

Watermelons

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Everything seems to be ripening quickly this summer. Apples are weeks ahead, along with sweet corn and peppers. But, best of all, we don't have to wait til mid-August for everyone's favorite treat. Yes, the watermelons are in.

"No way" I said when asked if they were ripe yet. For the better, I was wrong again. I slipped my knife in deep and she cracked wide open, dripping sweet juice all over my face. We love watermelons.

Sugar Baby is the small icebox variety which comes in first. They have tiny seeds and are dark red. I like to get them out of the field right away because they can get over ripe quickly.

It must be the hot weather that causes fruit to mature so fast. And it has been hot; the bank thermometer read 107° a few days ago. We're drinking lots of water, much of it in the form of melons.

Jubilee is a rattlesnake variety, oblong with green stripes. Its our biggest melon and has big seeds, too, which are better for watermelon seed spitting competition. I think they're my favorite, but I'll have to eat six of each of the other kinds before I can be sure.

Tendersweets are tender and sweet, but not red. They have a deep yellow color in the inside and dark green stripes on the outside.

Crimson sweets are the round, bowlingball shaped melons. Although the seeds are small, their flavor and texture make them always popular. We are trying a new old-time on that is solid green called Keckley's Sweet, but I haven't eaten one yet.

Most watermelons take 90 days to mature. So seed planted towards the end of May means melons in late August. But many of ours ripened up by Aug. 1. At least this hot weather is good for something.

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We'll get them all out of the field in the next day or two and stash them under the maple tree in the front yard, that way they wont keep maturing, but stay nice and fresh. Watermelons can store well in the shade for over a month.

But ours don't store well, because they taste so sweet and refreshing. The coop members are happy and so is anyone we run into when the truck is loaded. We love giving watermelons away so keep an eye out for a heaping truck.