HOW TO GROW MELONGENE

Melongene (also known as “Eggplant” and “Baigan”) can be grown throughout the year. When planting melongene consider the following:

- Melongene is a deep-rooting crop. Roots reach a depth of 35-50 cm. So plough deep!
- The plant bears fruits for a long time (6-9 months). Sometimes even cutting back can result in a new flush of growth and prolong the life of the crop. A fertile soil, rich in organic matter is necessary.
- Melongene needs a lot of water, but it is very sensitive to water logging. Provide adequate drainage. The plant also responds favourably to irrigation under drought conditions.
- This plant must be grown in full sunlight. It does not do well in shaded areas.

(A) PLANTING
- At planting time, add 2 handfuls of well rotted manure to each planting hole. Ensure adequate drainage especially in clay soils.

Transplant Seedlings
- When seedlings are 3-4 weeks old.
- Late in the afternoon.

Some tall varieties may require staking. Stake should be positioned when planting seedling.

(B) SPACING
If several melongene plants are grown together space seedlings 90 cm apart within rows and 1.5 metres between rows. However, melongene can be intercropped with most other vegetables.

(C) WATERING
- In the absence of rain, water daily.
- Ensure that excess water drains off the planting area.

(D) FERTILISING
At Transplanting, apply
- 1 Tablespoon High Phosphorus Fertilizer e.g. 12:24:12 dissolved in 1 litre of water.
- This volume will fertilize 10 plants.
- Apply to roots or leaves (foliar).
- Repeat every 14 days for 4 weeks.

During the Growing Stage, apply
- 4 Tablespoons High Nitrogen e.g. 20:10:10.
- Granular or dissolved in water (water-salt).
- Every 2 weeks until flowering.

At Flowering, apply
- High Potassium fertilizer e.g. 12:12:17+2 plus Trace Elements.
- 100 g (7 tbsp) per plant.
- Granular or dissolved in water (water-salt).

Every 2 weeks for the lifetime of the crop.
- Calcium, either granular or foliar, apply one handful per plant, every two weeks for the lifetime of the plant.
(E) PESTS AND DISEASES
Pests and Diseases left unchecked can hinder a plant’s ability to produce food for us.
A combination of control methods is best and is known as Integrated Pest Management.
See Factsheet on Integrated Pest Management titled “IPM for Home Gardeners”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEST/DISEASE</th>
<th>SYMPTOM</th>
<th>CONTROL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| MITES        | • Deformation of plant parts  
               • Underside of leaf looks dirty-grey  
               • Fruit develops a corky crust from tip to calyx | • Overhead Irrigation  
               • Pruning plants to remove shade  
               • Chemical control |
| WHITE-FLIES  | • unsightly spots | • Overhead Irrigation  
               • Chemical control |
| THRIPS       | • Corky scarring on fruits  
               • Insects on the underside of leaves | • Overhead irrigation  
               • Chemical control |
| APHIDS       | • scarring on leaves and fruits | • Natural enemies |
| ANTHRACNOSE  | • sunken spots with a black centre | • Chemical control |

(F) OTHER PESTS
Other pests include the melongene fruit worm, shot hole beetle (Figure 3), borers, caterpillars, lace wing bugs and sucking insects.

Note: Aranguez is resistant to Anthracnose and tolerant to Bacterial Wilt.

Melongene is the easiest of all of the solanaceous (tomatoes, pepper, melongene) crops to grow.

(G) VARIETIES
Some varieties currently available includes:
- Black Diamond
- Long purple
- La Pastora
- Aranguez
- Farmers Early
- Victoria
- Florida Market

Technical content edited by - Roshni Ramsingh

“All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form, or by any means reproduced without permission in writing, of the Ministry of Food Production Land and Marine Affairs.”