PLANT FACT SHEET

Cucurbita moschata (Duchesne ex Lam) Duchesne ex Poir.

GENUS *Cucurbita* **FAMILY** Cucurbitaceae

COMMON NAMES Pumpkin, Winter squash

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

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

The fruit are eaten cooked. They are boiled, fried or baked. They can be mashed and used in pies, soups, bread and cakes. They can be dried, ground into flour and used for bread.
The young leaves and flowers are edible. They can also be dried and stored.
The seeds are eaten roasted. They can also be roasted in salt.

DESCRIPTION

A pumpkin family plant. It is a creeping plant with long creeping stems and softly hairy but without prickly hairs. The stem are rounded or 5 angled and moderately hard. They can grow 15-20 m long. The leaves are large and shallowly lobed and divided like fingers on a hand. Occasionally the leaves have white blotches. They have rounded lobes. They are 20 cm by 30 cm. The leaf stalk is 12-30 cm long. The flowers have male and female flowers separately on the same plant. The fruit stalk is distinctly expanded there it joins the fruit. The fruit are not hard shelled and are dull in colour. The flesh is yellow. Often the flesh has fibres through it. The seeds are plump and white to brown. They separate easily from the pulp of the fruit. The edge of the seed is scalloped and irregular in outline. There are a large number of cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It suits the wet tropics. It will thrive in humid as well as in very hot climates. A temperature of 18-30°C is best. In PNG it grows to 2,400 m above sea level. It can tolerate some shade. It can grow in soils with a pH of 5.5-6.9. In Bolivia it grows up to 2000 m altitude. It suits hardiness zones 8-11. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seeds can be put in a nursery and transplanted.

Harvesting and Seed Production

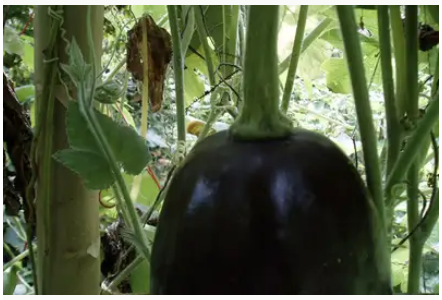
Fruit mature in 70-180 days after sowing depending on variety.

NOTES

There are 25 Cucurbita species. It has anticancer properties.

PICTURES

Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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