



## OUTSTANDING QUALITIES

- ◆ HIGH YIELD POTENTIAL
- ◆ FIRM, SWEET FLESH
- ◆ EXCELLENT BRIX
- ◆ UNIFORM FRUIT SIZE

**Dulce Nectar** is an early maturing Honeydew type melon that is best suited for early and late season plantings, as well as for winter production in certain areas. The plants are vigorous with good leaf cover, protecting the fruit from the sun. **Dulce Nectar** has an excellent setting ability, with very high yields. Fruit are round to oval with an average fruit size of around 1.5 - 2.0 kg in the cooler seasons. The flesh is very firm and Brix levels are excellent. **Dulce Nectar** has high resistance to Fusarium wilt race 2 (Fom: 2) and intermediate resistance to Powdery mildew races 1 and 2 (Px: 1, 2) (ex Sf).

## SPECIAL VARIETAL REQUIREMENTS

- Recommended for early and late season plantings, as fruit could become very large during summer

CHARACTERISTIC*	DULCE NECTAR
KIND	F1 hybrid sweet melon ( <i>Cucumis melo</i> L.)
TYPE	Honeydew
MATURITY	85 – 100 days (after sowing during the cool season)
GROWTH HABIT	Vining
PLANT VIGOUR	Good
SEASON	Cool and warm season
FRUIT SIZE	Weight: 1.5 - 2 kg in cool season
FRUIT SHAPE	Round to oval
FRUIT SEED CAVITY	Very small
FLESH COLOUR	Light green
SUGAR CONTENT	High, 12 – 14 % brix
FLAVOUR	Excellent: sweet with good flavour
RIND COLOUR	Creamy white
SUTURES	None
STEM-END SLIPPING	None
UNIFORMITY	Excellent
LEAF COVER	Good
DISEASE REACTION	<b>High resistance:</b> <i>Fusarium oxysporum</i> f. sp. <i>melonis</i> race 2 (Fom: 2) <b>Intermediate resistance:</b> <i>Podosphaera xanthii</i> (ex <i>Sphaerotheca fuliginea</i> ) races 1 and 2 (Px: 1, 2) (ex Sf)
POPULATION GUIDE	12 000 – 15 000 final stand per ha
MARKET / END USE	Fresh market, processing
SPECIAL FEATURES	Large-sized fruit with excellent internal quality

\* Characteristics given are affected by production methods such as soil type, nutrition, planting population, planting date and climatic conditions. Please read disclaimer.

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\* Experimental: This variety does not appear on the current South African Variety list, but has been submitted for registration.

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### GENERAL TIPS FOR SWEET MELON PRODUCTION

#### Climatic requirements

Melons are warm-season plants and grow best at temperatures of 21 - 32°C. The optimum growth temperatures at night are 18 - 20°C and during the day 24 - 30°C. Optimum temperatures for fruit ripening are between 15 - 25°C. The optimal soil temperatures are between 21 - 25°C.

Temperatures below 0°C can kill the plants, and below 12°C growth virtually stops. If the average daily temperatures fall below 18°C, melons will effectively cease growth. Temperatures above 40°C will suppress the total number of flowers. Seed will germinate and emerge within 4 - 6 days at a soil temperature of 25°C and within 6 - 12 days at 20°C. Melon seed does not germinate well at soil temperatures below 16°C.

#### Water requirements

Irrigation has a pronounced effect on both yield and quality of melons. Beds must be watered to a depth of 1 m before planting. Depending on the soil type and season, 18 - 25 mm water must be applied weekly after emergence. Avoid regular light irrigations. The best time to irrigate is during crop development. Limit irrigation when the melons approach ripening time. Excessive moisture at ripening will cause internal decay, lower sugar content and fruit bursting.

#### Nutrition

The rate of uptake of nutrients varies with growth stages namely germination, early runner, first flower, fruit expansion, and fruit ripening. Post-plant fertilizer applications need to be split in order to supply to the varying demands by the plants through the different growth stages. It is necessary that fertilizers are applied continuously through the development of the crop in the irrigation water.

The availability of Ca and Mg during the fruit expansion phase is crucial. These nutrients must be applied in irrigation water even if the soil analyses indicate that it is present in adequate amounts. Weekly foliar sprays of Ca and Mg from fruit set to harvest may ensure the best fruit quality.

#### Bees and pollination

Melon plants have separate male and female flowers on the same plant. Female flowers are only open for one day and need to be visited by bees several times to enable fruit set. Bees are the main pollinators and must, therefore, be placed as close as possible to the field. Poor pollination results in reduced yields and an increased percentage of misshapen fruits. Check blooming fields late morning on sunny, warm days – if there is minimal bee activity, it is recommended to provide beehives. Two to three hives are recommended per hectare. If an insecticide application is required on the melon crop or nearby fields, do it late in the afternoon when the bee activity has ceased. Place beehives upwind from the field in order to limit the possibility of insecticide drift. Apply insecticides carefully during flowering.

#### Disease resistance definition

**Resistance:** is the ability of a plant variety to restrict the growth and development of a specified pest or pathogen and/or the damage they cause when compared to susceptible plant varieties under similar environmental conditions and pest or pathogen pressure. Resistant varieties may exhibit some disease symptoms or damage under heavy pest or pathogen pressure. Two levels of resistance are defined:

**High/standard resistance (HR):** plant varieties that highly restrict the growth and development of the specified pest or pathogen under normal pest or pathogen pressure when compared to susceptible varieties. These plant varieties may, however, exhibit some symptoms or damage under heavy pest or pathogen pressure.

**Moderate/intermediate resistance (IR):** plant varieties that restrict the growth and development of the specified pest or pathogen, but may exhibit a greater range of symptoms or damage compared to resistant varieties. Moderately/intermediately resistant plant varieties will still show less severe symptoms or damage than susceptible plant varieties when grown under similar environmental conditions and/or pest or pathogen pressure.

#### Tolerance (T):

Tolerance (T) is the ability of a plant variety to endure **abiotic stress** without serious consequences for growth, appearance, and yield. Vegetable companies will continue to use tolerance for abiotic stress.

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