PLANT FACT SHEET

Cucumis ficifolius A. Rich.

GENUS *Cucumis* **FAMILY** Cucurbitaceae

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Vegetable, Roots - flavouring, Fruit

The tender leaves are cooked and eaten. They are also dried in the sun, pounded and used as a vegetable paste with grounded peanuts.
The young fruit are eaten raw. Mature fruit are boiled and eaten.
Mature fruit are cut into small slices, dried and cooked as a vegetable after adding peanut paste.
The roots are used to make alcohol more intoxicating.

DESCRIPTION

A pumpkin family climbing herb. It grows 2 m long. The stems have short soft hairs and a few hooked spines. The old stems are thick and have scaly bark at the base. The leaves are simple and have 3 lobes. They are oval or broadly rounded. The base is heart shaped. The edges are wavy and there are teeth around the edge. There are single tendrils beside the leaves. Male and female flowers are on the same plant. They occur singly beside the leaves. They have a green bell shaped tube and yellow petals. The fruit is fleshy and oval. They are 5 cm long and green with faint stripes. They turn bright yellow as they ripen. The stalk is thick and 3-6 cm long. The skin has hard cone shaped projections 2 mm long over it.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in medium altitude wooded grasslands. It grows up to 1,300 m above sea level. It grows in areas with a rainfall between 600-1,300 mm.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The leaves are collected during the rainy season.
The fruit are collected during the rainy season and after it.
The dried leaves and sliced fruit are stored in a dry place.

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