



PLANT FACT SHEET

Cucumis sativus L.

GENUS *Cucumis* FAMILY Cucurbitaceae

COMMON NAMES Cucumber

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Seeds, Vegetable, Seeds - oil, Flowers

Usually unripe fruit are eaten raw.

Young stem tops and leaves are edible.

The kernels of the seeds are edible. They are also roasted. The seeds can be pounded and added to other dishes. The seeds can be pressed for oil.

Cucumbers are normally eaten fresh while gherkins are pickled in vinegar.

DESCRIPTION

A pumpkin family plant. It is a hairy annual climber with tendrils and yellow flowers. It grows to 0.5 m high and spreads to 2 m wide. The stem is trailing and has bristles. The leaves are heart shaped and the lobes taper. Leaf shape varies with different varieties. The tendrils are not branched. The flowers are yellow and funnel shaped. They occur in clusters in the axils of leaves. Male and female flowers are separate but on the same plant. Male flowers are normally in groups of 2-3 and develop first and female flowers are borne singly and open later. Fruit are long and often with a slightly lumpy skin. The flesh inside is greenish white. The fruit are edible. The fruit contain many seeds. Fruit 20-100 cm long are called cucumbers and fruit which are much smaller and darker green are called gherkins.

HABITAT

A subtropical plant. It occurs from sea level up to at least 2200 m in the tropics. It is a traditional vegetable in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. Protection from wind is needed. It is killed by frost. It needs a temperature above 10°C. In Nepal they grow to 1600 m altitude. It suits hardiness zones 9-11. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Batches of 2-3 seeds are normally sown together during the dry season and in new gardens. A spacing of 1 m apart per plant is suitable.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Harvesting can commence 6-8 weeks after sowing. Up to 10 fruit per plant can be produced.

NOTES

There are about 25 Cucumis species.

PICTURES



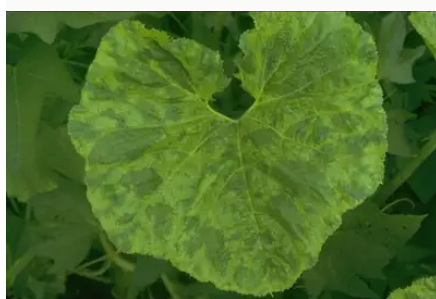
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