PLANT FACT SHEET

Use with caution

This plant can be harmful if it is eaten raw, in large amounts or without the right preparation. Read the whole fact sheet before use.

Cucumis zeyheri Sond.

GENUS *Cucumis* **FAMILY** Cucurbitaceae

COMMON NAMES Bitter apple

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Vegetable

Caution: The fruit are claimed to be poisonous. They are very bitter.
Non bitter fruit are eaten raw or pickled. The non bitter kinds are used for jam.
The leaves are cooked as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. It is a pumpkin family plant. It keeps growing from year to year. It has a woody rootstock. Kinds with non bitter fruit have to be chosen. The leaves are 3-9 cm long by 2-6 cm wide. The leaves usually have 3-5 deep lobes. These are triangle shaped. Male and female flowers are separate on the same plant. Male flowers occur singly and also the female flowers. The flowers are yellow. The fruit are 3-5 cm long by 2-4 cm wide. They are oblong and softly spiny. The seeds are 5-8 mm long and about 2 mm wide. They are whitish. Plants can be diploid or tetraploid.

HABITAT

It is a subtropical plant. It grows in open woodland and grassland. It grows between 300-1,650 m altitude.

NOTES

There are about 25 Cucumis species.

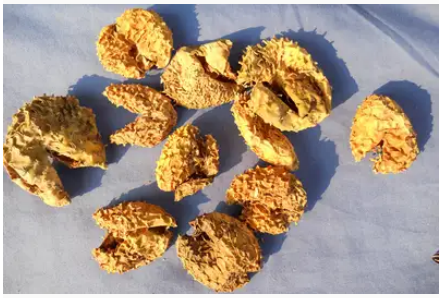
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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