

## **Problem:** Vine Crops, Lack of Fruit Set



**Affected Plants:** Cucumbers, Muskmelons, Watermelon, Pumpkins

**Description:** Cucumbers, squash, melons, and pumpkins all produce separate male and female flowers together on the same plant. Male flowers outnumber female flowers and always appear first. It takes several weeks of blooming before fruits start to set. Bees are necessary to pollinate the fruit and bees don't leave the hive when it is a cloudy or rainy day. Thus, with several cloudy days in a row you don't get a lot of fruit to set. In addition, there seem to be few native or wild bees to assist in pollination due to growing problems with bee pests. We need warm weather to encourage good growth and blooming, along with bright, sunny days to encourage bees.

**Recommendations:** If you suspect a lack of bees as being the problem, hand pollinate some flowers. Use an artist's brush to transfer pollen from the anthers of a male flower to the stigma of a female flower. The female flowers are those that have a small fruit immediately behind them. We also need warm weather to encourage good growth and blooming, along with bright, sunny days to encourage bees.

### **References:**

1. [Flowers Do Not Form Fruits](#), University of Illinois Extension, Pumpkins and More

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