

Melon Microgreens

An addition to the book,

Microgreen Garden:

Indoor Grower's Guide to Gourmet Greens

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Melon, specifically **Cantaloupe** (*Cucumis melo*)

Warm to Hot season crop.

Readily germinates but requires special consideration to grow.

Cultivar: Hales Best Jumbo, which yields a dark green microgreen.

Soaking: While not essential, soaking seeds for 8 hours before sowing will reduce germination time by 1 day. (Soaking longer than 8 hours does not significantly hasten germination.) For pint containers of soil, measure 2 teaspoons of seeds. For 10x10 inch (25x25cm) trays, 1/3 cup of seeds. The soak water sullies quickly, so when convenient flush the water and refill for a fresh bathe. No need to then sprout, for instance in a sprouting device, as sprouting before spreading on soil does not hasten germination.

Sowing: Spread soaked seeds evenly upon the soil, best if seeds do not touch each other. Place a lid or inverted tray atop the seeds to retain moisture. Place a weight atop the lid or tray to assure the roots will anchor. The weight need not be very heavy.

Germination: When cultivated at 85 degrees F (29.5 C), germination begins by Day 2. If at 80 degrees F (26.5 C), then germination will be delayed to Day 3, and so forth.

Growth: At 85 degrees F (29.5 C), on Day 3 seedlings will push up the lid and grow to 1 inch (2.5cm) tall. When the microgreens lift the lid, remove the lid, and thereafter expose to intense light for 16 hours a day. Only 2 days of such exposure to light will mature your microgreens for an early harvest on Day 5

Light: 18 hours light & 6 hours darkness will yield best and quickest results.

Harvest: If temperature is maintained at 85 degrees F, then only 5 days from soaking to sowing to first harvest. Peak flavor until 7 days. Can grow for several more days, but after 8 or 9 days that flavor begins to wane. True leaves do not appear until after 10 days. Distinct from sunflower, melon casts off nearly all the hulls from its cotyledon leaves. Little manual husking needed.

Flavor: Mildly sweet. Not quite like a melon, unless you let your imagination run wild. As with all microgreens, the alluring flavor is contained in the leaves, not in the stems, so intense light is necessary to assure broad leaves and short stems. Seed leaf stage is more tender and its flavor is stronger than true leaf stage.

Notes: Cultivation technique is much like for Sunflower greens. Same as Sunflower, Melon is a Warm to Hot season crop. While it can be cultivated at typical room temperature, Melon will take much longer to germinate and to grow.

Years ago, I tried growing from Honeydew and Cantaloupe seeds that I had gathered and dried from ripened fruits, but my results were dismal. From my limited experience with commercial sources for seeds, a specific cultivar of Cantaloupe, Hales Best Jumbo, that is marketed for growing microgreens proves an important factor for success.