



by Jan Yanez

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How To Choose The "right" Watermelon And Cantaloupes

Watermelon-whole-and-slices . In many ways, a watermelon is a lot like a Christmas gift: You're pretty sure you're going to like what's inside, but you're never really sure until you open it. Unlike a Christmas gift, however, with a watermelon, you'll like what's inside 100 percent of the time.

Since you can't stealthily peel back the wrapping of a watermelon in the grocery store to sneak a peek at what's inside, you'll have to employ some different techniques to determine its "ripeness." Personally, I use the following three-step process to find the right watermelon.

LOOK – Your watermelon should be firm, symmetrical and free of major bruises or scars. Some minor scratches are okay, however. After all, the purpose of that thick rind is to protect the delicious contents inside. Ripe watermelons should also be dark green in color.

LIFT – The ripest watermelons have the most water. And since watermelons are 92 percent water, your watermelon should be relatively heavy for its size.

TURN – Turn your watermelon over and check out its bottom, which should have a creamy yellow spot (also called "the ground spot"). This is where the watermelon sat on the ground while it soaked up the sun at the farm. If this spot is white or greenish, your watermelon may have been picked too soon and might not be as ripe as it should be.

Cantaloupes

There are basically two things that you can do to tell if a cantaloupe is ripe or not. The first step and most critical is the smell of the cantaloupe. The smell of the cantaloupe is what gives it away, look for a cantaloupe that has a musky sweet smell. An odorless one is likely to be tasteless, too, so it goes back in the pile.

Now after you have found your musky sweet smelling cantaloupe the next step in finding a ripe cantaloupe is to press on

the opposite side of the stem. Use your thumb and press down, what you want is for the cantaloupe to give a little bit. It is important to remember that if it gives a lot your cantaloupe will most likely be lumpy as well.

After you have checked both the smell and toughness of the outside it is time to check the outside. Avoid a cantaloupe with soft spots, bruises or punctures. Don't worry if there is a sort of bleached side where the melon rested on the ground. The melon should feel heavy for its size.

Try these tips when selecting your next Melon!

Conquering Clutter The 4 Container Method

By Sarah Aguirre,
About.com Guide

Have you ever tried to get rid of the clutter in your home? Haphazardly we walk through our homes searching for stuff we don't need. Oddly enough each item seems to call out to us with its greater purpose in the scheme of our lives. You've heard the phrase that clutter takes on a life of its own, well now it is time for drastic measures that give clutter a life far away from yours.

THE CATEGORIES

Find 4 boxes and label them with the 4 categories: Trash, Give Away/Sell, Storage, and Put Away

Trash – This should include any item that you do not need or want, but that is not donatable or sellable. Damaged and broken items should be included in the trash if they are not worth someone buying it and repairing it.

Give Away/Sell – Be generous. Think about the uses someone else might

get out of the items vs. the use it gets in your home buried in cabinets or closets. Consider the financial benefits of selling your stuff at a garage sale.

Storage – Put items in here that you cannot part with but do not need on a regular basis. Make an inventory of the items as you box them. Group similar items together. Remember one good way to clean out closets is to store out-of-season clothing.

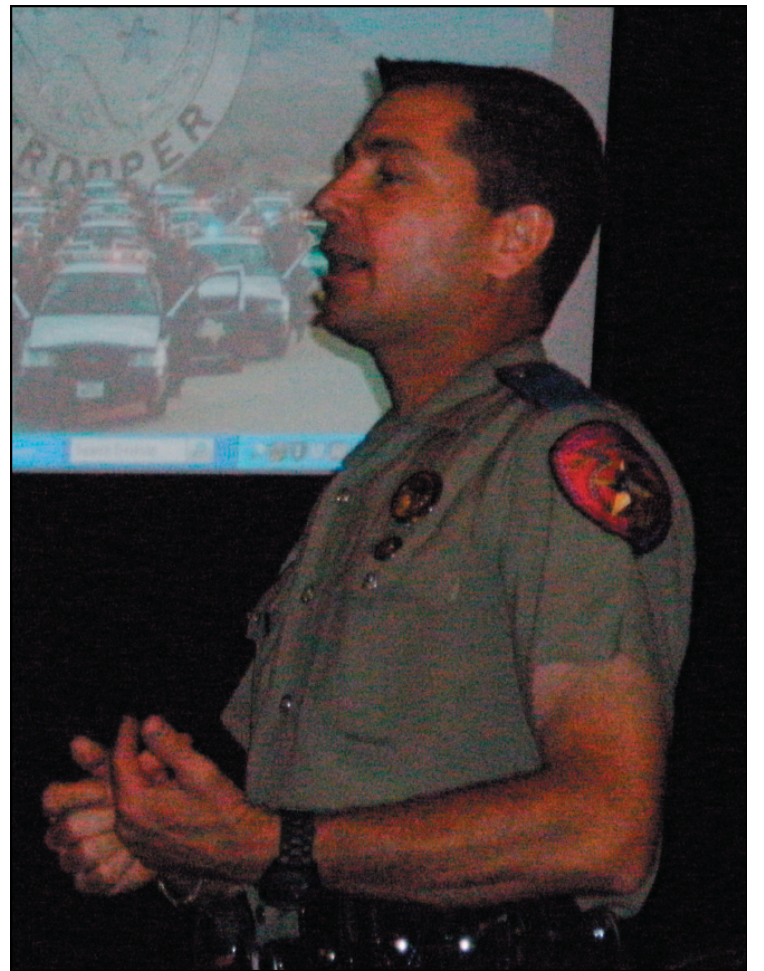
Put Away – This should be your smallest category. These are items that need to be out on a regular basis. Monitor yourself by determining if you have a place for each item. If the items in this box will not fit into your home without cluttering an area up, try to reassess if you really need them. If you do need these "essentials", try to come up with a storage solution that fits into your home.

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF ABOUT YOUR CLUTTER

Should you go thru the above steps and find that almost everything ended up in the "Keep" box, and if every piece of clutter in your home seems necessary for your existence, it may be time to ask yourself some honest questions about the items you can't get rid of.

1. When did I last use this item? If you haven't used it in the last year, chances are your not going to in the next. Allow yourself to purge old items, interest, hobbies, and unfinished projects to allow room for the really important parts of your life.

2. Am I going to need this item on a specific date in the future? If your best friend just set her wedding date for a couple of



Drive Safe! DPS Trooper Shawn Baxter recently spoke to students at Bronte High School about safe driving practices. During the presentation, several students got to play a game called "Who Wants to be a Millionaire - Traffic Safety". Students were awarded prizes for correctly answering questions throughout the presentation.

months away, it might be wise to keep your punch bowl out for future use. But if you are keeping a household full of furniture stacked in the garage for when your 5 year old daughter moves out on her own, it may be time to free up some space. If it doesn't have a definite date of use, the clutter isn't worth it.

3. Does this item have a legal or tax purpose? Paper can be our worst clutter enemy and we often use the excuse of the legal and tax purposes associated with a thirty year collection of receipts. Go through your papers and keep only items that are really needed.

4. How hard would it be to replace this item

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