PLANT FACT SHEET

Gossypium hirsutum L.

GENUS *Gossypium* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES American cotton

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Oil

Oil is extracted from the seeds and used in cooking and salads. It is also used to make margarine.
The seeds are use as food after the toxic substance gossypol is removed. Some kinds can be eaten without treatment.
Young fruit are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

An annual herb. It grows 0.6-1.5 cm high. The leaf blade has 3 lobes. The leaf blade is 5-12 cm across. The lobes are broad and oval. The lobes are less than half the leaf length. The flowers occur singly in the axils of leaves. The flowers are white or yellow becoming red or purple. They are 2.5-3 cm across. The fruit is a capsule 3.5-5 cm across. It has 3-4 cells. The seeds are oval and white and woolly. The seeds are covered with very long seed hairs called cotton.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It is widely cultivated in China. It needs an average, well-drained soil. It needs full sun. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

NOTES

A tetraploid plant. There are 40 Gossypium species. They grow in the tropics and subtropics.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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