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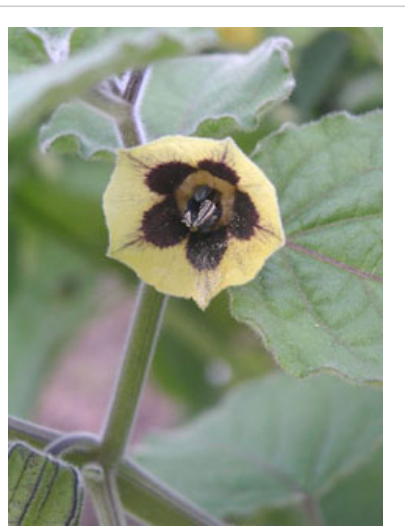


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Physalis peruviana - L.

Common Name	Goldenberry, Peruvian groundcherry
Family	Solanaceae
Synonyms	
Known Hazards	All parts of the plant, except the fruit, are poisonous[19, 65].
Habitats	Coastal regions and disturbed areas from sea level to 4500 metres.
Range	S. America - Peru. Naturalized in C. and S. Europe.
Edibility Rating	
Medicinal Rating	
Care	



<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Carstor>



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Physalis_Nahaufnahme.JPG

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Summary

Physical Characteristics



Physalis peruviana is a PERENNIAL growing to 1.2 m (4ft). It is hardy to zone (UK) 8 and is frost tender. It is in flower from Jul to October, and the seeds ripen from Aug to November. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by Bees, wind.

USDA hardiness zone : 7-10

Suitable for: light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils, prefers well-drained soil and can grow in nutritionally poor soil. Suitable pH: acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils and can grow in very acid and very alkaline soils. It can grow in semi-shade (light woodland) or no shade. It prefers moist soil.

Habitats

Woodland Garden SunnyEdge; Cultivated Beds; South Wall. By. West Wall. By.

Edible Uses

Edible Parts: [Fruit](#).

Edible Uses:

Fruit - raw or cooked in pies, cakes, jellies, compotes, jams etc[1, 2, 3, 34, 183]. A delicious bitter-sweet flavour, it has smaller but sweeter fruits than the cultivar 'Edulis'[K]. The dried fruit can be used as a raisin substitute, though it is not so sweet[183]. The plant conveniently wraps up each fruit in its own 'paper bag' (botanically, the calyx) to protect it from pests and the elements. This calyx is toxic and should not be eaten. The fruit is rich in vitamin A (3000 I.U. of carotene per 100g), vitamin C and some of the B complex (thiamine, niacin and B12)[196]. The protein and phosphorus levels are exceptionally high for a fruit[196]. The fruit is a berry about 2cm in diameter[200]. The dried fruit is said to be a substitute for yeast[183]. If picked carefully with the calyx intact, the fruit can be stored for 3 months or more[196]. The fruit is about 2cm in diameter[196].

Medicinal Uses

Plants For A Future can not take any responsibility for any adverse effects from the use of plants. Always seek advice from a professional before using a plant medicinally.

Diuretic; Vermifuge.

The leaf juice has been used in the treatment of worms and bowel complaints[240]. The plant is diuretic[240].

Other Uses

None known

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4 Foods to never eat:



Cut down a bit of stomach fat every day by never eating these 4 foods.

➔ 4 Foods

Cultivation details

Succeeds in a sheltered position in any well-drained soil in full sun or light shade[196, 200]. Prefers a rich loam[38] but tolerates poor soils[196]. If the soil is too rich it encourages leaf production at the expense of fruiting[196]. Plants tolerate a pH in the range 4.5 to 8.2[196]. The Cape Gooseberry is an evergreen shrub in its native environment. It is not very cold-hardy in Britain, however, though it can succeed outdoors as a herbaceous perennial in the mildest areas of the country or when grown in favoured positions such as the foot of a sunny wall. Some cultivars will tolerate temperatures down to about -10° when grown in this way[K]. It would be wise to apply a good protective mulch to the roots in late autumn after the top growth has been cut back by frosts. In most areas of Britain, however, it needs to be grown as an annual in much the same way as tomatoes. The plant is usually naturally bushy, but it can be useful to pinch out the growing tip whilst the shoots are less than 30cm tall in order to encourage side shoots[K]. This species is often cultivated for its edible fruit in warm temperate and tropical zones, there are some named varieties[3, 183]. 'Edulis' is the most common cultivar in Britain, it has considerably larger fruits than the species but these do not have quite such a good flavour[K]. Yields of 20 tonnes per hectare are common in S. America, 33 tonnes has been achieved[196].

Propagation

Seed - sow March/April in a greenhouse only just covering the seed. Germination usually takes place quickly and freely. Prick out the seedlings into individual pots of fairly rich soil when they are large enough to handle and plant them out after the last expected frosts. Consider giving them some protection such as a cloche until they are growing away well. Diurnal temperature fluctuations assist germination[170]. Division in spring[111]. This is best done without digging up the plant. Remove young shoots that are growing out from the side of the clump, making sure that some of the below ground shoot is also removed. It is best if this has some roots on, but the shoot should form new roots fairly quickly if it is potted up and kept for a few weeks in a shady but humid part of the greenhouse[K].

Plant Suppliers: Click here for a [List](#)



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Expert comment

Author

L.

Botanical References

170200

Links / References

[K] **Ken Fern** Notes from observations, tasting etc at Plants For A Future and on field trips.

