PLANT FACT SHEET

Cucumis anguria L.

GENUS *Cucumis* **FAMILY** Cucurbitaceae

COMMON NAMES West Indian Gherkin

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Leaves, Vegetable

The young prickly fruit are peeled and eaten raw. They are also boiled and served with hot pepper sauce. They can be added to soups or made into pickles. Some kinds have sweet fruit.
The young leaves are eaten cooked.
The fruit can be dried and stored after the seeds are removed They can store for a year.
Caution: Many kinds in Africa are bitter.

DESCRIPTION

A pumpkin family plant. It is a trailing or climbing herb. It grows 3 m long. It is rough to touch. The leaves are broadly oval and 4-10 cm long by 5-11 cm wide. They have 3-5 deep lobes. The leaves have fine teeth along the edge. It has separate male and female flowers on the same plant. There are 1-10 male flowers with stalks 4-30 mm long. The female flowers occur singly. The stalks are 1-10 cm long. The fruit are broadly oblong and 4-7 cm long. They are covered with soft curved prickles. They ripen to yellow-green with darker bands along them. The seed are 4-6 mm long. The flesh is firm and white.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. An edible variety is cultivated in tropical America. It grows between 200-1,500 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed.

NOTES

There are about 25 Cucumis species. There is an original bitter kind growing wild in Africa.

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