

Lemon Cucumber: A refreshing & nutritious Vegetable

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Lemon cucumber, also known as *Cucumis sativus*, and belong to the Cucurbitaceae family, which also includes melons, gourds, and squash. This variety is often referred to as a Garden Lemon, Apple cucumber, Budamkaya, and Dosakai. It is a refreshing and unique variety of cucumber that is slightly different from the traditional cucumber. It quickly gaining popularity in gardens and kitchens across the world. It is known for its lemon-like appearance. The lemon cucumber is round, yellowish in colour, and has a mild, slightly tangy taste that sets it apart from the regular green cucumber. It gets its name from bright yellow colour, which resembles that of a lemon, and its tangy, lemon-like flavour, though it is scientifically, a type of cucumber. Lemon cucumbers have thin skin and are burpless, meaning they lack bitter flavour components and are easily digestible. This heirloom variety matures late and has a low yield but is valuable for genetic research. Lemon Cucumber flowers have both male and female parts, making it easier to self-pollinate than other cucumber varieties. This cultivar is one of seven types of cucumbers, which include Gherkins, Armenian, English, Persian, and oriental cucumbers. Lemon, English, and Persian cucumbers are classified as slicing cucumbers, while Gherkins, Armenian, and Oriental cucumbers are typically used for pickling. Fruit of this cucumber cultivar does bear a slight resemblance to a citrus fruit. It is nearly round, not elongated like most cucumbers, and about the size of a small orange. The fruit often has a protrusion at the blossom end, somewhat like that of a navel orange. The fruit color changes during development from a light green to a pale yellow, like a lemon, and then to a deeper yellow with faint orange mottling (Robinson, 2011).



Origin

A touching tale was told by a huckster in the year of 1909 (Fullerton, H.B., 1910). In order to commemorate the wedding of his beloved daughter, he claimed that he plucked an orange blossom from



her bridal bouquet and used it to pollinate a cucumber plant. The result of this bizarre union was, he said, a cucumber plant bearing fruit like that of an orange. He described its flesh as having the most delicious blending of the finest Florida orange with the crispness of a delectable cucumber. He offered to share his marvellous creation with others for only a dollar for each seed, which of course would be much more expensive with the inflated dollars of today. This preposterous claim of a cucumber x orange intergeneric hybrid was indignantly denounced by Fullerton in 1910. He disclosed that it was nothing more than the 'Lemon' cucumber cultivar, which was listed in seed catalogues at that time (Robinson, 2011).

Lemon cucumbers are well-suited for warm weather but are adaptable enough to grow in cooler climates as well. Lemon Cucumbers remain popular in Indian and Australian markets. They can also be purchased from seed all over the world and found at farmers markets and specialty grocers in the United States, Europe, and Asia. Unlike the long, cylindrical cucumbers that are commonly found in supermarkets, lemon cucumbers are round and yellow when ripe. When unripe, they appear green. As they mature, their color turns from pale green to bright yellow or golden. The texture of the skin is smooth, and they have fewer seeds than the regular cucumber, making them a delight to eat raw.

Nutritional Benefits

Lemon cucumbers are packed with nutrients that promote overall health. They are low in calories, making them a great option for anyone watching their weight. They are also an excellent source of water, which helps keep the body hydrated, especially during hot weather. A serving of lemon cucumber contains essential vitamins and minerals such as vitamin C, potassium, magnesium, and fibres. Lemon cucumbers are a good source of vitamin C, which is essential for immune function, skin health, and wound healing. The high potassium content in lemon cucumbers aids in maintaining a healthy balance of fluids in the body and can help lower blood pressure. Like other varieties of cucumber, lemon cucumbers are rich in fibres, promoting healthy digestion and supporting gut health. Lemon cucumbers also contain antioxidants that help fight free radicals in the body, reducing the risk of chronic diseases.

Culinary Uses

Lemon cucumbers are incredibly versatile in the kitchen. Their crisp texture and mild flavour make them perfect for salads, sandwiches, and garnishes. Here are some popular ways to enjoy them: Slice lemon cucumbers into thin rounds and toss them with other vegetables, herbs, and a light dressing for a refreshing summer salad. Just like traditional cucumbers, lemon cucumbers can be pickled to create tangy, crunchy treats that complement a variety of dishes. Blend lemon cucumber with fruits like

pineapple, mango, or berries for a cool, hydrating smoothie. Dice lemon cucumber and combine it with tomatoes, onions, and cilantro for a refreshing twist on traditional salsa. Add slices of lemon cucumber to water for a hydrating, naturally flavoured beverage.

Health Benefits

In addition to being low in calories and high in water content, lemon cucumbers offer several health benefits: Due to their high-water content, lemon cucumbers help keep the body hydrated, which is essential for maintaining healthy skin, digestion, and organ function. Being low in calories and high in water and fibres, lemon cucumbers can help curb hunger and promote feelings of fullness, making them a great addition to weight loss. The fibres in lemon cucumbers aids in digestion and helps prevent constipation. It also supports the growth of healthy gut bacteria. The vitamin C in lemon cucumbers is vital for collagen production, which promotes healthy skin and may reduce the appearance of wrinkles.

Cultivation of Lemon Cucumbers

Lemon cucumbers are easy to grow in gardens or containers. They prefer warm climates and well-drained soil. Lemon cucumbers thrive in warm climates with temperatures ranging from 20°C to 30°C. They require a sunny environment, as they need 6-8 hours of sunlight daily to grow optimally. They prefer well-drained, sandy loam soil with a pH of 6.0 to 7.0. The soil should be rich in organic matter for better yield. To grow lemon cucumbers, plant them in full sun and ensure they receive adequate watering. The plants tend to vine and require space to spread, so consider using a trellis or allowing them to sprawl across the ground. They typically take about 60–70 days to mature, and once ripe, the cucumbers are ready to be harvested.



Conclusion

Lemon cucumbers are gaining popularity in urban markets, especially among health-conscious consumers, due to their refreshing taste and high-water content. Lemon cucumbers are a delicious, nutritious, and refreshing addition to any diet. With their bright appearance, mild tangy flavour, and numerous health benefits, they can be incorporated into a wide variety of dishes or enjoyed on their own. Whether you're growing them in your garden or buying them from your local farmer's market, lemon cucumbers are a great way to add a twist to usual cucumber routine while reaping the many benefits of this hydrating vegetable.



Bibliography

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