

# Muskmelon Cultivar Trial - 2005

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The 2005 trial investigated the performance characteristics of eight muskmelon cultivars. Plots were transplanted to the field on May 13 and grown on clear plastic mulch with drip irrigation. Warm growing conditions promoted strong rapid vine growth but it wasn't a perfect growing season, hot temperatures during late June and July most likely contributed to a concentrated fruit set in most cultivars resulting in some huge pickings around July 20-24. Marketable yields were mostly good ranging from 359.5 cwt for *Aphrodite* to a high of 583.2 cwt for *Superstar* (Table 1). The first fruit were picked on July 12 and cultivars with significant early yield included *Aphrodite*, *Athena*, *Crescent Moon* and *Superstar*. Fruit were unusually large this season with *HMX 4587*, *Moneyloupe* and *Crescent Moon* producing the heaviest melons averaging seven pounds or better. Fruit from *Athena*, *Aphrodite*, *Eclipse* and *Moneyloupe* gave the highest soluble solids (sweetness) readings when tested with a refractometer.

## Cultivar observations and comments:

*Superstar* – top pick this year because of earliness, yield, distinctive ribbed shaped and sweet juicy flesh. The hot dry weather favored it – no disease or fruit cracking problems this season.

*HMX 2607* - strong yield of round, good-quality fruit with small cavities.

*Eclipse* – standard cultivar performed well, uniform fruit with nice size (avg. 6.5 lbs), good flavor.

*Aphrodite* – early maturity, large firm fruit, resistance to cracking, mediocre yields but not as prone to concentrated fruit set and short harvest season seen in other cultivars.

*HMX 4587* – very large fruit with round to elongated shape, low soluble solids.

*Moneyloupe* – full season shipper type, big oblong fruit, good eating characteristics when fully ripened. A few fruit developed soft ground spots which might be a problem in wet seasons.

*Crescent Moon* – large attractive fruit with prominent ribbing, but low soluble solids.

*Athena* – high quality fruit with good shelf life but size might be small for some markets.

## Materials and Methods

- Planting: Planted in greenhouse one seed per cell, 72 cell-pack, April 12, 2005.  
Transplanted to field on May 13.
- Plot Design: RCB, 3 reps. Plot = 1 row of eight hills 32" apart, rows 7' apart.
- Culture: Loamy sand soil type. Plants grown on black plastic mulch with drip irrigation. Fertilizer applied preplant incorporated under plastic mulch and through trickle tubes during growing season. Rates determined by soil and plant tests.
- Pesticides: Curbit, Sandea herbicide; Capture, Furadan, Sevin XLR insecticide; Bravo 720, Quadris fungicide.

Table 1. Muskmelon cultivar marketable yield and fruit characteristics.

Cultivar	Seed Source	Marketable Frt/Plant	Early Yield CWT/A <sup>1</sup>	Total Yield CWT/A <sup>1</sup>	Avg Frt Wt - lbs	% Soluble Solids
Superstar	HM	4.0	61.7	583.2	6.4	10.4
HMX 2607	HM	3.9	11.5	565.0	6.5	10.1
Crescent Moon	RU	3.5	56.5	551.3	7.0	8.7
HMX 4587	HM	3.1	0.0	537.9	7.8	8.7
Eclipse	SM	3.7	0.0	532.2	6.5	11.4
Moneyloupe	AC	2.6	6.4	463.4	7.6	11.1
Athena	RG	3.6	67.1	388.5	4.9	12.2
Aphrodite	RG	2.5	43.8	359.5	6.5	11.6
<i>Trial Avg</i>		3.4	30.9	494.3	6.7	10.5
<i>LSD 5%</i>			37.1	88.7	.8	

1. Early yield = harvest 7/12-7/18. Per acre yield based on plant population of 2,240.