

Plastic mulch – a promising technology for rain-fed melon cultivation



Advantages of plastic mulch

- ❖ Preserves moisture, so no supplementary irrigation is needed
- ❖ Controls weeds effectively
- ❖ Promotes vigorous plant growth
- ❖ Plants are more resistant to pests
- ❖ Higher fruit setting
- ❖ Less costly
- ❖ Reduces melon fly population by preventing the larvae from entering into soil for pupation



How to use plastic mulch

Seed sowing

Make sure there is adequate amount of moisture in the pit before sowing. In rainfed areas, sow seeds immediately after the melting of snow, and in irrigated areas provide irrigation before sowing, if soil does not have adequate moisture.

Sow seeds in a heap as shown in the picture. Sow 4-5 seeds per heap/pit because many of the local seeds do not have good germination. After germination keep only 2-3 plants per heap/pit.



Covering with plastic

Cover with plastic immediately after sowing seeds. To minimize cost, use very thin plastic because plastic is needed only to preserve the moisture from evaporation. White or black, any type of plastic can be used.

Put adequate amount of soil at the joining of the plastics and some clods over the plastic to prevent from blowing by wind.



Tearing the plastic

After covering the field, make adequate number of holes on the plastic so that there are passages for air movements in the soil, and the soil does not become extremely hot.

Monitor the field and observe the progress of germination. Once seeds start germinating, tear the plastic so that the seedlings can easily come out of the plastic. Once the seedlings get bigger, you can increase the tear like a circle around the plants as shown in the picture



Caution

Remember that plastic is not degradable. After completion of the harvest, remove all the plastic from the field and try to organize recycling

