# HYBRID WATERMELON

**Very Sweet, Crispy Flesh.**
**Resistant to Fusarium Wilt.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Growing Guideline Snapshot</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Seeds/g</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Seeds for Direct Sowing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended Sowing Depth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temperature range for Germination</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Days to Emergence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In Row spacing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Between Row spacing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temperature range for Growth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideal environment for growth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expected Yield</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average effective root depth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Optimal soil type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soil pH</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Water Requirement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly Water Requirement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideal storage regime: Temperature</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pests</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diseases</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physiological Disorders</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plant Nutrition: Nitrogen (N)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phosphorus (P)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potassium (K)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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INTRODUCING PATA NEGRA F1 AND SENTINEL F1 VARIETIES

**Pata Negra F1**
Introducing an early maturing dark green round variety with average fruit weights 7-10 Kg. The flesh is brilliant red, crisp and sweet. The variety is early maturing 100-120 days with average yield of 46 t/acre. Thick rind makes the variety for long keeping and good transportability. “High yielding round variety with excellent fruit features”

Features:
- Very high yielding with production potential of 46 t/acre
- Very sweet brilliant red, crisp flesh
- Early maturing variety 100-120 days
- Dark green round uniform fruit 7-10 kg in weight
- Very vigorous plant with good fruit cover
- Excellent transportability (Long distance shipper) due fruits have thick rind
- Variety tolerant to Fusarium wilt

**New watermelon variety SENTINEL F1**
High yielding Oblong to blocky shaped zebra variety

Features:
- Very high yielding 50t/acre
- Oblong- Blocky hybrid dark variety with vigorous vines
- Very sweet variety, deep red interior with crisp, juicy flesh
- Uniform fruit shape and weight of 11 to 14 Kg
- Thick fruit rind and shape make variety suitable for long distance shipping
- Tolerant to Fusarium wilt Race 1
- Maturity period of 100-120 days

GROWING WATERMELONS

**Climatic requirements**
- Require relatively hot dry weather conditions with enough sunlight
- Low humidity and little if any rain is also beneficial for this crop, high humidity leads to diseases and affect fruit quality and sweetness
- Temperature range from 180C to 380C
- Under these conditions the producer should obtain vigorous high yielding plants, with quality fruits containing high sugars.

**Soil requirements**
- Perform well on a wide range of soil types except for heavy clay soils, sandy loamy soils best.
- Watermelons require nutrient rich, deep well-drained soils that are free of nematodes
- Crop affected by Fusarium- grow resistant variety of observe a 7 years rotation program
- Wide pH range but optimum pH of 5.0-6.8 to ensure uptake of micronutrients.

**Seedbed preparation**
- Deep plough to break hardpans to enhance drainage and water percolation
- Recommend bed made 1,5m apart and 15-20cm high; if drip irrigation is used they are laid before the plastic mulch is put down.

**Fertilizer use**
- Soil analysis necessary to measure pH and level of each nutrients
- Liming keep the pH in check to prevent disorders like Blossom-end Rot.
- Nitrogen is usually applied in two applications, at the 2-4 leaf stage and the second when the vines start to develop.

**Spacing and irrigation**
- Plant population vary with fruit size required. Spacing of 100cm per 100cm adopted by mosts farmers
- Seed requirement of 400g per acre
- Higher populations are possible where drip irrigation and/or plastic mulches are used.
- Requires less irrigation as they have better root system, critical stage is during flowering and fruit set

**Flower and pollination**
- Pollination critical, place a beehive to guarantee pollination
- Pest control should be limited to protect the bees

**Pest and disease control**
- Melon fly and aphids are the greatest challenge. During flowering registered product for melon fly should be sprayed
- Diseases such as Alternaria, Fusarium, Antrachnose and powdery mildews challenging
- Control by use of registered products
- Resistant cultivars are available for this diseases
- Weeds managed by mechanical weeding avoid damaging the roots

**Harvesting and handling**
- Watermelons are harvested as close to full-ripeness as possible; this is when the fruit surface touching the soil is light yellow or when the vine closest to the fruit is starting to wilt
- The peduncle is cut off to prevent the peduncle from ripping into the skin of the fruit, which can result in secondary diseases.
- Watermelons are very prone to cracking or bursting during and after harvest due to rough handling.
- Watermelons should not be thrown during handling, stepped on or stacked too high.