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*Cucumis metuliferus*

**AFRICAN HORNED CUCUMBER** is a climbing/trailing annual. Native to tropical and southern Africa (including the Kalahari desert) it has trumpet-shaped flowers. It is also known as African cucumber, African horned melon, *Afrika agurk* (Danish), Bitter wild cucumber, *Concombre* (Seychellois), *Concombre à corne* (French), *Concombre africain* (French), *Concombre cornu* (French), English tomato, Hedged gourd, *Hommelone* (German), Horned cucumber, Horned melon, Jelly melon, *Kivakurkku* (Finnish), Kiwano (English, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish), *Kumbundu* (Portuguese), Melano, *Melon à corne* (French), *Melon porte-corne* (French), *Metulon* (French), *Pepino africano* (Portuguese), Prickly cucumber, *Rooi-agurkie* (Afrikaans), *Stachelgurke* (German), *Zackengurke* (German), and *Zultjesdragende komkommer* (Dutch).

Warning - the sharply thorny, golden-orange fruit with their blunt red spines need to be handled carefully. Parts of the plant can be poisonous for animals but they are normally deterred by its extremely bitter taste.

The plant was introduced to Australia in about 1930 and it thrived there to the point of becoming invasive.

Today the fruit are cultivated on the edges of the Australian desert – and in New Zealand they have become particularly fashionable as a dessert fruit. Records note that it was the New Zealanders who christened the fruit Kiwano in the 1980s when they were preparing to sell it commercially in the United States and Japan. (In South Africa the fruit are viewed locally as a famine food.)

African horned cucumber is cultivated as an ornamental fruit in Kenya, New Zealand, the United States and Israel.

Medicinally, the seeds (made into an emulsion) are used in folk medicine to treat worms.