

Common names**Pumpkin, Winter squash,****Cucurbitaceae****Scientific name*****Cucurbita maxima*****Edible portion**

Fruit, Leaves, Seeds, Flowers, Vegetable,

**Description**

A pumpkin family plant. It is a creeping vine with tendrils. It is an annual plant. The stems are soft and round in cross section. The leaves are large and hang loose. They are dark green and kidney shaped. The edges of the leaves are entire. There are large nodes at the base of the leaf. The tendrils are fairly stout and are divided half way along their length into many branches. Male flowers are carried on long upright stalks. The 5 petals are united into a long yellow tube. The female flowers are larger than the male and are fewer in number and carried on shorter stalks. The fruit varies in size, colour and patterns on the skin. They can be round, oval or flattened, with yellow, orange or green skin. The surface can be smooth and rough and warty. The flesh is yellow and edible. The seeds are in the centre. The seeds are white or brown. They are flattened but plump and have a slanting scar at the top. The seeds are edible. (*C. moschata* does not have hairy stems but has fruit with a stalk thickened near where it joins the fruit.) There are a large number of cultivated varieties.

Distribution

A subtropical plant. They are grown throughout the tropical countries from sea level to 2400 m altitude. They need a fertile soil. *C. moschata* is better suited to coastal areas. They are frost sensitive but better suited to cooler areas than *C. moschata*. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 8-11.

Found in:

Africa, Albania, Andes, Angola, Argentina, Asia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Bougainville, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Caucasus, Central Africa, Central African Republic, CAR, Central America, Central Asia, Chad, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo DR, Congo R, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominican Republic, East Africa, East Timor, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guyana, Haiti, Hawaii, Himalayas, India, Indochina, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Korea, Laos, Liberia, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mariana Islands, Marquesas, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mediterranean, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, Niger, Nigeria, North America, Northeastern India, Pacific, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, PNG, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, SE Asia, Seychelles, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Sikkim, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South

Use

The young leaf tips are eaten cooked. They can also be dried and stored.

The fruit can be eaten cooked. They are baked, boiled, fried, steamed or mashed. They are used in pies and cakes.

The seeds are edible, raw or roasted. They are also ground into a meal.

The male flowers are eaten after removing the stamen and calyx.

Cultivation

They are grown from seed. Usually 2 or 3 seeds are planted together in a mound. The distance apart depends on the cultivar. Some kinds are better for leaf tips. It is good to save seed of adapted kinds.

Production

Fruit are ready for harvest after about 3-4 months. Seed can be saved from fruit for re-sowing but as pumpkins cross pollinate different types become mixed.



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Nutritional Values

Cucurbita maxima

Edible Part	/100 g edible portion	Moisture %	Energy KJ	Energy Kcal	Protein g	Provit A µg	Vit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
Seeds - dry		6.9	2264	542	24.5	38	1.9	14.9	7.5
Fruit		69.6	439	105	1.4				
Leaves		88.0	160	38	4.9	260	28	2.5	0.9
Flower		88.7	107	26	1.4	173	14	0.8	0.1



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