

KP4 Develops Melon with Boxy, Triangle and Heart Shapes


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After a successful harvest of about 1,500 melon crops of Gama Melon Basket (GMB) and Gama Melody 1 variety, the Agricultural Training, Research, and Development of Agriculture, Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM KP4) successfully developed melons with boxy, triangle, heart shapes and some other shapes. This success is obtained after the fruit was genetically engineered, producing the Gama Melody and Gama Melon Basket type ready for harvest at the age of 60 days.

Head of UGM KP4, Dr. Cahyono Agus, describes this type of melon as disease-resistant melon, with orange yellow flesh color, sweet taste with the rich texture of the fruit flesh. This melon is also characterized by a typical netted and striped fruit skin like that of a basketball, because a variety of environmental engineering efforts for place to grow has also been conducted. Cahyono Agus added that research and development of various forms of melon is the result of cooperation between KP4 and UGM's Faculty of Biology. "The melon fruit actually is not only molded into the boxy shape, but also other forms, such as stars, triangles, and heart shape. The engineering in term of form is expected to provide added value to the aesthetics and marketability," said Agus Cahyono in KP4, Tuesday (15/11).

It was also explained that in order to obtain some particular shapes, a special treatment is required by wrapping young melons (age 21 days) with a box-shaped container or other desired shapes. Thus, when the melon grows, it will adjust to the shape of the box. Engineering of environment to growth is also carried out physically, chemically, and biologically in the form of environmentally friendly organic fertilizers and biological pesticides taken from some of the plants that are efficacious as remedy, namely the neem plant, jenu (*Derris elliptica* Bth), and mahogany, which are abundant in the environment.

Agus said that melons which originally cannot be planted in the rainy season because it easily



decomposes can now be engineered by managing soil moisture through the provision of shelter against rain and drainage improvements. This way, the melon is not given fertilizer and chemical pesticide like imported fruit or melons that are already on the market. "That way, the fruit is relatively safer and healthier," he explained.

Cahyono Agus said that genetic engineering and the environmental engineering are an integral part of an integrated agricultural development based on EfSD (Education for Sustainable Development), which is an attempt to synergize the economy, environment, and social culture, and to support the program "jihad for food sovereignty" to become no longer dependent on imported commodity.

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