

The background features a collage of images. At the top, there are several images of melons, including a large green melon on the left and several smaller, colorful melons on the right. Below these, there is a dark, textured area that appears to be a close-up of a person's face or a similar subject, rendered in a high-contrast, almost abstract style. The overall color palette is dominated by greens, yellows, and oranges, with a dark, charcoal grey background for the text area.

# Casaba Melons

- Casaba melons have a long history and have been grown for centuries in and around the Mediterranean Coast.
- In the mid to late 1800's seed found its way to sellers in the US.
- The casaba is a long season vine crop exceeding 90 days. When they were grown in the South, they were harvested in late October into November and sold into the North as Winter Melons.

# Casaba Melons in Late September





# Interest in these “Winter Melons”

- The original purpose for investigating growing these melons started with looking at crops that could have some longer shelf storage life.
- Being called “winter” melons, this was intriguing.
- With the expansion of seasonally local food and selling through winter CSA shares and winter and long-season markets, the wider the selection available would have greater customer appeal.



# Observations

- Most of the varieties selected were ones found mentioned in old seed catalogs dating back to the late 1890s-1930.
- Several sources of seed with the same name were found. Growing them out for storage experiments was undertaken in 2013.
- They were grown following the same recommendations as for cantaloupe.



# Field Observations

- 2013 was a cool wet season. The plot was direct seeded in mid June and germination was slow over two weeks.
- Trickle irrigation under black plastic mulch was in place. Preplant fertilizer had been added in May.
- Weeds were managed through the season but no insect or fungicide program was initiated.



# Observations

- By late July, the plants started vining out after a slow start.
- Downy mildew blew into WNY in July yet the plants seemed to be slow in getting the disease.
- Late August saw DM show up on all the varieties trialed.
- Interestingly, the leaves did not show severe symptoms. Vines continued to grow and more fruit was set.



# Observations

- Melons started ripening with a few in late August and continued through Sept. Most were ripened by the third week in Sept.
- All of the varieties seemed to be ready within 5-7 days of each other.
- Some were harvested to slice, taste, and characterize qualities.
- The rest were stored in a cooler with a temperature in lower 50'sF.

# Piel de Sapo










# Comments

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- Good tolerance to DM
  - Consistent large fruit
  - 4+ fruit/vine
  - Flavor is sweet and perfumey
  - Hard at first to determine when to harvest.  
Doesn't have "slip" stem. Look for at least 2 dried tendrils and dulling of rind color.
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# Amarillo D'Oro








# Comments

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- Nice attractive color
  - Good DM tolerance
  - 3+ fruit/plant
  - Great flavor
  - Hard at first to determine when to harvest. Doesn't have "slip" stem. Look for at least 2 dried tendrils and dulling of rind color.
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# Valencia Winter





VALENCIA WINTER



# Comments



- Large fruit 3+lbs
- Good tolerance to DM
- Prolific production 5+ fruit/plant
- Hard rind
- Hard at first to determine when to harvest. Doesn't have "slip" stem. Look for at least 2 dried tendrils and dulling of rind color.



# Verde de Inverno





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- Fair tolerance to DM
  - A lot of fruit 4+ /plant
  - Fine flavor
  - 2-2.5lb ea
  - Hard at first to determine when to harvest. Doesn't have "slip" stem. Look for at least 2 dried tendrils and dulling of rind color.
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# Napoletano Verde







# Comments

- Earliest to ripen
- Great flavor, fragrant
- Rounder fruit 2-2.5lb
- Very prolific 7+fruit/plant
- Fair tolerance to DM
- Hard at first to determine when to harvest.  
Doesn't have "slip" stem. Look for at least 2  
dried tendrils and dulling of rind color.

# Tendrill Verde Tardif









# Comments

- Hard rind
- Fair DM tolerance
- Prolific 4+ fruit/plant
- Great taste
- Hard at first to determine when to harvest. Doesn't have "slip" stem. Look for at least 2 dried tendrils and dulling of rind color.

# Golden Beauty







Casaba Golden  
Beauty




Casaba Golden  
Beauty

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- Poorest of group with DM but still had vine growth and green leaves in mid Sept.
  - Yellowish rind with ring at bottom end.
  - Poor taste
  - Hard at first to determine when to harvest. Doesn't have "slip" stem. Look for at least 2 dried tendrils and dulling of rind color.
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# Additional comments

- The pictures of the harvested fruit show a greenish hue to most of the varieties. This has to do with not being able to figure out when to pick. Most were slightly under-ripe. Fruit harvested 5 days later were better. Looked for duller rind color and several dried tendrils closest to stem.
  - Fully ripe fruit were cantaloupe orange to orangey-pink and very flavorful.
  - Taste tested with farmers and all raved over the flavor.
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# Storage Trial

- Melons were stored in open boxes
- Melons were more mature than the ones in the pictures.
- 25% of fruit were softening after 2 weeks.
- 50% were soft after 3 weeks.
- 25% lasted 4 weeks with little decrease in rind hardness and flavor. Though dark spots were starting to appear on the rinds.
- Results – store no longer than 14-18 days @ 36-40° F



# Take Home Message

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- Casaba melons have terrific flavor.
  - Some of the varieties seem to stand up longer to DM than cantaloupe
  - Some storage potential. Will be growing out more and selecting for types with longer storage life and breeding them out.
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