Why organic seedless watermelons could be considered GMOs–Or chemically-created mutants

Is a seedless watermelon, including those sold as organic, a GMO, a hybrid, or something else altogether—a chemically altered mutant? There is some disagreement on this point. Ultimately, it's a matter of how genetic modification is defined, and consumers are at ground zero of this high-stakes word game.

To make seedless watermelons, the number of chromosomes in traditional melons are doubled by adding the chemical colchicine. This doubling leads to a plant with four sets of chromsones, called a tetraploid plant. The tetraploid is then pollinated with the original diploid melon, and out comes a seedless watermelon seed! The process is explained by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

Where do seedless watermelons fall on the spectrum of GMOs and hybrids?

They are in fact the result of a synthetic chemically induced mutant tetraploid that produces an sterile melon–yet are often sold as "organic".

Prominent biotechnology researcher, Professor Nina Fedoroff, includes seedless watermelon in this discussion about GMO foods on the Penn State Science page. However, a Penn State Science course page refers to seedless watermelons as "a genetically created hybrid."

Read full original article: Seedless Watermelon: Hybrid, GMO, Or Chemically Altered Mutant?