# Seedless vs. Seeded Watermelon: The Truth That Might Surprise You

By Robert Ferguson

It's hot outside, and my daughters and I love watermelon. We get to the store, and they're in season—**bright red, juicy, and refreshing**. Even better, the seedless watermelons are **on sale**. I'm excited and grab six of the volleyball-sized ones.

As we're checking out, someone recognizes me as a nutritionist and says,

"I'm surprised to see you buying seedless watermelons. I would've never thought you'd feed your kids GMO food."

Not sure if that was a question, a statement, or an insult—but it inspired me to write this article.

Because the truth is, there's a lot of confusion about **seedless vs. seeded watermelon**, and whether one is healthier or "more natural" than the other. So let's clear up the myths—and I promise, by the time you finish reading, you'll be able to enjoy your favorite watermelon **without guilt or doubt**.

## Seedless Watermelon Is Not Genetically Modified

Despite what you may have heard, seedless watermelon is not a **genetically modified organism** (GMO). This means it's not created in a lab using **genetic engineering**. Instead, seedless watermelon is developed through a natural crossbreeding technique known as **triploid hybridization** (Maynard, 2001).

Here's the science in simple terms:

- Seedless watermelons are grown by crossing a watermelon with 2 sets of chromosomes (2n) with one that has 4 sets (4n), created by treating plants with colchicine.
- This creates a **triploid plant (3n)** that can grow fruit but **can't produce mature seeds** (Zhang et al., 2017).
- No gene splicing. No DNA editing. Just **smart plant breeding**, and the result is a juicy, sweet watermelon that's easier to eat.

## Are Seeded Watermelons Healthier?

Some people believe that seeded watermelons must be more nutritious—but the truth is, **both types are loaded with health benefits**, including:

- **Hydration** Watermelon is over 90% water, making it perfect for hot days and active lifestyles.
- **Lycopene** This powerful antioxidant may support heart health and reduce inflammation (Perkins-Veazie et al., 2001).
- **Citrulline** An amino acid that supports healthy blood flow and may reduce muscle soreness (Collins et al., 2007).
- Vitamin C & A Great for your immune system and skin.

The **seeded variety does contain edible black seeds**, which are rich in **magnesium**, **zinc**, **and healthy fats**—but you'd have to eat quite a few to make a significant difference.

## What If Every Watermelon Were Seedless?

Here's something most people don't realize:

#### Seedless watermelons can't reproduce.

They're **sterile**, which means they don't produce viable seeds that farmers can plant to grow more watermelons (Zhang et al., 2017).

So... what would happen if every watermelon on Earth was seedless?

#### We'd be in trouble.

No seeds = no next generation of watermelon plants.

But here's the good news: Seeded watermelons are still grown and maintained to preserve the future of watermelon. Farmers use seeded watermelons to create the parent plants needed for seedless varieties.

## Why You Don't Need to Worry

Both seeded and seedless watermelons are grown every year on farms. The seedless ones are produced by carefully crossing specific varieties in controlled settings — and this process **starts** with seeds from the original, seeded plants.

That means:

- You can enjoy **seedless watermelon** for convenience
- You can choose seeded watermelon if you like to chew the seeds or feel nostalgic
- And either way, you're supporting the future of the fruit

There's **no danger** that seedless watermelons will replace all others or lead to a shortage. It's a **perfect example of how science and farming work hand-in-hand with nature**.

## The Takeaway

The next time you hear someone say, "Seedless watermelon isn't real!" you can smile and say:

"Actually, seedless watermelon is 100% real — and made possible thanks to the seeded ones."

You're not just eating fruit.

You're part of a smart, sustainable food system that gives you options — and keeps watermelons growing for generations to come.

# References

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