

Benincasa hispida

[Synonyms : *Benincasa cerifera*, *Cucurbita hispida*, *Lagenaria dasystemon*]

GOURD MELON is an annual vine. Native to tropical Asia and Africa, it has small yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Abóbora d'água* (Portuguese), Ash gourd, Ash pumpkin, *Bai dong gwa* (Chinese), *Bí bee* (Vietnamese), *Bí dao* (Vietnamese), *Bí xanh* (Vietnamese), *Brihatphala* (Sanskrit), *Budida-gum-madi* (Telugu), *Calabaza blanca* (Spanish), *Calabaza branca* (Portuguese), *Calabaza china* (Spanish), *Chalkumra* (Bengali, Punjabi), Chinese fuzzy gourd, Chinese preserving melon, Chinese pumpkin, Chinese water melon, Chinese winter melon, *Courge à la cire* (French), *Courge cireuse* (French), *Doan gwa* (Chinese), *Fagu* (Samoan), *Faeng* (Thai), *Fak* (Thai), *Fangu* (Tongan), Fuzzy melon, Fuzzy gourd, *Kandol* (Filipino/Tagalog), *Kohla* (Marathi), *Kubiindo* (Nepalese), *Kundur* (Malay), *Kundur* (Indonesian, Malay), *Kushmanda* (Sanskrit), *Kyauk-hpayon* (Burmese), *Mafak khom* (Thai), *Mafak mon* (Thai), *Mafak mon khom* (Thai), *Mao gwa* (Chinese), *Mom kabagi* (Turkish), *Pastèque de Chine* (French), *Petha* (Hindi), *Pethaa* (Hindi, Nepalese), *Prügelkürbis* (German), *Pushani-kai* (Tamil), *Shijar abyadh* (Arabic), Tallow gourd, *Talvimeloni* (Finnish), *Tougan* (Japanese), *Tung kwa* (Chinese), *Vago* (Fijian), *Vahakurpitsa* (Finnish), *Valkoinen meloni* (Finnish), *Voksagurk* (Danish), *Wachskürbis* (German), *Waskalebas* (Dutch), Wax gourd, White gourd, White pumpkin, Winter melon, *Yin dong gwa* (Chinese), and *Zucca della cera* (Italian)

The marrow-like (*Cucurbita pepo medullosa*), waxy green fruit when ripe can weigh up to 18 lb.

The fruit of the gourd melon have been confused with those of the bottle gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria*).

Hispida is Latin (rough, hairy, bristly) meaning 'bristly or with rough, erect hairs'.

The heavy fruit need to be supported and in Malaysia, let alone other regions, the vines have been cultivated against buildings so that the weighty gourds can rest on a roof say as they ripen.

The white flesh is eaten as a boiled vegetable, and is also dried and preserved (candied). The leaves and flower buds are eaten as vegetables as well. In China gourd melon is included in slimming diets.

Locally the fruit also provide a source of wax for making candles.

As the plant is associated with religious superstitions in India it is less likely to be stolen there than other gourds.

Medicinally, the fruit juice has been used in parts of India to treat epilepsy and insanity, the seeds have provided a remedy for intestinal worms, and the whole fruit have been taken as a laxative – and as an aphrodisiac. An infusion of the root has been used in Malaysia as an ingredient in remedies for some venereal diseases. The Chinese have applied ash from the burnt fruit skin to wounds.