PLANT FACT SHEET

Trigonella foenum-graecum L.

GENUS *Trigonella* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Fenugreek

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Leaves, Herb, Spice, Young pods, Vegetable

The seeds can be sprouted and eaten. They are also soaked and cooked.
The seeds are ground and used as a spice. They are used in curry powder.
The leaves can be eaten as a vegetable. They are also dried and mixed into vegetable dishes.
The bitter taste of the seeds can be removed by slightly dry roasting.
The roasted seeds are used as a coffee substitute.
The seeds and leaves can be brewed into a tea.
The seeds produce an oil.

DESCRIPTION

A small herb. It grows up to 30-60 cm tall. It spreads 20-30 cm wide. It grows each year from seed. The leaves have 3 leaflets like clover. The leaflets are oval and do not have stalks. They are 1.3-2.7 cm long by 0.5-1.7 cm wide. They are spoon shaped with teeth and a rounded tip. They narrow towards the base. The leaves are light green. The flowers are small and pea like. They are yellow. The fruit is a long narrow pod. It has a pronounced beak. The seeds are like small golden brown pieces of gravel.

HABITAT

It suits dry temperate and subtropical regions. It needs a well-drained soil. It needs a sunny position. In Nepal they grow up to 2500 m altitude. It can tolerate frost. It can grow in acid, neutral and alkaline soils. It can grow in salty soils. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 380-1,530 mm. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 9-11. Hobart Botanical Gardens. In Sichuan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seeds are sown directly. They are thinned out to 10 cm between plants.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants mature in 3-5 months. The seeds are harvested when ripe. Often the whole plant is pulled up and dried and the seed threshed out. They are dried in a warm dry spot. They are normally dried to 10% moisture.

NOTES

The seeds contain hormone precursors which increase breast milk.
The are also used to cure diabetes.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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