


Physalis alkekengi

<i>Physalis alkekengi</i>	
	
<i>Physalis alkekengi</i> fruit with the red husk	
Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Asterids
Order:	Solanales
Family:	Solanaceae
Genus:	<i>Physalis</i>
Species:	<i>P. alkekengi</i>
Binomial name	
<i>Physalis alkekengi</i> L.	

Physalis alkekengi (**Bladder cherry**, **Chinese lantern**,^[1] **Japanese lantern**,^[1] or **Winter cherry**,^[1] Japanese: *hōzuki*), is a relative of *P. peruviana* (Cape Gooseberry), easily identifiable by the larger, bright orange to red papery covering over its fruit, which resemble Chinese lanterns. It is native from southern Europe east across southern Asia to Japan. It is an herbaceous perennial plant growing to 40–60 cm tall, with spirally arranged leaves 6–12 cm long and 4–9 cm broad. The flowers are white, with a five-lobed corolla 10–15 mm across, with an inflated basal calyx which matures into the papery orange fruit covering, 4–5 cm long and broad.

Cultivation

It is a popular ornamental plant, though it can be invasive with its wide-spreading root system sending up new shoots some distance from where it was originally planted. In various places around the world, it has escaped cultivation.^[2] It has food and medicinal uses.^{[2][3]}

Traditional uses

The dried fruit of *Physalis alkekengi* is called Kaknaj in the Unani system of medicine, and used as a diuretic, antiseptic, liver corrective, and sedative.^[4]

Chemical constituents

Like a number of other species in the genus *Physalis*, it contains a wide variety of physalins.^{[5][6][7]} When isolated from the plant, these have antibacterial^[8] and leishmanicidal^{[9][10]} activities *in vitro*.

It also contains caffeic acid ethyl ester, 25,27-dehydro-physalin L, physalin D, and cuneataside E.^[11]

Cultural significance

In Japan, its seeds are used as part of the Bon Festival as offerings to guide the souls of the deceased. There is also an annual market dedicated to the flower called *hōzuki-ichi* which occurs every year in Asakusa around Sensō-ji every year on July 9th and 10th.

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Physalis alkekengi, or the Chinese Lantern, blooms during Winter and dries during Spring. Once it is dried, the bright red fruit is seen. The outer cover is a thin mesh that held the flower petals, seen in golden colour

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