PLANT FACT SHEET

Crescentia alata H. B. Kunth

GENUS *Crescentia* **FAMILY** Bignoniaceae

COMMON NAMES Mexican calabash

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Seeds - oil, Fruit

The fruit are occasionally eaten. They are also made into a drink.
The ripe seeds are ground then mixed with rice, roasted pumpkin seeds, lemon peel, sugar, water and ice and made into a non-alcoholic drink called "horchata". Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.
The seeds yield an edible oil.

DESCRIPTION

A tree. It grows 8 m tall. It has drooping branches but no small branches. The leaves are 8-15 cm long. They have 3 leaflets. The leaves are cross shaped. They line the main branch. The leaf stalks have wings. The flowers emerge directly from the main trunk. They are brown with yellow throats. The flowers are bell shaped. The fruit is round and green and gourd-like. The fruit are 10 cm long.

HABITAT

It suits a tropical climate. It needs an average, well-drained soil. It can grow in full sun or light shade. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 1,000-2,500 mm. In Africa it grows below 1,000 m altitude. In the Indian Himalayas it grows between 700-1,200 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places. It suits plant hardiness zones 10-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds.

NOTES

There are 6 Crescentia species. They are trees from tropical America.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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