

ASH GOURD

(Benincasa hispida)

Ash gourd is a cucurbitaceous crop grown through out in north eastern region. It is an annual vine trailing on the ground. Ash gourd is grown for its flesh fruit. The immature fruit is cooked as vegetables. The ripe fruit is used for sweetmeat.



Cultivars

CO- 1, CO- 2, RCAG-15, RCAG-28 and Mudliar are the recommended varieties for this region.

Climate and Soil

It grows well in warm, humid tropical climate. The temperature of 22-35 DC is ideal. Ash gourd thrives on all types of soil. But loam, sandy loam and clay loam are best suited for its cultivation. The optimum pH is 6.5-7.5.

Field Preparation

The land is prepared by ploughing the soil for 3 to 4 times. Well rotten compost or FYM is mixed at the time of land preparation.

Seed Rate

5-7 kg/ ha.

Time of Sowing

The seeds are sown from March-April for early crop and June-July for main crop.

Spacing

1.5 to 2.5m (row to row) x 60 to 120 cm (plant to plant)

Manure and Fertilizer

A basal dose of farmyard manures 20 t/ ha should be given at the time of field preparation. NPK @ 60:60:80 kg / ha should be top-dressed. N should be applied in 2 split doses. The last dose of N @ 30 kg / ha should be given 40 days after sowing.

Weeding

During early stage, the crop should be kept weed free by giving shallow cultivation.

Staking

The plants should be provided a suitable support with bamboo sticks. The interspaces in which the vines are allowed to trail should be kept dry so that the developing fruit do not come in contact with moisture and rot.

Irrigation

First irrigation should be given immediately after sowing and then subsequent irrigation is given at an interval of 4 to 5 days.

Plant protection

Same as in Cucumber.

Harvesting and Yield

As the fruit develop they become bigger in size and form an ashy coating on fruit surface. After full maturity the ashy bloom slowly drops off when the fruits become ready for harvesting 90-100 days after sowing.

The average yield is 100-150 q / ha.