

The Green Scene

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What are some good muskmelon and watermelon varieties for Iowa?

Question:

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Answer:

Suggested muskmelon varieties for Iowa include ‘Earlisweet’ (early maturing, 2 to 3 lb. fruit), ‘Athena’ (oval 4 to 6 lb. fruit), ‘Superstar’ (oval 6 to 8 lb. fruit), ‘Ambrosia’ (round 4 to 5 lb. fruit), ‘Hales Best’ (oval 4 to 5 lb. fruit, heirloom), ‘Earlidew’ (honeydew type, pale green flesh), and ‘Passport’ (hybrid melon, green flesh).

Excellent watermelon varieties include ‘Crimson Sweet’ (red-fleshed, seeded, blocky round fruit, 20 to 30 lb.), ‘Royal Sweet’ (red-fleshed, seeded, blocky oval fruit, 20 to 25 lb.), ‘Sangria’ (red-fleshed. Seeded, blocky oval fruit, 20 to 26 lb.), ‘Crunchy Red’ (red-fleshed, seedless, round to oval fruit, 15 to 18 lb.), ‘Gypsy’ (red-fleshed, seedless, round fruit, 13 to 17 lb.), ‘Millionaire’ (red-fleshed, seedless, oblong fruit, 13 to 20 lb.), ‘Sweet Beauty’ (red-fleshed, seeded, oblong iceblock-size fruit, 5 to 7 lb.), ‘Yellow Baby’ (yellow-fleshed, seeded, round fruit, 9 to 12 lb.), and ‘Amarillo’ (yellow-fleshed, seedless round fruit, 12 to 14 lb.).

A seeded variety (pollinizer must be planted with seedless watermelon varieties for proper pollination. Pollinator seeds are often included in seedless watermelon packets.

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Extension and Outreach

Juglone—What is it?

By Cynthia Haynes, Department of Horticulture

Juglone is a chemical that inhibits the growth of certain plant species. When plants produce the growth of other plants it is called allelopathy. Black Walnut is common woodland and landscape tree in the Midwest that produces juglone which causes an allelopathic response (inhibition of growth) in other plants.

Juglone is produced by all parts of Black Walnut (leaves, stems, fruit, etc.), making it a highly effective competitor for space in the landscape. The name of juglone comes from scientific name for Black Walnut, *Juglans nigra*. Other members of the Juglandacea family (includes Butternut and Pecan) also produce juglone, but Black Walnut produces the most more effectively than other members of the family.

Below are a few frequently asked questions about Black walnuts and the chemical juglone.

Are all plants sensitive to juglone? Not all plants are sensitive to juglone. Members of the tomato family (tomato, potato, eggplant, pepper) are highly sensitive to juglone. Some shrubs like lilac, hydrangea, rhododendron, viburnum, and yew are also considered somewhat sensitive to juglone. There are many other plants, however, that are not impacted by juglone. Shade loving perennials like bugleweed and bleeding hart can coexist nicely underneath walnuts without any injury. It is important to note that there are no definitive lists and vary few official studies on the impact of juglone on different plant species. It is also important to note that many turfgrass species are tolerant of juglone. They, like many other sun-loving plants, are more likely to perform poorly because of the shade of the walnut tree rather than the juglone.

What are the symptoms of juglone sensitivity? The degree of symptoms varies with species. Tomatoes are highly sensitive so they often yellow, grow poorly or look stunted, and eventually die when grown near walnuts. Plants that are not sensitive may yellow slightly or grow more slowly, but are rarely killed. And plants that are tolerant to juglone grow well with no signs or symptoms of injury.

How long does juglone last in the landscape after the removal of a walnut? Juglone breaks down quickly in the environment. Even though all parts of a walnut produces juglone, a few months after removal most of the juglone is gone. It is usually safe to replant the next growing season in spaces formerly occupied by walnuts.

Can I use woodchips from walnut as mulch in my landscape? Yes, you can use walnut chips in landscaping—however, you should wait a few months for the chips to compost slightly and break down the juglone chemical before placing the mulch around sensitive plants.



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