PLANT FACT SHEET

Cucurbita ficifolia Bouche

GENUS *Cucurbita* **FAMILY** Cucurbitaceae

COMMON NAMES Malabar gourd, Fig-leaf gourd

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Flowers, Tips, Leaves, Vegetable

Young fruits can be eaten raw and ripe fruit are boiled.
The flesh of the ripe fruit is used to prepare sweets. They are cut into pieces, soaked in lime for 12 hours then washed and boiled with sugar and apple twigs.
The seeds can be roasted and eaten.
The young stems are eaten
The flowers are cooked and eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A pumpkin family plant. It is a creeping or climbing plant. It is a vine which grows to several metres long. It grows as an annual. It does not have swollen reserve roots. The plant is softly hairy. It has 5 vigorous angular stems. The leaf stalks are 5-25 cm long. The leaves are oval or heart shaped. They may or may not have white spots on the surface. The leaves have 3-5 rounded lobes. The central one is larger than the side ones. The tendrils are divided 3-4 times. The flowers occur singly in the axils of leaves. Flowers are yellow to orange. The male flowers have longer stalks. The fruit are large, bright green and mottled. The fruit contain white flesh and black seeds. The seeds are 15-25 mm long by 7-12 mm wide.

HABITAT

It suits high altitudes. It can tolerate low temperatures but not frosts. It grows between 1,000 and 3,000 m altitude in South America. In the Philippines it grows above 1,700 m above sea level. It needs soil temperatures above 15°C for seeds to germinate. It suits hardiness zones 8-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from seed. Seed are planted at the start of the rainy season.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Mature fruit will store for a year. A plant can produce 50 fruit. A fruit can contain 500 seed.

NOTES

There are 25 Cucurbita species.

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