducted. In cool season, Powdery Mildew can be controlled with Benomyl, Sectin, etc.

7. Harvesting & Yield:

It takes 40-60 days from flowering to harvesting depend on the variety & season. The fruit stalk shows drying symptoms and also leaves start drying when maturity approaches. When colour of fruits starts changing, the fruit can be harvested. There are 3 to 6 fruits per plant depend on the

variety. The fruit has good shelf life if stored in cool & dry place. If stored properly, it can be kept for 2-4 months and marketed when prices are good in market.

Note: The above information is provided based on research and field observation. Variations in local condition may affect the information and suggestions contained above and for which the company should not be held liable. In case of doubt, it is recommended to carry out ordinary trial production in order to test local growing condition in different seasons and area.