

MELONS:

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are desert plants, which take in heat during the day to produce sugar as a source of energy.

Not only are the days hot enough for melons around Hermiston, but cooler nights slow down the respiration process which allows the plants to retain all that sugar. Light, sandy soils also allow water to filter down deep to plant's roots. The result is a sweet and juicy summertime treat.

Jack Bellinger, of Bellinger Farms in Hermiston, said they started cutting melons off the vine last week, which are now available at their bistro on South Highway 395 and local produce stands. He said they'll start shipping to stores across the Northwest later this week, including the Portland and Seattle metro areas.

The growing season this year has been hit and miss, Bellinger said, with some weeks topping out around 65 degrees and others reaching triple-digits. That type of variation can interrupt watermelons while they're growing, but he anticipates the crop will fare well over the next couple months.

"The quality looks really good," Bellinger said. "We're cutting really solid watermelons right now."



Kids reach out to high-five drivers during the Outlaw Lawn-Dragsters races Saturday during Funfest.

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The Outlaw Lawn-Dragsters out of New Plymouth, Idaho, brought their high-powered mowers to Main Street. Kids lining the race lanes plugged their ears to muffle the high-pitched scream from the engines. However, they quickly reached out their hands to high-five drivers as they made their way back to the pit area.

At the other end of Main Street, several chainsaw carvers added to the high decibel levels. Using logs, the artists created everything from



Above: Alivia Wadkins, 5, Jake Wadkins, 5, Ariel Wadkins, 8, Aubrianna Wadkins, 8, and Kyle Ball, 10, enjoy Hawaiian shaved ice Saturday during Funfest.



A number of people gather around a 1929 Ford Sedan owned by Gary Jones at Saturday's Cool Rides Car Show at McKenzie Park in Hermiston.

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