PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Coccinia grandis* (L.) J. O. Voigt.

**GENUS** *Coccinia* **FAMILY** Cucurbitaceae

**COMMON NAMES** Ivy gourd, Little gourd, Scarlet gourd

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Leaves, Fruit, Tubers, Root, Vegetable, Seeds

The leaves, shoots, and immature fruits are cooked as a vegetable.
Mature fruits are eaten raw. The ripe red fruit are collected, peeled and cut into small pieces and added to porridge.
The leaf tips are cooked as a vegetable. They are also used in soups. The leaves can be stored for 10 days.
The unripe fruit are cooked as a vegetable. They are used in curries.
Sometimes the fruit are candied.

## DESCRIPTION

A pumpkin family plant. It is a climbing or trailing herb. It can climb 20 m high. It has single tendrils. It has long tuberous roots. The leaves are heart shaped, with the lobes towards the base in an angular shape. The leaves are 5-10 cm across. The edges of the leaves are irregular. The flowers occur as male and female flowers on separate plants. The flowers are large and white and occur singly. The fruit is oblong and up to 10 cm long by 2.5 cm across. It is green with white stripes. The fruit become bright red when mature. The seeds are white or light brown. They are hairy and flattened with a broad rim.

## HABITAT

A tropical plant. It does well in warm climates. In cold weather, plants remain dormant. They cannot grow in waterlogged soil. Plants grow between 550 and 1600 m altitude in Ethiopia. It requires a well distributed rainfall and a fairly high humidity. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 1,000-1,600 mm. It requires a sandy soil with good drainage and a high level of organic material. In Nepal the plants grow up to 1400 m altitude. In south Vietnam it grows up to 1,500 m above sea level. In the Himalayas in India it grows between 1,200-2,000 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places. In Yunnan.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

Plants are grown from stem cuttings or tuberous roots. They can also be grown from seeds. Stem cuttings about 12-15 cm long are suitable. The plant needs a trellis to climb over. One male plant to every ten female plants is enough to ensure pollination. A spacing of 150 cm apart is suitable. During dry periods watering is required.

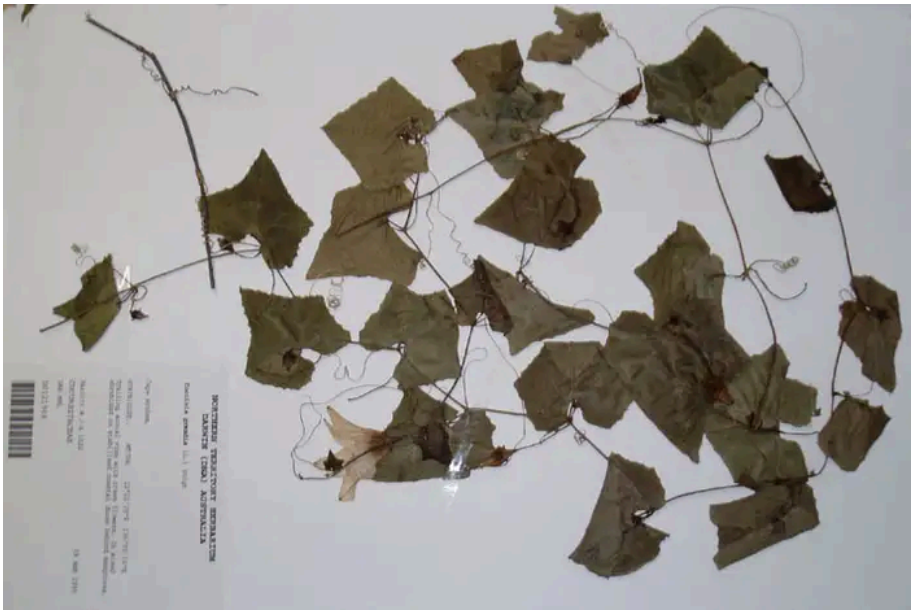
### Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants can grow for 3 or 4 years. The yield of fruit can be about 10 kg per plant.
In Tanzania the fruit are collected in June to August.

## NOTES

It can be invasive. It is illegal to grow it in some places. It is used in medicine.

## PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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