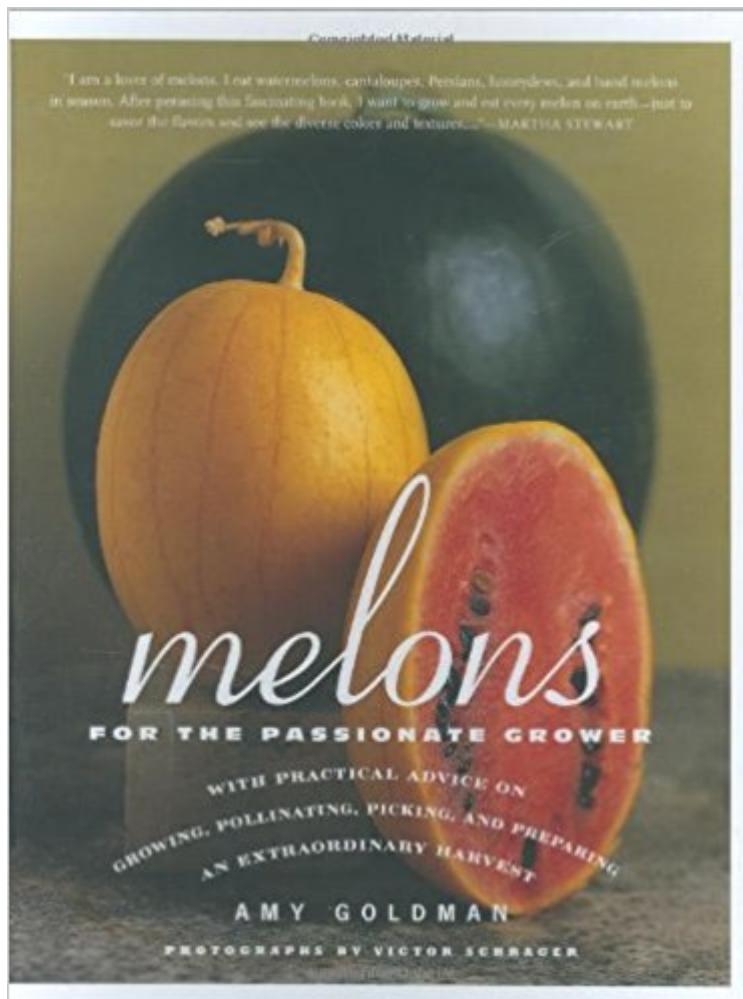


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# Melons For The Passionate Grower



## **Synopsis**

This year's heirloom tomato is a melon! Acclaimed gardener Amy Goldman, known to viewers of Martha Stewart and PBS, is a dedicated seed saver working to preserve fast-disappearing varieties of heirloom melons. Her book, *Melons for the Passionate Grower*, is a celebration of the speckled, bumpy, oh-so-sweet world of the melon—from Minnesota Midget and Georgia Rattlesnake to Ali Baba and Sweet Siberian. Here she profiles more than one hundred varieties, each showcased in a full-color photographic still life recalling eighteenth- and nineteenth-century botanical paintings and engravings. Goldman also offers expert advice on cultivating and selecting your own melons, as well as the rudiments of seed saving.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Your local market probably carries only honeydew, cantaloupe, and watermelon, but it's the heirloom melons of the world that contain both remarkable succulence and the critical germ plasm that may ward off future plant diseases. Amy Goldman's tribute to the magnificent family of melons, *Melons for the Passionate Grower* is both a celebration of the rich gifts of these fruits and a cautionary tale of how many of these treats nearly went extinct. Before you get too caught up in the gorgeous photos and fascinating histories of these gems, note the seed company list at the end of the book--you can try to grow all the plants you read about. The introductory section includes detailed instructions on hand pollination, ripening, and a few recipes like watermelon salad with onion, pepper, oil, and vinegar in addition to the sweet melon. The pages that fall in the middle are

mini temples devoted to individual melons. Often romantic histories are included next to the glossy photos--who can resist tales of the Hungarian noble who wrapped her beloved sweet melons in her furs? With varieties like the slender, crunchy Snake and the astonishingly sweet Bidwell Casaba, learning about these glorious fruits will keep you fascinated for the rest of your gardening days. --Jill Lightner

There's more to the world of melons than just the cantaloupe and honeydew, but this may not be true for long: many varieties are "on the brink of extinction," according to cultivator and collector Goldman. This handsome volume documents unusual types of melon like the Collective Farm Woman (originally from Ukraine) and the serpent-shaped Snake melon with lavish color photos and playful descriptions. Goldman also instructs readers on how to pollinate, grow and harvest these plants; includes a list of commercial sources; and throws in a few recipes and plenty of trivia ("the Chinese grow more watermelons than anyone else but... they eat the seeds and often discard the melons"). Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

