PLANT FACT SHEET

Cucumeropsis mannii Naudin

GENUS *Cucumeropsis* **FAMILY** Cucurbitaceae

COMMON NAMES Dark egusi

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Fruit, Vegetable, Leaves

The seeds are parched and pounded to remove the seed coat. The kernels are crushed and added to soups and stews.
The seeds are roasted and eaten as a snack.
The flesh of the fruit is edible but not commonly used.

DESCRIPTION

A pumpkin family plant. It is a cucumber-like plant. It lies along the ground. The vines can be 5 m or more long. The leaves are alternate and simple. They are 9-18 cm long and 7-15 cm wide. They are heart shaped at the base and have 3-5 lobes arranged like fingers on a hand. There are teeth around the edge. The flowers are of separate sexes. The male flowers are in groups in the axils of leaves and female flowers occur singly. The flowers are yellow. The fruit are about 25 cm long and 8 cm across. They are pale yellow and have many seeds. The seeds are oval and flattened. They are 1-2 cm long by 0.5-1 cm wide. They are smooth and white.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in forests in tropical Africa. It grows up to 1,150 m altitude.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Often 3-4 seeds are planted in a hole. The seedlings appear within 6-8 days. It is often intercropped and allowed to climb stakes.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Fruit are collected when the stems have dried and the fruit have changed from green to pale yellow or white. Seed yields can be 300-900 kg per hectare. After harvest fruit are cracked or split open and allowed to rot for 14-20 days to help remove the seed from the pulp. (This creates a smell so is done away from houses.) The seeds are washed and covered with sand to prevent sticking. They are then dried and stored.

REFERENCES

Abbiw, D.K., 1990, Useful Plants of Ghana. West African uses of wild and cultivated plants. Intermediate Technology Publications and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. p 40 (As Cucumeropsis edulis)

Achigan-Dako, E, et al (Eds), 2009, Catalogue of Traditional Vegetables in Benin. International Foundation for Science.

Akinola, R., et al, 2020, A Review of Indigenous Food Crops in Africa and the Implications for more Sustainable and Healthy Food Systems. Sustainability 2020, 12, 3493;

Ann. Sci. Nat. Bot. ser. 5, 5:30. 1866

Burkill, H. M., 1985, The useful plants of west tropical Africa, Vol. 1. Kew.

Busson, 1965,

Dalziel, J. M., 1937, The Useful plants of west tropical Africa. Crown Agents for the Colonies London.

Dansi, A., et al, 2008, Traditional leafy vegetables and their use in the Benin Republic. Genet Resour Crop Evol (2008) 55:1239–1256

Dansi, A., et al, 2012, Diversity of the Neglected and Underutilized Crop Species of Importance in Benin. The Scientific World Journal. Volume 2012, Article ID 932947, 19 pages

Egunjobi, J.K. & Adebisi, A.A., 2004. Cucumeropsis mannii Naudin. [Internet] Record from Protabase. Grubben, G.J.H. & Denton, O.A. (Editors). PROTA (Plant Resources of Tropical Africa), Wageningen, Netherlands. < http://database.prota.org/search.htm>. Accessed 15 October 2009.

Epenhuijsen C.W. van., 1974, Growing Native vegetables in Nigeria. FAO Rome, p 61 (As Cucumeropsis edulis)

Esquinas-Alcazar, et al, 1983, Genetic Resources of Cucurbitaceae. International Board of Plant Genetic Resources.

Feld, D., 2021, A Systematic Checklist of Food Plants, including Herbs and Spices, and with an Index. p 9

Grivetti, L. E., 1980, Agricultural development: present and potential role of edible wild plants. Part 2: Sub-Saharan Africa, Report to the Department of State Agency for International Development. p 33 (As Cucumeropsis edulis)

Grubben, G. J. H. and Denton, O. A. (eds), 2004, Plant Resources of Tropical Africa 2. Vegetables. PROTA, Wageningen, Netherlands. p 235

Hedrick, U.P., 1919, (Ed.), Sturtevant's edible plants of the world. p 229 (As Cucumeropsis edulis)

Heywood, V.H., Brummitt, R.K., Culham, A., and Seberg, O. 2007, Flowering Plant Families of the World. Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew. p 117

Jardin, C., 1970, List of Foods Used In Africa, FAO Nutrition Information Document Series No 2.p 42, 71

Kamda, A. G. S., et al, 2014, Protective effect of edible Cucurbitaceae seed extract from Cameroon against oxidative stress. Environmental Engineering and Management Journal. Vol. 13, No. 7, 1721-1727

Kays, S. J., and Dias, J. C. S., 1995, Common Names of Commercially Cultivated Vegetables of the World in 15 languages. Economic Botany, Vol. 49, No. 2, pp. 115-152

Latham, P., 2004, Useful Plants of Bas-Congo province. Salvation Army & DFID p 101

Loukou, A. L., et al, 2006, Macronutrient composition of three cucurbit species cultivated for seed consumption in Côte d'Ivoire. Afr. J. Biotechnol.

Mosango M., Szafranski F., 1985, Plantes sauvages à fruits comestibles dans les environs de Kisangani (Zaïre). In: Journal d'agriculture traditionnelle et de botanique appliquée, 32e année, pp. 177-190

Nyadanu, D., et al, 2015, Agro-biodiversity and challenges of on-farm conservation: the case of plant genetic resources of neglected and underutilized crop species in Ghana. Genet. Resourc. Crop Evol. 62(7): (As Cucumeropsis edulis)

Okigbo, B.N., Vegetables in Tropical Africa, in Opena, R.T. & Kyomo, M.L., 1990, Vegetable Research and development in SADCC countries. Asian Vegetable Research and development Centre. Taiwan. p 38

Okigbo, B.N., Vegetables in Tropical Africa, in Opena, R.T. & Kyomo, M.L., 1990, Vegetable Research and development in SADCC countries. Asian Vegetable Research and development Centre. Taiwan. p 38 (As Cucumeropsis edulis)

Peters, C. R., O'Brien, E. M., and Drummond, R.B., 1992, Edible Wild plants of Sub-saharan Africa. Kew. p 100

Segnon, A. C. & Achigan-Dako, E. G., 2014, Comparative analysis of diversity and utilization of edible plants in arid and semi-arid areas in Benin. Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine 2014, 10:80

Terra, G.J.A., 1973, Tropical Vegetables. Communication 54e Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, p 42

Ubani, O. N., 1993, Food Chemistry 47: 7-10 Storage properties of melon seeds (Cucumeriopsis edulis)

van Wyk, B., 2005, Food Plants of the World. An illustrated guide. Timber press. p 160

Vickery, M.L. and Vickery, B., 1979, Plant Products of Tropical Africa, Macmillan. p 39

Vickery, M.L. and Vickery, B., 1979, Plant Products of Tropical Africa, Macmillan. p 39 (As Cucumeropsis edulis)

Wiersema, J. H. & Leon, B., 2013, World Economic Plants. A Standard Reference CRC Press. 2nd Ed. p 443 (As Melothria sphaerocarpa)

World Checklist of Useful Plant Species 2020. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (As Melothria sphaerocarpa)

Zeven, A. C. & de West, J. M. J., 1982, Dictionary of cultivated plants and their regions of diversity. Wageningen. p 124 (Also as Cucumeropsis edulis)

PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

LICENCE CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/85d65e3d-5844-46e6-aaab-68c262d2854d