

Elongated Seedless Watermelon Cultivar Trials for Southwestern Indiana, 2003

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Elongated seedless watermelon are an increasingly interesting part of the seedless watermelon market. This trial, along with the seeded (diploid) watermelon variety trial provides an objective and independent comparative assessment of new watermelons for the commercial industry. This study included 8 elongated seedless watermelon varieties.

Methods:

Seeds of 8 seedless watermelon cultivars were sown in the greenhouse on April 17 and transplanted on May 16 into a randomized complete block design with three replications. Charleston Elite was used as a pollinator and planted in every other row in a checker board pattern. Plots were single rows 40 ft. long, centered 6 ft. apart, and covered with 4 ft. black plastic mulch. Each plot had 10 plants four feet apart. The recommendations in the Midwest Vegetable Production Guide for Commercial Growers (ID-56, 2002) were followed for fertilization, weed, disease and insect control. Plots were harvested on August 7, 14, and 20. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Analysis Software (SAS) package (SAS Institute, Cary, NC). Trickle irrigation was used as necessary to provide ample water to the field plots.

Results and Conclusions:

Yields and Quality. Yields ranged from 23.7 to 38.5 tons/acre with 2541 to 4447 fruit/acre harvested across all entries (Table 1). The average weight of seedless fruit was 19.1 lbs/fruit with a range of 15.7 to 22.3 lbs/fruit. The highest yielding cultivar in this trial was Seedless Sangria. Elongated seedless watermelons could be a part of your melon production strategy as long as you have a market that will purchase the fruit at a higher price than the seeded watermelons.

Table 1. Comparison of Yield and Quality of Elongated Seedless Watermelon in Southwestern Indiana, 2003.

Cultivar	Seed source	Yield Cwt./A	Yield ^r Tons/A	Fruit No./A	Ave fruit weight lbs	% Germination 7 days after planting
Seedless Sangria	SY	770.0	38.5 a	3766	20.5	57
	SM	698.8	35.0 a	4447	15.7	37
Cooperstown	SU	696.5	34.8 a	3676	18.9	77
	SU	682.8	34.2 a	3802	17.9	42
Banner	SU	670.7	33.5 a	3570	18.8	38
	WI	667.7	33.4 a	2995	22.3	86
Freedom	SU	620.7	31.1 ab	3146	19.7	91
	SU	472.6	23.7 b	2541	18.6	76
WX 28	HZ					
SR 8026						
Vertigo						
Grand mean		660.0	33.0	3493	19.1	
LSD (5%)		172.4	8.6	862	1.1	
C.V. (%)		17.9	17.9	17	4.1	

^r Randomized complete block design: 3 replications.

^r Yield wt. (tons) averages spanned by the same letter are not significantly different.