I agonized over the five star dilemma for awhile; does one small nagging problem warrant deleting down to four stars? In the end, the charm of this book won me over completely. This is a book for someone who has a basic knowledge of gardening. Indeed, the title hints at this but most of us would expect a gardening book to cater to beginners, which it doesn't. In fact, I would say that it would be best if the reader had at least tried growing melons once before. Apparently, melons are a little more high-maintenance than tomatoes and beans -- but the author only spares a small cursory section on melon culture, the better to get down to the real reason to own this treasure: a thoroughly engaging and informative tribute to each known variety of heirloom melon still surviving today. Each melon variety is comprehensively detailed with a photograph and a short history and description. Amy Goldman makes a very good case for the growing of heirloom (Open Pollinated) varieties, by the way. I won't get into the details, but if superior flavor is your reason for growing your own produce, heirlooms will blow all those mealy, watery grocery store hybrids right off their shelves. By the time you get two pages into the gorgeously photographed catalog of her melons you will be salivating and wishing you had gotten the jump on the summer planting season a little earlier. Before you finish this book you will decide that nothing else but your very own Charentais cantaloupes (12 and 1/4 on the Brix sweetnes scale) and Cream of Saskatchewan watermelons (10 degrees Brix) will do. Bottom line is, this book will light a fire under you to develop a genuine passion about your home garden and the types of fruits you grow in it. So I can recommend this book even

though I have yet to apply its advice to the actual growing. After all, you need the inspiration before you can get off your duff to apply the perspiration!

Is mostly talking about the history of melons and how we got to where we are today, but not a lot of current info. A little disappointed, but still a good read.

Was surprised at all the different types of melons. Since moving, I now have a much larger garden than before and plan to grow a variety based on Amy's book. A surprise was that the book was signed by the author.

Just wow! Amy Goodman's books are off the charts amazing- beautiful photos and varieties very well documented. Fascinating.

The melons covered in the book range from the true cantaloupe to muskmelons (what Americans call cantaloupe) to casabas to Asian melons (not sweet like those to which Americans are accustomed) to those that aren't tasty (but are valued for other reasons) to every color flesh and seed, size and shape of watermelon under the sun! How about a melon to scent a person or a room, a melon to stand in for a cucumber in a salad (bitterfree, crisper, and will set fruit all summer long), a melon that looks for all the world like a winter squash, a bi-colored-flesh watermelon, or a watermelon whose skin turns a bright yellow when it is ripe? These are the Queen Anne's pocket melon or the D'Alger melon, the Snake melons, the Prescott Fond Blanc melon, the Colorado Striped Tarahumara watermelon, and the Golden Midget watermelon. Don't have room to grow your own melons? Then the pages about how to select a melon, even at market, will be invaluable--already I have been able to improve my chances of coming home with a riper melon from the store. I have one tiny complaint about the content of the book: there are several varieties that are listed with "Seed Source: None". I assume these melons that are not available from commercial seed sources are available among the Seed Savers Exchange organization members, but that is never mentioned. My other complaint about the book is technical: it's not what most of us would consider a "hardback". It has a firm cover, but it's not a hardback in the traditional textbook sense. All in all, a very lovely book, one that makes you wish you had 10 acres in which to just grow melons. It has been an engrossing read and re-read, an indispensable book in planning our future forays into melon-growing.

AMY GOLDMAN WRITES ABOUT EVERY SINGLE THING YOU CAN THINK OF TO ASK ABOUT MELONS - NO SOONER THAN YOU THINK A QUESTION UP THAN YOU FIND THE ANSWER! HER ENTHUSIASM ABOUT HER SUBJECT IS INFECTIOUS. I CANT WAIT TO START GROWING THOSE SEEDS NEXT SPRING. THE PICTURES ARE BEAUTIFUL AS WELL, AND THE SUPPLEMENTARY INFO RE SEED SOURCES IS, OF COURSE, THOROUGH AND MOST WELCOME.

I bought the book in hopes of learning about various hard to find melons. This book has an amazing variety of melons but I fond it to be rather light on the amount of information provided to the inexperienced new grower. You get several pages of tips on growing and harvesting (I don't think it's quite detailed enough for the novice), a page on saving seeds, two on hand pollination (these were interesting), and a couple of pages of recipes to use your harvest in. The main part of the book is sort of art book like to me with a few pages of type histries and several pages of artistic photos of various melons. Each of the melon pictures is identified as figure#1-100, you'll find a corresponding section in the back of the book giving info on size, weight and so on. At the end of the book there's a source listing for places to get the seeds of some, not all, of what is shown in the book.

yes, a book on melons and gorgeous pictures. Not as good as her tomato and squash books, very bare bones, but lovely pictures ;)

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