



PLANT FACT SHEET

Physalis ixocarpa Brot. ex Hornem.

GENUS *Physalis* FAMILY Solanaceae

COMMON NAMES Tomatillo

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Leaves, Vegetable

The fruit are eaten fresh. They can be used for jam, sauces, pickles, or juice. They are used in soups, curries, and in cooked meat dishes.

Unripe fruit are often used in a hot chili sauce.

The leaves are cooked and eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A branched annual/perennial herb growing up to 1 m tall. The leaves are oval and 5 cm long by 3 cm wide. The edges of the leaves are entire or slightly wavy. They are smooth. The flower stalk is up to 7 mm long. The flower is small about 2 cm across. It is yellow with five dark purple brown markings at the throat. The fruit is yellow with purple veins and sticky. They are 4 cm across. There are several named cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It suits temperate to subtropical climates. It suits warmer climates. Plants are damaged by frost. They do best in rich soil in full sun. A temperature above 16°C is best. In Zimbabwe it grows up to 1,500 m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed germinate in 7-10 days. Plants should be spaced 40 cm apart. Plants are best staked to prevent plants sprawling and fruit rotting. Plants can be grown from cuttings. Flowers are self fertile.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants fruit in their first year. Fruit fall to the ground and are collected and ripen over the next 4 weeks. Yields of about 1 kg per plant are possible.

NOTES

There are about 75-100 *Physalis* species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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PROVIDED BY Food Plants International

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

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