[1]**F. Chittendon**. RHS Dictionary of Plants plus Supplement. 1956

Comprehensive listing of species and how to grow them. Somewhat outdated, it has been replaced in 1992 by a new dictionary (see [200]).

[2]**Hedrick. U. P.** Sturtevant's Edible Plants of the World.

Lots of entries, quite a lot of information in most entries and references.

[3]**Simmons. A. E.** Growing Unusual Fruit.

A very readable book with information on about 100 species that can be grown in Britain (some in greenhouses) and details on how to grow and use them.

[34]**Harrison. S. Wallis. M. Masefield. G.** The Oxford Book of Food Plants.

Good drawings of some of the more common food plants from around the world. Not much information though.

[38]**Simmons A. E.** Simmons' Manual of Fruit.

A good guide to some of the cultivars of temperate fruits. It covers quite a wide range of fruits.

[111]**Sanders. T. W.** Popular Hardy Perennials.

A fairly wide range of perennial plants that can be grown in Britain and how to grow them.

[170]**Dremann. C. G.** Ground Cherries, Husk Tomatoes and Tomatilloes.

Only a small booklet but it covers the various species in some depth.

[183]**Facciola. S.** Cornucopia - A Source Book of Edible Plants.

Excellent. Contains a very wide range of conventional and unconventional food plants (including tropical) and where they can be obtained (mainly N. American nurseries but also research institutes and a lot of other nurseries from around the world).

[196]**Popenoe. H. et al** Lost Crops of the Incas

An excellent book. Very readable, with lots of information and good pictures of some lesser known food plants of S. America.

[200]**Huxley. A.** The New RHS Dictionary of Gardening. 1992.

Excellent and very comprehensive, though it contains a number of silly mistakes. Readable yet also very detailed.

[240]**Chopra. R. N., Nayar. S. L. and Chopra. I. C.** Glossary of Indian Medicinal Plants (Including the Supplement).

Very terse details of medicinal uses of plants with a wide range of references and details of research into the plants chemistry. Not for the casual reader.

Readers comment

Elizabeth H.

Corey Mon Dec 18 2006

If Microsoft designed a fruit, the physalis peruviana would be it. 'nuff said.

Elizabeth H.

TURGAY CEPNÝ Tue Jul 8 2008

Dear Sir/Madam, I want to grow physalis peruviana in Eastern Blacksea of Turkey. Please send me information how I can grow it.

Elizabeth H.

Sun Jul 27 2008

When do you harvest P. edulis?

Elizabeth H.

barry glennie Tue Oct 14 2008

i grow physallis plants in the uk survive southern winters outside have hardie stock for sale

Elizabeth H.

wirdan mahzumi Fri Feb 6 2009

in my country, indonesia, regency Sekadau, Kalimantan Barat province, i saw many physalis peruviana grow, we used for malaria or diabetitic mellitus, we are drink one glass, leaf with warm water.

Elizabeth H.

Peter LEWIN Fri Oct 23 2009

I have grown five plants from seed, and have transplanted them twice. They live on my lounge window ledge, and receive about 21C during the evening, and whatever heat comes from the sun during the day. My problem is that they have grown to about 5-6' and try to flower but they are weak, and eventually drop off. Two questions if anyone can help...can I cut the centre stems down, and will they survive throughout the year? So, growing Northern UK, and plenty of shubbery. Cheers, Peter

Elizabeth H.

david Fri Oct 23 2009

Clipping growing tips is usually recommended (to make it compact) rather than cutting the main stem, if grown for over a year they can be pruned right back to encourage new growth that will produce fruit (info from Discovering Fruit and Nuts by S Lyle). In my experiece this plant does not like it too dry, that or something else may be the problem.

David H.

Jan 15 2012 12:00AM

If growing from seed, I would recommend sowing in Jan-Feb indoors as they take about a month to germinate and are very slow to grow for the first two months. Further, growth takes a while to start again after transplanting. These will grow vigorously outside in the UK. I would imagine they would have no problem growing even in Scandinavia. When all else had died in my garden, these were still growing vigorously through into January, when the frosts killed them. The problem with Physalis p. is that the fruit doesn't have adequate conditions to ripen in the UK; at least not in Shropshire. They may fare better in region 9 areas, but as they ripen late I think these would require a poly-tunnel anywhere in the UK. Although the plants have no problem with producing 75-100 fruits per plant, only one or two will fully ripen and a handful of others will half ripen. There are reports that this can only be grown as an annual in the UK, but the roots should survive the winter, especially if given some protection. If growing outside, it will also need some protection from wind. The stems are extremely prone to breaking.

Cat S.

B12 and human health Feb 9 2012 12:00AM

B12 - I think that this must be a typographical error. True B12 as an essential dietary additive has not been found in any plant material yet. The inactive forms found in algae have been studied and are at best neutral and sometimes harmful within the human diet.

[Vegan Outreach](#)

Ingrid N.

May 22 2012 12:00AM

I have been consuming these berries for a couple of months now, both dehydrated (like raisins) and cooked with porridge, rice, just about anything. They are extremely tart though occasionally there really is one that has a hint of pineapple flavor. I mention this because in Denmark, they are called ananas berries, but most of the berries I get (from Ecuador) are really sour. I got them because of a sudden crisis with my vision. This had been almost impossible to manage until adding these to my diet.

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Subject : *Physalis peruviana*

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