

My taste buds await the ripe cataloupes

By Kay Melia
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My taste buds remind me this time of year that they are patiently awaiting the cantaloupe harvest. Just yesterday, one of them jabbed me in the tongue and said "hey old man, how about some cantaloupe one of these days or are you going to make excuses about why you didn't grow any this year?"

Or something like that. Taste buds seem to have a way of coming alive at the very sight of a ripe cantaloupe, and one of these days, barring another stock market sell off, I'm going to make them very happy.



kay melia
• the gardener

I can't remember having such a good looking cantaloupe patch. When it's time to vote at my house, it's always a close race as to whether we would rather have a fresh ripe tomato, or a half of an Ambrosia cantaloupe for dinner.

Isn't it amazing how some of your garden crops produce so well one year, and then are nearly failures in

other years? In my garden for instance, last year for tomatoes, sweet corn, and onions produced sizable crops.

This year, the potatoes, peppers, and cantaloupe are extremely impressive.

The only thing you can seemingly be certain of is the zucchini, both hills of it.

But indeed, my cantaloupes are thriving this year, and I haven't the slightest idea why. Could be a little more heat and humidity this year, or maybe the soil was in better shape.

I plant two varieties of cantaloupe each year, Without fail, there are always a few hills of Ambrosia, now the nation's largest seller of seed.

You'll never find an Ambrosia melon at the supermarket, because they do not ship well, and as a result, commercial growers avoid them like the plague. Such a shame!

In the last few years, I have planted a relatively new melon introduced by Burpee, called Early Hybrid Crenshaw. Listen closely...you will never find a melon with such a delightfully perfect taste as this Crenshaw. What a breakthrough! It's a 90 day melon, grows to 10 or

12 pounds, and changes to a bright yellow color when ripe. It is truly a fantastic melon.

Cantaloupes were introduced in America in 1494 when Christopher Columbus brought them over from Spain and Italy.

The fragrant melon was named after the Italian town of Cantalupo and flourished for years in the area of Greece and Turkey.

Here in America, the Arkansas River valley of Colorado was among the first to grow them commercially in about 1895.

It was there where the Rocky Ford cantaloupe rose to national

prominence.

In my humble opinion, you will be much more successful growing them if you plant the seed and avoid setting out transplants.

Cantaloupe, like other plants from the cucurbit family, dislike someone messing around with their roots. Plant the seed when the soil reaches 60-65 degrees in the spring, and avoid the transplants.

Satisfy your taste buds as you can do no other way! Just have a bite of wonderful home grown cantaloupe!

A multi year approach needed to control bindweed

Field bindweed is adept at blending in, white it takes over other plants. Homeowners may not notice the noxious weed until small pink-to-white, trumpet-shaped flowers show up in shrubs or lawn.

Unfortunately, once a bindweed vine produces more than six shield-shaped leaves, it becomes increasingly difficult to control. Typically, homeowners must take a multi-

pronged approach for several years - or more, said Ward Upham, Kansas State Research and Extension horticulturist.

"You can't afford to ignore it. At least pull it up every time you see it," Upham advised. "Under ideal conditions, bindweed can grow roots that reach 30 feet in every direction and have growth buds that spread things even further. Its

flowers prouce about 550 long-lasting seeds every year, and they get around - via birds or any king of feet, paws or wheels."

The heat of summer is the time to try the most drastic control if, for example, bindweed has infested a vegetable garden, Upham said. The steps are to 1) till and smooth soil;

2) water; 3) cover with clear, UV-stabilized plastic sheeting; 4) bury sheeting's edges to prevent blowing and under-film air movement; and 5) leave in place for four to six weeks. Sunlight will cook (solarize) any plants that emerge.

Another approach is to apply glyphosate (Roundup, many others)

when bindweed is at or beyond full bloom and growing well - even into fall, he said. Glyphosate will kill any greenery it hits. So, gardeners must kill everything in a particular plot and/or protect nearby ornamentals and turf grass by either using a cardboard shield or spraying down a card board tube.

A selective lawn herbicide that impacts bindweed is now available to homeowners. Upham added. Quinlorac sells under the trade name Drive. It's also one ingredient in such products as Ortho Weed-B-Gone Max + Crabgrass Control and Bayer All-in-one Lawn Weed and Crabgrass Killer.

Success one step beyond biggest failure

Most great people have attained their greatest success just one step beyond their greatest failure. - Napoleon Hill

We've all tasted failure at one time or another. It knocks the wind out of you. It makes you doubt yourself. It... well, it just sucks.

Looking back on history, we see the big success stories also came with big failures. The difference between their stories and the stories of people we've never heard of is they didn't let failure stop them.

Wherever you are in your busi-

jamie morphew
• business tips

ness adventure, remember: You will either succeed or learn. Don't give up.

This tip was brought to you by Western Kansas Business Consulting, sponsored in part by Sherman County. We offer free and confidential business consulting to Kearny, Scott, Sherman, and Wichita counties. For information call (620) 874-0771.

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