

Melons To Brighten Any Occasion



These cantaloupes are not just spectacular centerpieces, they also are consumable delicacies. Chef Harvey Rosen recently demonstrated melon garnishing in several

Philadelphia-area grocery stores. He said, "Melons can set the theme for birthdays, anniversaries, dinner parties and other happy occasions." decorating tool.

BY LOU ANN GOOD
DOYLESTOWN (Bucks Co.) — If you're looking for a spectacular centerpiece, try a melon.

A melon can be carved into a basket, ship, fish, dove, baby buggy, hearts, love birds, parrots, turkey and other creative shapes.

Harvey Rosen, a leading authority on food presentation, said, "Watermelon and cantaloupe can be dressed up to set the theme for birthdays, anniversaries, dinner parties and other happy occasions."

He has authored a comprehensive series of garnishing books, "Melon Garnishing," "How to Garnish" and "Apple Garnishing."

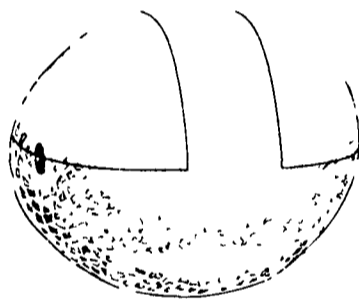
In his book on melon garnishing, Rosen offers more than 30 themes for sculptures and centerpieces, including love birds for anniversaries or engagement parties, a baby buggy for a baby shower, a melon ship with "Happy Birthday" written on the sail, and swans to add elegance to a dinner party.

"You can pick almost any theme and build on it with a melon carving. The advantage of using watermelon and cantaloupe is that they are not just centerpieces; they are consumable delicacies," says the chef.

Melon sculptures can be created easily with help of a v-shaped food

Buying and storing tips
To begin, choose firm melons for carving. Cantaloupe should have a slightly golden undercolor and netting that stands out prominently and covers the entire melon. The stem end should be smooth, well-rounded and slightly soft when ripe. A ripe cantaloupe also will have a distinctive, sweet aroma. One sided of the cantaloupe may be slightly bleached from resting on the soil. Avoid cantaloupe with irregular shapes, scuffs, bruises, soft spots, or a dull green background color. Unripe melons require cool, but not refrigerated

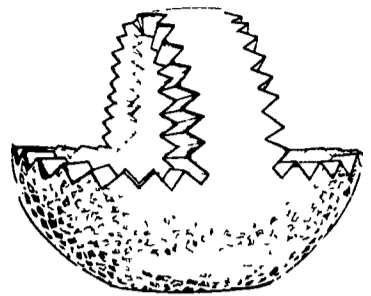
temperatures. Ripe melons can be refrigerated, but should not be held at extremely cold temperatures.



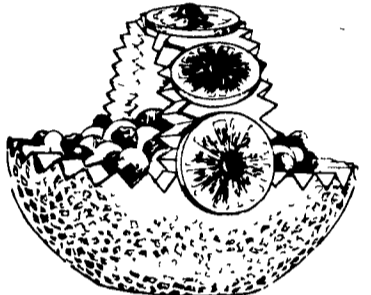
MELON BASKET

Select a round melon. To provide a stable base, cut a thin slice from the bottom of the melon. Draw the lines of the basket on the melon

before you start cutting. Draw one line horizontally around the center of the melon. Draw the handle by drawing two lines a few inches apart at the top of the melon.



Cut an X through the rind in the sections to be discarded to reduce the chances of splitting. Use a v-shaped food decorating tool to make the zig zag pattern along the edges. Insert the point of the tool at least half way into the melon along the line that was just drawn. Continue making v-shaped cuts along the line being sure they connect. Be careful not to cut through the handle.



When the cutting is completed, lift the top quarter sections off carefully. Use a knife to remove the pulp of the cantaloupe from the rind. A melon ball scoop may be used to form balls to fill the basket. Also fruits such as grapes, cherries, strawberries, pineapple and various melons may be used to fill the melon, if desired. Decorate the handle with citrus slices, melon balls and cherries attached with toothpicks to give the basket a professional touch.

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What's New Under The Sun

At The Flower And Vegetable Gardens

BY LOU ANN GOOD
UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Ever wonder how new plant varieties receive a stamp of approval?

Visit Penn State Trial Gardens where new plant varieties are grown for testing. The judges compare their results with other trial gardens located across the U.S. This determines whether or not a plant does better in cold or warm climates. What does best in one climate or soil type may not do as well in another.

The growing patterns, plant health, and vegetable flavor are rated throughout the different stages of plant growth.

