Controlled-Environment Greenhouse

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

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Growing Rock Melon (2)

From the Editor

In recent years, the Horticulture Section has experimentally grown different types of rock melon through the use of controlled-environment greenhouses and organic farming methods. Quality varieties such as "Tin Luk" and "Red Eagle"—whose flesh is greenish white and orange in color respectively—have been recommended to farmers for cultivation and are now well received by consumers. To achieve the most desirable results, farmers have to familiarize themselves with the general cultivation management techniques, which have already been explained in an earlier issue, as well as to grasp the skills of fruiting vine selection, artificial pollination and fruit retention. In this issue, we will provide you with a summary of the relevant skills using the two foresaid varieties as examples.

Greenhouse cultivation

Rock melon with greenish white flesh (Tin Luk)

Rock melon with orange flesh (Red Eagle)

Selection of Fruiting Vines

Select the strongest secondary vines from the 11th to 15th node of the main vine for fruiting and train the vines by pinching and removing excessive leaves or lateral shoots. The flowering period should be carefully monitored for artificial pollination.

Artificial Pollination

For cultivation of rock melon in greenhouses, artificial pollination is an indispensable procedure for the plant to bear fruit in the absence of insect pollination.

Artificial pollination is preferably conducted in the morning with low humidity. Select and pick a male flower in full bloom and expose its stamen by pressing the petals wide open.

Select a female flower in early bloom on the most suitable node. Gently wipe the stigma of the female flower with the stamen resulting in the whole stigma being covered with pollen so as to facilitate fruit bearing.

Fruit Selection and Retention

Select a young and healthy fruit for retention when the condition of fruit growth stabilizes. Fruit retention measures such as training, fruit hanging, irrigation control and fertilizer adjustment should then be carried out in order to produce a crop that excels in both quality and appearance.

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