

GROWING CANTALOUPE IN THE PALO VERDE VALLEY

1956 1953

GENERAL: Cantaloupes are well adapted to the desert area, which is noted for the early production of melons of excellent quality.

YIELDS: Yields of about 160 crates per acre are average for this area.

SOIL REQUIREMENTS: Loam soils well supplied with organic matter are desirable for the production of maximum yields. Land that has been in alfalfa is especially suitable.

VARIETIES: Strains resistant to powdery mildew are desirable. Sulfur resistant varieties are grown to a limited extent.

PLANTING: Cantaloupes are direct-seeded by a planter mounted on the shaper, both operations (bed shaping and planting) being performed at the same time. Melons planted from December to about February 15 are capped. They should not be planted in the open until after the danger of frost is past. About 2 pounds of seed are required to plant an acre, with the seed being drilled-in in the south slopes of beds having 6 to 7 foot centers.

FERTILIZERS: Most soils in the area will require from 80 to 90 pounds of nitrogen and from 100 to 120 pounds of P_2O_5 for good production. Mixed fertilizers are the sources of nutrients generally used.

IRRIGATION: Cantaloupes growing on medium soils will require from 3 to 4 acre feet of water. The frequency of irrigation will depend on climatic conditions and soil type.

DISEASES AND INSECT PESTS AND CONTROLS: Powdery mildew, mosaic, and curly top are diseases which affect melon plants in the area. Resistance to powdery mildew occurs in some varieties, but the resistance is to only 1 or 2 strains of the fungus. Sulfur resistant varieties are available, which can be safely dusted with sulfur, which is a control for powdery mildew. Ovotran at rates used for mite control, or Karathane 0.75 to 1% dust at 30 - 40 lbs. per acre when properly applied are effective in mildew control. Insect pests attacking melon plants are darkling ground beetles, cucumber beetles, cutworms, thrips, leafminers, red spider, mites, leafhoppers, and nematodes. With the exception of nematodes, current crops can be treated with various insecticides for control of these pests.

HARVESTING: Cantaloupes are picked in the field at from one-half to three fourths slip for melons being shipped to distant markets, and at the full slip stage when destined for local markets. The melons are then hauled to sheds where they are graded, sorted and packed. Grading is according to size and stage of maturity. The California Agricultural Code requires that cantaloupes grown south and east of the San Geronio Pass must have 10% soluble solids (or have a full slip) in the flesh of the melons to be shipped.

NOTE: The costs indicated on the opposite side of this sheet are for a crop grown under caps and planted in December, hence the land is not double-cropped. The costs of cantaloupe production in this area, as in other early producing areas, will be affected by many factors.

AVERAGE PRICES RECEIVED BY CALIFORNIA PRODUCERS FOR SPRING CROP, PER 80# crate INCLUDES: CASABAS, CRANSHAW'S, MISCELLANEOUS MELONS.

1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
3.20	4.10	4.55	5.10	4.95

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WHAT WILL IT COST TO GROW CANTALOUPE IN THE PALO VERDE VALLEY

(Based on a Yield of 160 Crates Per Acre)

ITEMS	SAMPLE COSTS		YOUR COSTS	
	Per Acre	Per Crate	Per Acre	Per Crate
<u>Preparation and Planting</u>				
Knife	\$ 6.00		.....	.....
Disc 2x	4.00		.....	.....
Float or landplane 2x	2.00		.....	.....
Disc 2x	4.00		.....	.....
Pre-irrigate (includes build borders, pre-irrigate, level borders, disc 2x)	5.50		.....	.....
Build beds and plant (1 operation)	5.00		.....	.....
PREPARATION AND PLANT TOTAL	\$ 26.50	\$.17	.....	.....
<u>Cultural Labor and Field Power</u>				
Cap @ \$10/1000	\$ 41.58		.....	.....
Recap, remove caps, thin, recap	60.00		.....	.....
Recap - after wind damage	15.00		.....	.....
Removing caps and wires	5.00		.....	.....
Fertilize - preplant, sidedress, gas	6.00		.....	.....
Hoe and thin 2x	13.00		.....	.....
Vine turning	13.00		.....	.....
Irrigate 8x	12.00		.....	.....
Pest control 7x	17.00		.....	.....
Cultivate 5x.	10.00		.....	.....
Miscellaneous	4.00		.....	.....
CULTURAL TOTAL.	\$196.58	\$1.23	.....	.....
<u>Materials</u>				
Seed - 2 lbs. @ \$1.80	\$ 3.60		.....	.....
Fertilizer - 120% N and 120% P ₂ O ₅	29.00		.....	.....
Irrigation water.	5.00		.....	.....
Insecticides	17.00		.....	.....
Caps - @ \$8.25/1000	34.20		.....	.....
Wires	14.00		.....	.....
MATERIALS TOTAL	\$102.80	\$.64	.....	.....
<u>Cash Overhead</u>				
General expense @ 5% of above	\$ 16.24		.....	.....
County taxes - 100% to melons	6.00		.....	.....
Repairs	4.50		.....	.....
Compensation insurance	1.45		.....	.....
CASH OVERHEAD TOTAL.	\$ 28.19	\$.18	.....	.....
TOTAL CASH COSTS.	\$354.07	\$2.21	.....	.....
Land rent @ \$65.00 - 100% to melons	\$ 65.00	\$.41	.....	.....
TOTAL COST BEFORE HARVESTING	\$419.07	\$2.62	.....	.....
<u>Harvesting</u>				
Picking - varies - @ 26¢/crate.	\$ 41.60		.....	.....
Hauling to shed - varies - @ 12¢/crate.	19.20		.....	.....
Shed costs - varies - @ \$1.85/crate	296.00		.....	.....
HARVEST, HAULING, AND SHED COSTS TOTAL.	\$356.80	\$2.23	.....	.....
TOTAL ALL COSTS	\$775.87	\$4.85	.....	.....
*Transportation to New York @ \$2.28/crate (Doesn't include extra services enroute)	\$364.80	\$2.28	.....	.....