

## Sponge gourd

Luffa (*Luffa cylindrica* (L.) Roem syn *L. aegyptiaca* Mill) commonly called sponge gourd, loofah, vegetable sponge, bath sponge or dish cloth gourd, is a member of cucurbitaceous family. Nepalese farmers called it Ghiraula. The number of species in the genus *Luffa* varies from 5 to 7. Only two species *L. cylindrica* and ribbed or ridge gourd (*L. acutangula* (L.) Roxb)

### Descriptors for sponge gourd

Sponge gourd prefers pH of around 6 to 6.8. High level of K and P is recommended. It also grows well in green house and will grow on many soil types but well drained sandy loams are preferred. Seeds need to be germinated at 25°C and grown on and transplanted when the soil temperature is about 18°C. Although Ghiraula can be left to grow along the ground, best yields and fruit quality are obtained using a support structure or trellis system. In Nepal it is grown in living trees, dead branches, walls, roofs etc.

### Definitions and guidelines

Descriptors are associated information of a particular species. They are generally used to distinguish, identify, locate, describe and evaluate the genotypes in question. Descriptors listed here are passport, management, environment and site, characterization and evaluation. These are interlinked and some descriptors are overlapped.



## Uses

Plant is bitter tonic, emetic, diuretic and purgative and useful in asthma, skin diseases and splenic enlargement. It is used internally for rheumatism, backache, internal hemorrhage, chest pains as well as hemorrhoids. Young fruit can be eaten raw like cucumber or cooked like squash, while the young leaves, shoots, flower buds, as well as the flowers can be eaten after being lightly steamed. The seeds can be roasted as a snack, or pressed to produce oil. Externally, it is used for shingles and boils. The dried fruit fibers are used as abrasive sponges in skin care, to remove dead skin and to stimulate the circulation. The fruits are anthelmintic, carminative, laxative, depurative, emollient, expectorant, tonic and galactagogue and are useful in fever, syphilis, tumours, bronchitis, splenopathy and leprosy. The vine is most commonly grown for the fibrous interior of the fruits. Kernel of seed is expectorant, demulcent and used in dysentery. Seed oil is used in leprosy and skin diseases.

The seeds for cultivating hybrid tomatoes is the first picking is recommended only after 60 to 70 days of transplanting. Our high quality hybrid tomatoes seeds help in the cultivation of deep red, shiny, oval shaped tomatoes that are developed in a bunch of five. The tomatoes are resistant to Verticillium and Fusarium Wilt and Viral diseases and are also tolerant to sun scald due to fruits covered by green foliage. The tomatoes have a shelf-life of 5-6 days and are suitable for both local and distant market transportation. The cultivation of tomatoes is done all the year round.



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