PLANT FACT SHEET

Cuminum cyminum L.

GENUS *Cuminum* **FAMILY** Apiaceae

COMMON NAMES Cumin

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Herb, Stems, Leaves, Fruit - spice

The fruitlets are used as a spice. They are used whole or ground. They are common in curries and meat dishes. They are also used to flavour cheese, cakes and liqueurs.
The oil is used to flavour sauces and sausages.

DESCRIPTION

A slender annual herb. It grows about 30-60 cm high. It spreads 30 cm wide. The stems are angular. The lower leaves have stalks and the upper leaves do not. The leaves are like fronds. They are divided into long narrow segments. The leaves are 10 cm long. The flowers are white. They occur in a compound umbel. The fruit is like a cylinder and has ridges. It is 4-5 mm long. It tapers at the ends and is only slightly curved.

HABITAT

A warm temperate to tropical plant. It suits hot climates. In Nepal it grows up to 400 m altitude. It needs full sun. It needs fertile, well-drained soils. It needs 3-4 warm months to ripen the seed. It suits hardiness zones 8-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. They can be transplanted.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The stems are harvested when the plant has finished flowering and before the fruit are ripe. These are dried before threshing. The seeds are rubbed to remove the hair like tails. The ground seeds produce a coarse textured, dark green, oily-feeling powder

NOTES

There are 2-4 Cuminum species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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