PLANT FACT SHEET

Crescentia cujete L.

GENUS *Crescentia* **FAMILY** Bignoniaceae

COMMON NAMES Calabash, Calabash-tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Fruit, Leaves

The young fruit are eaten cooked or pickled.
The seeds are eaten, roasted. They are also roasted and mixed with wheat to make a coffee.
The seeds yield an oil.
The seeds are used to make a syrup. They are ground and mixed with sugar and water and boiled.
The leaves are cooked in soups.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub or tree. It grows to 10 m tall. It is evergreen. The leaves are arranged in spirals and are long and narrow. They are simple and dark green. They are 27 cm long. The bark is deeply cracked and corky. The flowers are round and bell shaped. They grow in long drooping heads. The fruit hangs like balls on long stalks. The fruit are 30 cm long by 18 cm wide. They are green. They have a hard outer rind and white pulp containing seeds.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It does best in warm moist conditions. In the Indian Himalayas it grows between 1,200-1,900 m above sea level. It cannot stand frost while young. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 11-12. In Cairns Botanical Gardens. In XTBG Yunnan. At ECHO.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed or cuttings. It can also be grown by air-layering.

NOTES

The mature wooden fruit are used for ornaments and containers.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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