

Producing More Fruit On Hardshell Gourd Vines

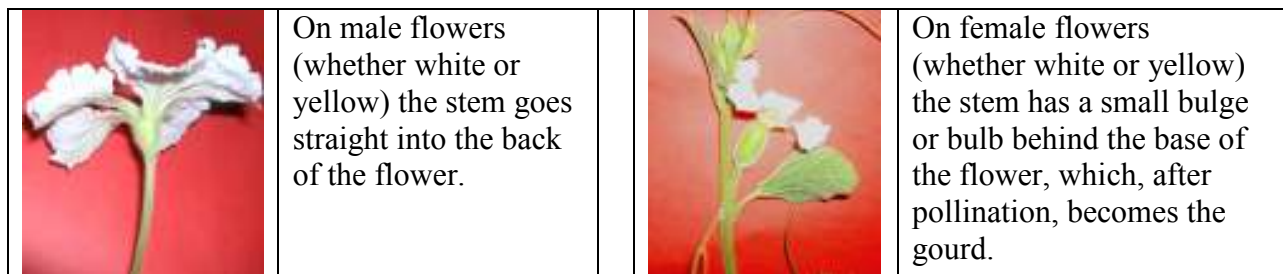
By *Jesse Glessner*

Date: 06 April 2011

Hardshell Gourds start blooming at Dusk with the blooms closing at Dawn. The flowers of all hardshell gourds are white. (Yellow flowers designate an Ornamental Gourd with the flower opening during the day. With the multitude of daytime insects there is usually no problem with these flowers being pollinated.)

With hardshell gourds being night bloomers, there is only one insect, a moth, that helps pollinate the flowers. For more fruit on your vines you must take some steps yourself to assure that your vines will bear a larger crop for you.

First, know the differences between Male and Female flowers so you can help the pollination process. These factors are also true of Ornamental gourds with Yellow flowers.



When your gourd vine gets from 10 feet to 15 feet in length nip the growth bud on the end of the vine. This first main stem of the vine will contain mostly male flowers. Nipping the growth bud will cause laterals to form and grow, which contain mostly female flowers.



Laterals are then formed on the plant starting at the nipped bud area and continue growing until the laterals themselves are nipped. You may need to actually cut some of the laterals off if your plant gets too unruly or if you prefer to have just a few gourds on the vine.



The female flowers on the laterals are what produce the gourds. If you want to assure more fruit on the vines make sure to help with the pollination during the evening hours when the blooms open or in the early morning hours just before they close for the day.

Even though you hand pollinate these blossoms it does not mean that you will have pure seed from the resulting gourds. That requires much more extensive attention to the plant and flowers and very strict adherence to practices of pollination than most people are willing to do.