

*Cyperus esculentus*

[Synonyms : *Chlorocyperus aureus*, *Chlorocyperus phymatodes*, *Cyperus aureus*, *Cyperus esculentus* var. *esculentus*, *Cyperus esculentus* var. *leptostachyus*, *Cyperus esculentus* var. *phymatodes*, *Cyperus esculentus* var. *sativus*, *Cyperus esculentus* var. *sprucei*, *Cyperus fulvescens*, *Cyperus lutescens* var. *fulvescens*, *Cyperus maritimus*, *Cyperus melanorhizus*, *Cyperus phymatodes*, *Cyperus repens*, *Cyperus strigosus*]

**EARTH ALMOND** is a sedge. Native to tropical Africa and western Asia, it has golden flower spikelets.

It is also known as *Aardamandel* (Dutch), *Amande de terre* (French), *Atadwe* (Twi), *Cebollín* (Spanish), *Chichoda* (Hindi), *Choufa* (French), *Chufa* (Portuguese, Spanish), *Chufa flatsedge*, *Chufanød* (Danish), *Chufanuss* (German), *Cipero dolce* (Italian), *Cipero manĝebla* (Esperanto), *Cotufa* (Spanish), *Edible cypress*, *Edible galingale*, *Erdmandel* (German), *Erdmandelgras* (German), *Essares Zypergras* (German), *Fladaks* (Danish), *Geeluintjie* (Afrikaans), *Gland de terre* (French), *Ground-almond*, *Ground moss*, *Haeo chin* (Thai), *Jordmandel* (Swedish), *Jordmandler* (Danish), *Juncia avellanada* (Spanish), *Juncinha* (Portuguese), *Junquinha mansa* (Portuguese), *Kashuur* (Nepalese), *Kaseru* (Punjabi), *Kaseruka* (Sanskrit), *Ki hamasuge* (Japanese), *Maakastanja* (Finnish), *Mandelsäv* (Swedish), *Noix tigrée* (French), *Nut grass*, *Rush nut*, *Saad* (Arabic), *Šáchor jedlý* (Czech), *Shokuyou gayatsuri* (Japanese), *Souchet comestible* (French), *Souchet rampant* (French), *Souchet sultan* (French), *Souchet tracant* (French), *Tiger-nuts*, *Tijgemoten* (Dutch), *Tubérculo de chufa* (Spanish), *Watergrass*, *Yellow nut grass*, *Yellow nut sedge*, *You sha cao* (Chinese), *You sha dou* (Chinese), *Zigolo dolce* (Italian), *Zizzola terrestre* (Italian), and *Zulu nut*.

*Esculentus* is Latin (eatable).

The roots, that look like large, wrinkled peas when dry, are not only eaten by humans (boiled or roasted as a vegetable) but also hogs .

Records suggest that the ancient Egyptians were the first to cultivate earth almond for food. In modern times it is a food crop in parts of Africa, especially Ethiopia. The juice from the fresh root is the basis for a drink known as *Horchata de chufas* and the roasted and ground roots are sometimes used as a substitute for coffee.

Earth almond came to be known by several North American Indian tribes – and provided some of them, such as the Costanoans, with food. For the Pomo Indians the roots were a vegetable, while the Paiute tribe not only ate the tubers raw but also dried them as an ingredient for use in other dishes.

Some of the Tohono O’Odham Indians stimulated their horses by placing chewed root in the animals’ noses. For some of the Navajo however earth almond was an ingredient in a ritual medicine.

The chewed roots were also prescribed by some of the Tohono O’Odham tribe for treating coughs, colds and snake bites.

Oil extracted from the roots is used for flavouring. In some parts of western Africa this was prized as an aphrodisiac, especially at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century,. The tubers are still enjoyed as an aphrodisiac in India today.

Ghanaians can find earth almond for sale in their local markets.

