

UGA WEED CONTROL PROGRAMS FOR WATERMELON IN 2017

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Crop rotation, tillage, and a sound herbicide program are all often critical components for long-term success. This circular focuses on developing sound herbicide programs while minimizing crop injury when 1) transplanting into small-bed flat mulch, 2) transplanting into bareground, and 3) seeding into bareground. Large raised-bed mulch production is not addressed but that information can be found on the methyl bromide alternatives circular found at gaweed.com or at your local Extension office. It is critical for growers to understand that their specific production practices may alter weed and crop responses; thus, **growers must evaluate these programs on limited acres until gaining experience.**

TRANSPLANT SMALL-BED MULCH PRODUCTION:

Step 1. Under mulch: If significant weed infestations are expected, the addition of metam sodium (e.g., Vapam) for the control of small-seeded grass and broadleaf weeds (≥ 50 GPA broadcast rate) and nutsedge (75 GPA broadcast rate) will be the most effective option *under the mulch*; plant only after metam has dissipated. If herbicides (although less effective) are preferred under mulch, Reflex, Sinbar and/or Sandea can be applied as long as the treated bed is not disturbed when laying mulch. For Sandea, delay planting at least 7 d after application; no planting interval needed for Reflex or Sinbar. *Carryover potential from Sinbar and Reflex under mulch is much greater than when applied on bare soil.*

Step 2. Over mulch: After laying mulch over a bed that facilitates herbicidal removal with washing and before punching transplant holes (Figures 1 and 2), broadcast Reflex (12 oz/acre), Sinbar (3-4 oz/acre), and Curbit (1.5-2 pt/acre) over mulch and bare soil. Include Gramoxone or Roundup to control emerged weeds, if needed. Herbicides can be applied any time prior to planting except for Roundup (suggest at least 5 days before planting). *All herbicides must be removed from mulch prior to transplanting with a single 0.5-inch rain/irrigation event. Reflex & Sinbar pose rotational issues; see labels for more information.*

Step 3. In-crop: Apply Select Max at 9 oz/acre without adjuvant when grasses are ≤ 3 inches; do not apply within 14 days of harvest.

Step 4. Row middle: Dual Magnum (12-16 oz/acre), Sandea (0.75 oz/ acre) and/or Treflan (1-1.5 pt/ acre) can be applied to row middles for additional residual control and control of emerged nutsedge. Plowing will destroy residual weed control.

Note: *Curbit is only labeled for use between watermelon rows in transplant production. Do not apply under mulch.*



Figure 1. Mulch must be free of holes and beds must be formed to allow irrigation and rain to wash herbicides off mulch.

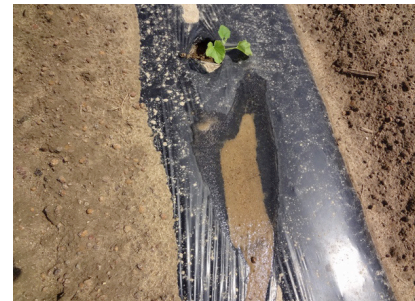


Figure 2. Poor bed formation allows herbicides to puddle, which can cause significant injury.

TRANSPLANT BARE-GROUND PRODUCTION:

Step 1. Prepare land for transplanting, but do not poke transplant holes. Broadcast Sinbar (3-4 oz/acre) and/or Reflex (12 oz/acre) plus Gramoxone at any time prior to planting. Roundup can be used instead of Gramoxone as long as it is applied at least three days prior to planting. Sandea (0.67 oz/acre) may be included, but application must be seven days prior to planting.

Step 2. Irrigate to activate herbicides and to move them into the soil, thereby reducing injury potential.

Step 3. Poke holes and transplant seedlings.

Step 4. After planting, irrigate to maintain a perfect stand, but **limit irrigations** to as few as possible during first two weeks.

Step 5. Apply Select Max at 9 oz/acre without adjuvant when grasses are ≤ 3 inches; do not apply within 14 days of harvest.

Step 6. Apply Dual Magnum (12-16 oz/acre), Sandea (0.75 oz/acre), and/or Treflan (1-1.5 pt/acre) to row middles for additional residual control and control of emerged nutsedge. Plowing will destroy residual weed control.

Note: *Curbit is only labeled for use between watermelon rows in transplant production. Do not apply pre-transplant.*

SEEDED BARE-GROUND PRODUCTION:

Step 1. After seeding watermelon into a weed-free environment *with excellent moisture*, apply Sinbar (3-4 oz/acre), Reflex (12 oz/acre), and/or Curbit (12-20 oz/acre). If weeds are emerged, also apply Gramoxone.

Step 2. Lightly irrigate at least 24 hours after planting but at least 36 hours prior to watermelon emergence; this will activate herbicides while preventing the chemical's movement down around the seed. Avoid irrigation during emergence! After emergence, irrigate to maintain a perfect stand but limit irrigations to as few as possible during first two weeks.

Step 3. Apply Select Max at 9 oz/acre without adjuvant when grasses are ≤ 3 inches; do not apply within 14 days of harvest.

Step 4. Dual Magnum (12-16 oz/acre), Sandea (0.75 oz/acre), and/or Treflan (1-1.5 pt/acre) can be applied to row middles for additional residual control and emerged nutsedge control; residual herbicide will likely be beneficial after plowing.

OTHER CRITICAL THINKING POINTS:

1. Dual Magnum and Reflex have third party registrations and labels must be obtained from www.farmassist.com.
2. Reflex poses very serious carryover concerns to certain crops; Sinbar also poses some carryover concerns. When applied under mulch, carryover of these herbicides is greatly increased (Figure 3).
3. Use conservative herbicide rates on sandy soils with low organic matter and/or when using numerous irrigations.
4. Dual Magnum should not be applied within 6 inches of the transplant root ball or seed; do not apply within 60 days of harvest.
5. Neither Sandea nor Reflex should ever contact emerged watermelon foliage.
6. Treflan should be directed or applied in row middles after the crop has three to four true leaves.
7. Metam sodium (Vapam, etc.) requires a fumigant management plan (FMP).
8. Always follow label restrictions of each product used; read label for potential injury or carryover concerns.



Figure 3. Carryover risk with Reflex under mulch is greatly increased.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR WATERMELON/COTTON INTERCROPPING (Figure 4):

- 1) Do not use Sinbar, as it will kill cotton.
- 2) Sandea is not labeled for cotton, and cotton stunting may occur.
- 3) An effective system might include the following: Treflan + Reflex preplant, wash mulch, transplant melons, plow row middles (if needed), plant cotton into weed-free melon row middles just prior to melon vines leaving mulch top, and apply Treflan as a banded PRE application to cotton while directing spray to melons. If cotton emerges prior to melon vines reaching row middles, one can apply Dual Magnum as a banded overtop application to emerged cotton without directly contacting melon vines. Select Max may be applied topically to melons and cotton.



Figure 4. Example showing watermelon/cotton intercropping.

It is important to always read any pesticide label before use. Use the product strictly according to the label directions. It is particularly important to follow all safety precautions. Trade and brand names are used only for information. The University of Georgia does not guarantee nor warrant published standards on any product mentioned; neither does the use of a trade or brand name imply approval of any product to the exclusion of others, which may also be suitable.



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