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## Physalis pubescens - L.

<b>Common Name</b>	Ground Cherry, Husk tomato
<b>Family</b>	<a href="#">Solanaceae</a>
<b>Synonyms</b>	P. barbardense. P. florida.
<b>Known Hazards</b>	Although no specific mention has been seen for this species, it belongs to a genus where many of the members have poisonous leaves and stems, though the full ripe fruits are usually edible[19, 65].
<b>Habitats</b>	Damp to dry open woods, sand dunes and disturbed soil[43]
<b>Range</b>	N. America - Wisconsin, Virginia, Ohio. Indiana and southwards.
<b>Edibility Rating</b>	
<b>Medicinal Rating</b>	
<b>Care</b>	

### Summary

#### Physical Characteristics



Physalis pubescens is a ANNUAL growing to 0.5 m (1ft 8in). It is hardy to zone (UK) 7. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by Insects.

USDA hardiness zone : 6-9

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

#### Habitats

Cultivated Beds;



[www.flickr.com/photos/plants\\_of\\_russian\\_in\\_brazil](http://www.flickr.com/photos/plants_of_russian_in_brazil)



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Horus\\_Elthamensis\\_plate\\_009.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Horus_Elthamensis_plate_009.jpg)

**A Brita Pitcher**  
**Can NOT Filter This...**



**Texas Man**  
**Discovers New**  
**Pitcher That Filters**  
**Out Fluoride,**  
**Heavy-Metals And**  
**Disease Causing**  
**Contaminants...**

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## Edible Uses

Edible Parts: [Fruit](#).

Edible Uses:

Fruit - raw or cooked in pies, preserves etc[62, 85, 132, 183]. A delicious bitter sweet flavour. The fruit falls from the plant before it is fully ripe and should be left for a week or two until the husk has dried and the fruit has turned a golden-yellow[207]. Delightful when fully ripe[102]. When dried in sugar, the fruit is excellent in fruit cakes, some cooks preferring them to raisins or figs[183]. Yields up to 0.5 kilo per plant[170]. 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 will store for several weeks if left in the calyx[207]. The fruit is a berry about 15mm in diameter[200].

## Medicinal Uses

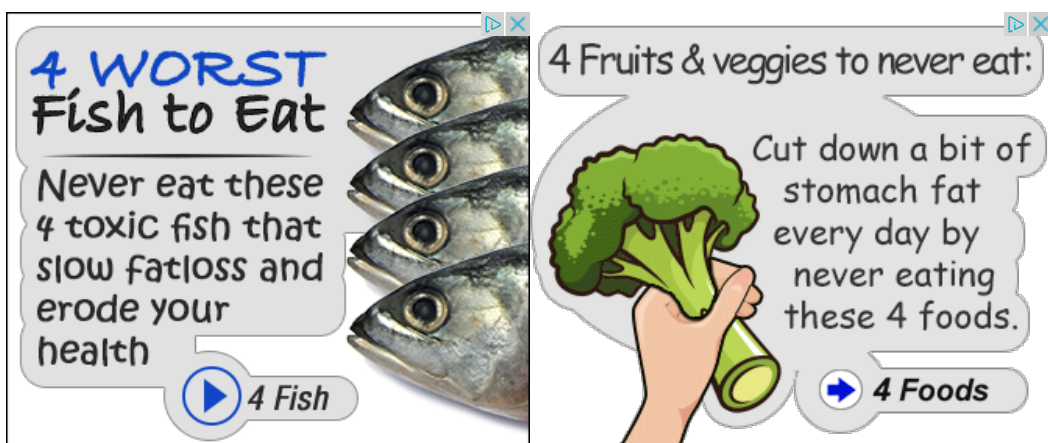
*Plants For A Future can not take any responsibility for any adverse effects from the use of plants. Always seek advice from a professional before using a plant medicinally.*

[Antipyretic](#); [Depurative](#); [Diuretic](#); [Pectoral](#); [Vermifuge](#).

The whole plant is antipyretic, depurative, diuretic, pectoral, vermifuge[147]. A decoction is used in the treatment of abscesses, coughs, fevers, sore throat etc[147, 218].

## Other Uses

None known



## Cultivation details

Succeeds in any well-drained soil in full sun or light shade[200]. Cultivated for its edible fruit in the Ukraine[50]. There are some named varieties[200]. 'Cossack Pineapple' has a small pineapple-flavoured fruit[200]. 'Goldie' has medium-sized fruits that are borne prolifically on a well-branched plant[200].

## 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].

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## Expert comment

## Author

L.

## Botanical References

170

## Links / References

[43]**Fernald. M. L.** Gray's Manual of Botany.

A bit dated but good and concise flora of the eastern part of N. America.

[50]? Flora Europaea

An immense work in 6 volumes (including the index). The standard reference flora for Europe, it is very terse though and with very little extra information. Not for the casual reader.

[62]**Elias. T. and Dykeman. P.** A Field Guide to N. American Edible Wild Plants.

Very readable.

[85]**Harrington. H. D.** Edible Native Plants of the Rocky Mountains.

A superb book. Very readable, it gives the results of the authors experiments with native edible plants.

[102]**Kavasch. B.** Native Harvests.

Another guide to the wild foods of America.

[132]**Bianchini. F., Corbetta. F. and Pistoia. M.** Fruits of the Earth.

Lovely pictures, a very readable book.

[147]? A Barefoot Doctors Manual.

A very readable herbal from China, combining some modern methods with traditional Chinese methods.

[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).

[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.

[207] **Coffey, T.** The History and Folklore of North American Wild Flowers.

A nice read, lots of information on plant uses.

[218] **Duke, J. A. and Ayensu, E. S.** Medicinal Plants of China

Details of over 1,200 medicinal plants of China and brief details of their uses. Often includes an analysis, or at least a list of constituents. Heavy going if you are not into the subject.

### Readers comment

Elizabeth H.

**Joe Krein** Mon Jun 2 2008

Why do all of your descriptions say, "The plant prefers light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils and requires well-drained soil. The plant prefers acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils" ? Seems pretty ambiguous. How can a plant that needs well drained soil also prefer heavy clay soils? Also, how can it "prefer" such a wide range of alkalinities?

Elizabeth H.

**Eric Cgung** Sun Jul 27 2008

I have a plant called *Physalis pubescens*, but the picture are not the same. I have 2 picture at my site. Is this plant the same as yours. Thanks for identification. I am in Malaysia. Thanks.

[herb plant](#)

Elizabeth H.

**Mrs B J Harvey** Wed Apr 8 2009

I wish to buy dried *Physalis* in UK, can you help

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Subject : *Physalis pubescens*

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