Honeydew

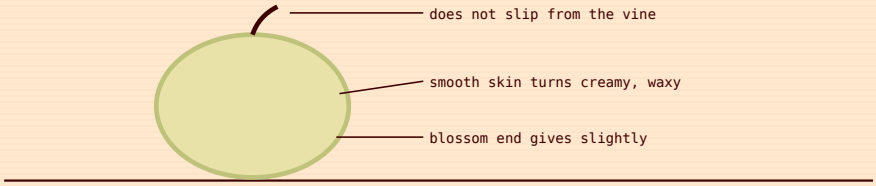
Cucumis melo · Cucurbit family

DIFFICULTY Moderate
TYPE Annual, warm-season trailing vine
MATURITY 14–16 weeks

SUN	WATER	SOIL PH	SPACING	DEPTH
Full sun	Regular, eased off near ripening	6.0–7.0	90cm apart, 1.5m between rows	2cm

01 Ripe and ready

Unlike rockmelon, honeydew does not slip from the vine. Judge it by skin colour, which turns from pale green to creamy yellow with a waxy feel, and by the slight give at the blossom 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 October to December in most zones, from September in the subtropics. It needs a long, warm season.
SPACE	Allow about 2 m² per plant; the fruit is heavy, so support it if trellised.

> 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.

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.
- Limit each vine to 2–3 fruit so each ripens fully.

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.
- **Fruit flies** — sting developing fruit; bag or net fruit and clear fallen produce.
- **Not ripening in time** — honeydew needs a long, hot season, and cool autumns can end it before the fruit is ripe; choose early varieties and sow on time.

Pest and disease pages: Fruit Fly, Powdery Mildew, Downy Mildew, Pumpkin Beetle. Pest and Disease Finder.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Skin turns from pale green to creamy yellow and waxy, and the blossom end gives slightly. It does not slip from the vine.
METHOD	Cut the stem with a sharp knife, leaving a short piece attached, once colour has changed.
CURING	May soften for a few days at room temperature but gets no sweeter.
STORAGE	Whole, ripe: 1–2 weeks in the fridge. Cut: 3–4 days, wrapped. Cubes freeze for smoothies.
PRESERVING	See Dehydrating (drying honeydew pieces as a chewy snack) for ways to keep a harvest surplus.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY
Corn · Nasturtium · Radish

AVOID NEARBY
Potato

ROTATION NOTE
Avoid following any cucurbit for 3–4 years to limit wilt and mildew.