

Cantaloupe and Watermelon Disease Management Timeline for Indiana

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Use this timeline to determine the appropriate disease management measures for cantaloupe and watermelon diseases common to Indiana.

Disease	Winter/Fall Off-season	Greenhouse	Planting	Vine Touch	Fruit Maturity	Harvest
Alternaria leaf blight	Rotate crops at least 2 years and practice fall tillage.			Apply contact or systemic fungicides at 7-14 day intervals or according to MELCAST (see Purdue Extension publication BP-67, <i>Foliar Disease Control Using MELCAST</i>).		Fungicide applications are unnecessary within 2-3 weeks of final harvest.
anthracnose	Rotate crops at least 3 years and practice fall tillage. May be seedborne. More information about anthracnose of cucurbits is available in <i>Vegetable Diseases: Anthracnose of Cucumber, Muskmelon, and Watermelon</i> (BP-180-W).	Scout for disease. Apply contact fungicide labeled for greenhouse if disease threatens.	Inspect seedlings. Avoid planting diseased seedlings.	Apply contact or systemic fungicides at 7-14 day intervals or according to MELCAST (see Purdue Extension publication BP-67, <i>Foliar Disease Control Using MELCAST</i>).		Inspect fruit. Avoid saving seed.
bacterial fruit blotch	Rotate crops at least 2 years to eliminate volunteers. May be seedborne.	Scout, and apply fixed copper if disease threatens.	Inspect seedlings. Avoid planting diseased seedlings.	Fixed copper may lessen impact of disease.		Inspect fruit. Avoid saving seed.
bacterial wilt of cantaloupe	Cucumber beetles spread bacterial wilt, so the disease is unaffected by rotation and tillage.		Apply systemic insecticides such as Admire® or Platinum®. Apply contact insecticides before transplanting and after systemic insecticide loses effectiveness. Scout fields regularly for cucumber beetle.		Vines are much less susceptible to bacterial wilt as the plants reach lay-by.	
downy mildew	Crop rotation and fall tillage have no effect on downy mildew.			Begin scouting in July. Follow disease progress in the Purdue Extension Vegetable Crops Hotline bulletin or at cdm.ipmpipe.org . Apply specialized systemic downy mildew fungicides only if disease is observed in the area.		
gummy stem blight	Rotate crops at least 3 years and practice fall tillage. May be seedborne. More information about gummy stem blight is available in <i>Vegetable Diseases: Gummy Stem Blight of Muskmelon and Watermelon</i> (BP-142-W).	Scout for disease. Apply contact fungicide labeled for greenhouse if disease threatens.	Inspect seedlings. Apply fungicide if disease threatens.	Apply contact or systemic fungicides at 7-14 day intervals or according to MELCAST (see Purdue Extension publication BP-67, <i>Foliar Disease Control Using MELCAST</i>).		Fungicide applications are unnecessary within 2-3 weeks of final harvest.
Phytophthora blight	Rotate crops 4 years or more. Avoid peppers in the rotation.		Whenever possible, apply specialized fungicides before symptoms appear.		Inspect fruit for symptoms.	
powdery mildew	Crop rotation and fall tillage are moderately important. Several cantaloupe cultivars have powdery mildew resistance.				If growing cantaloupe, begin systemic fungicide applications 7-14 days before first harvest.	

Post-Harvest Care

Store cantaloupe at 36–41°F at 95 percent humidity. Inspect fruit for signs of developing lesions. Remove field debris from fruit surface with soft brush or rag. If fruit is washed, use 150 ppm solution of sodium hypochlorite (approximately 1/3 oz. household bleach per gallon of water), and dry fruit well.

More information about disease management is available in the *Midwest Vegetable Production Guide for Commercial Growers*, mwveguide.org. Keep current during the season about diseases and more with the Vegetable Crops Hotline, veg hotline.org.

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