Research entries are interspersed among the garden flowers, vegetables, and bedding plants that include All America Selection Trials and America Rose Selections.

These entries are coded but the college does not know the name of the company that developed them in order for them to give an unbiased report.

Vegetable Gardens

Dr. Peter Ferretti, professor of vegetable crops, explained that vegetables not only need to taste

good but also the plant must be vigorous. Beans plants do not pass the test if their stalks have a tendency to collapse.

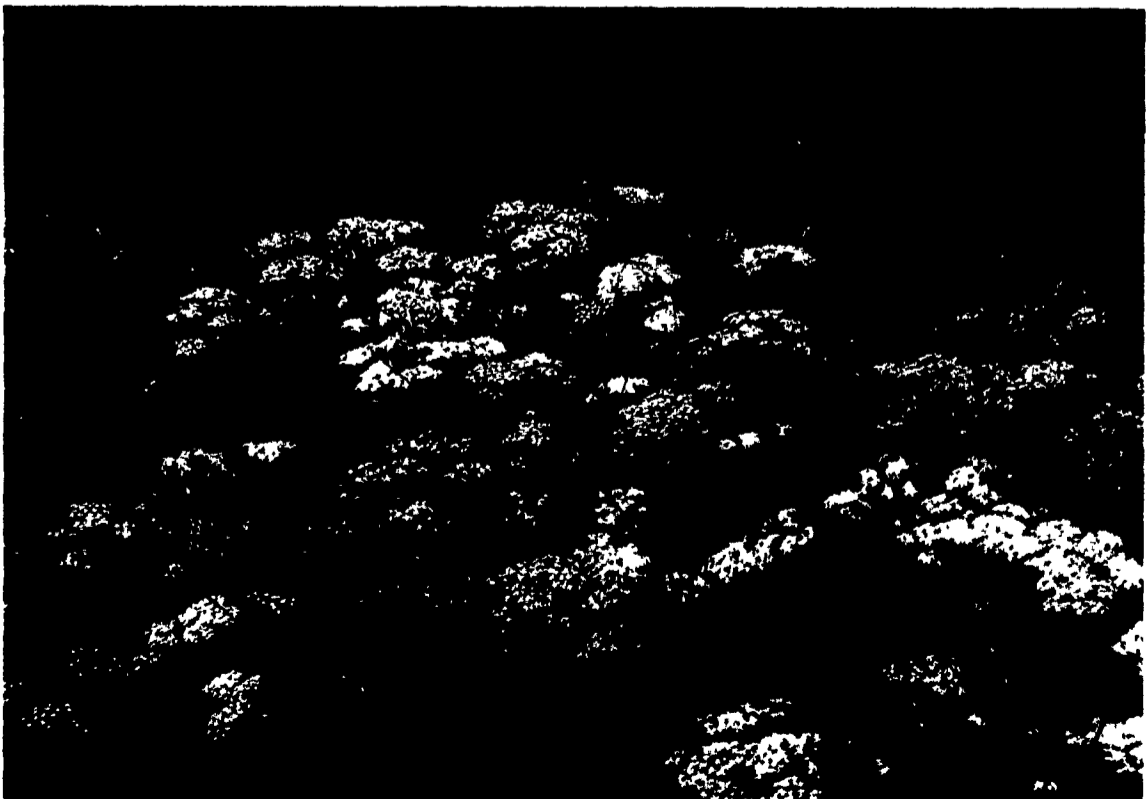
Ferretti is impressed with the purple bean that grows at the top of bean bush so that it doesn't get dirty on the ground. As soon as it is cooked the purple beans turn green. The beans are good for eating and in flower arranging.

Some bean plants offer good flavor, long pod, but poor bush stand. This shows that something is wrong with seed quality. Another variety is tender and juicy, but not flavorful.

Ferretti also tests vegetables taste by cooking them in a variety of ways. He discovered that Tender Bead broccoli offers the best flavor when microwaved and a good flavor raw unlike other varieties, which have a skunky flavor."

In the gardens, Jalapeno peppers are grown that offer a sweet, spicy flavor without being too hot to be eaten raw.

The market demand for specialty and gourmet vegetables continues to expand from their publicity as nutritional vegetables. A scallop squash that can be eaten



The Summer Pastel collection is a dwarf yarrow with the mature plant reaching about 2 feet tall and 18 inches wide. They flower in four months from seed. The flowers provide an improved color range of pinks, apricots, cream, reds, lavenders, purples and pure white. Superior performance except does not dry as well as the tall yarrow.

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