



## AS IT IS

# Malaysian Farmers Use Music, Touch to Grow Prized Muskmelons

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A Malaysian farm says it has perfected its methods to successfully grow Japanese muskmelons, one of the world's costliest fruits.

Farmers at Malaysia's Mono Premium Melon company said they had discovered the right mix of nutrients and treatments to grow the top quality melons.

One of the methods involves workers rubbing the melons with a soft cloth. The farmers believe that doing this can improve the taste of the fruit. They also play classical music around the plants, which is thought to increase growth.

Seh Cheng Siang is the director and co-founder of the farm, in Putrajaya, south of Kuala Lumpur. "Every single Japanese melon that you see in our farm is almost like an art piece," Seh told Reuters news agency.

Since the last century, farmers in Japan have been perfecting the art of growing the fruit. Japanese muskmelons are prized for their tastiness and exact, rounded shape. In Japan, the costly melons are sold in high-end stores as **luxury** products.

The farmers said they aim to grow melons with the same level of quality as those sold in Japan. But the process is more difficult in Malaysia because of the country's hot and **humid** climate. Japan enjoys more moderate climate conditions than Malaysia.

"We have to make sure that nutrition, the watering and the fertilizer are done very **consistently** and **precisely**," Seh said. He added that his company had tried growing more than 10 kinds of Japanese melon before settling on the right one.

The Malaysian farmers get their seeds from Japan and also travel to Japanese farms to learn the correct growing methods.

The farmers say they had to do a lot of experimentation to find out exactly which **ingredients** provided the best nutrition to the muskmelon plants.

The company's efforts have been successful so far. The farmers reported that the first crop of 200 selected muskmelons had quickly sold out. Most of the sales happened online.

The melons are sold for 186 ringgit each, which is about 40 U.S. dollars. That price is about one-third lower than what muskmelons sell for in Japan.

Elaine Chow attended a recent sales event at the company's farm and said she was very pleased to find the local muskmelons. "It's pretty interesting to know that as a Malaysian, we can actually grow Japanese-grade melons in Malaysia," she said.

I'm Bryan Lynn.

*Reuters reported this story. Bryan Lynn adapted the report for VOA Learning English. Hai Do was the editor.*

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## Words in This Story

**luxury** – *n.* something that is very costly and gives pleasure, but is not needed

**humid** – *adj.* hot and slightly wet

**consistent** – *adj.* always behaving in a similar way

**precise** – *adj.* exact and accurate

**ingredient** – *n.* one of the things that are used to make a food, product, etc.

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