

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for September 5, 2022
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about melons, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

When I think about some of the most versatile fruits and vegetables to cook with, melon has never been at the top of my list. However, after researching and preparing for the last OSU Extension "Savoring Ohio Produce" webinar, my opinion has changed.

Ohio melons can be divided into two types- watermelons and muskmelons. Muskmelons include cantaloupe and honeydew. I find this very interesting, because I grew up using the words muskmelon and cantaloupe interchangeably, but I never considered honeydew to be muskmelon.

Many people seem to have their own rituals and rules of thumb when it comes to melon selection. Here are a few things to consider. Cantaloupe should have a prominent, evenly distributed corky netting that is buff or light tan. The background color can be green, yellow, or gray. The stem end should be smooth and slightly sunken. The blossom end should give slightly when pressed. A ripe melon will have a sweet musky aroma.

Honeydew should be creamy yellow when picked. A green melon will never ripen. The skin may have a velvety feel. Like cantaloupe, the blossom end will be slightly springy when pressed.

The Watermelon Promotion Board suggests the "Look, Lift, and Turn" method. Look a watermelon over for bruises or dents. Lift it to make sure it is heavy for its size. Then turn it over to look for a creamy yellow spot that indicates it sat on the ground while ripening in the sun. If you insist on thumping, patting, or knocking, then a melon that sounds like a "ping" may be unripe while a "pong" may indicate it is ready.

There are many benefits to eating melon. An entire cup contains only 45-60 calories, and it is rich in vitamins A and C. Red watermelon is also rich in the phytonutrient lycopene associated with protection against several types of cancer.

Before cutting a melon, scrub the rind with a soft-bristled brush while rinsing with cool, running water. Melon must be refrigerated after cutting and can be stored for up to one week.

If your extent of eating melon includes slices or cubes or little melon balls, then you are not alone. But the possibilities of cooking with melon are endless. I was able to meet the Florida Watermelon Queen this summer and learned about watermelon.org . It is an amazing website from the Watermelon Promotion Board full of recipes for main dishes, sides, and desserts. Some of my favorites are Roasted Salmon with Watermelon Salsa, Spiralized Cucumber and Watermelon Salad, and Watermelon Glazed Meatballs. Watermelon can even be grilled or pan-fried in a savory sauce to taste like tuna. Who knew?

And don't forget that the watermelon rind is edible. There is a lot of fiber packed in this often discarded part of the melon. You could try watermelon rind pickles or bruschetta. The website even has a whole section of creative ways to carve a watermelon rind from dinosaur shapes to holiday party masterpieces. There are also lots of great recipes for muskmelon from the California Cantaloupe Advisory Board at californiacantaloupes.com .

You can learn more about serving melons by viewing a recording of the "Savoring Ohio Produce- Melons" webinar, which I co-taught recently with my colleague Kate Shumaker, at Coshocton.osu.edu .

And now let's look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

The next "Savoring Ohio Produce" webinar is tomorrow, September 6 from 4-5 PM on Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and Cauliflower. Visit our website to register or watch recorded webinars anytime. The Coshocton County Fair starts in less than one month! We would love to have you attend the Tasting Smorgasbord on Tuesday, October 4 at 12:30 pm to try samples of tasty creations from our 4-H members. We also encourage you to bring cans of food when you attend to help with the Farm Credit "Stock the Traylor" competition that will benefit our local Salvation Army.

You can find details about future programs related to financial wellness, food safety, and more at our website coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy Labor Day!