Finding the Perfect Watermelon

1. Look for a shiny, blemish-free watermelon. The color of a ripe watermelon is dull, but the complexion is shiny. Never purchase a melon that has cracks, fissures or soft spots.

2. Find a yellow or white spot on the watermelon. Usually, watermelons have a yellow or white spot from where it has been sitting on the ground. If the spot is yellow, the melon is ripe. If it’s white, it’s not.

3. Feel the weight of the melon. If the watermelon feels heavy for its size, it’s full of moisture and ripe.

4. Squeeze the watermelon. Gently squeeze your shiny watermelon and listen for a soft cracking inside. This is another indicator the melon is ripe. Don’t squeeze it too hard; you could burst it. You also can hold the melon in one hand and slap it gently with the other. If there is a deep, thick and hollow sound, your chosen melon is ripe. Watermelons that aren’t ripe have a higher pitch than those that are.
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Black spot is caused by a fungus (Diplocarpon rosae) and is the most important disease of roses in Arkansas. Each year, rose growers need to take steps to battle this serious disease that affects most rose varieties. Hybrid tea roses are the hardest hit although the fungus may infect all types.

The optimum weather conditions for disease development are 75°- 85°F with high relative humidity or rainy periods. When leaves remain wet for six or more hours, the fungus infects them. Canes can also be infected. Black spot is less of a problem under greenhouse conditions since relative humidity and temperature can be controlled.

For information on controlling black spot on roses, contact Sevier County Extension Service at (870) 584-3013.