



# Horned Melon

## *Cucumis metuliferus*

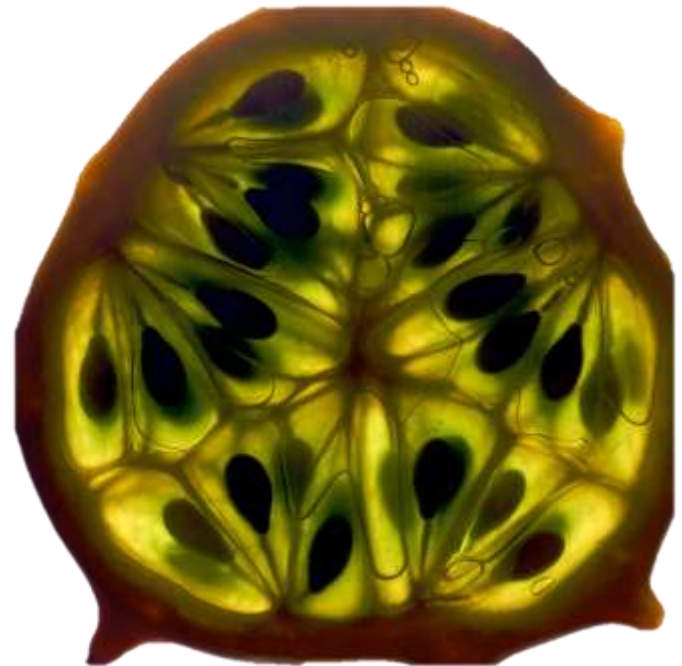
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# Horned Melon

- + Family: *Cucurbitaceae* or the melon family. The family consists of approximately 975 species, most of which are annual vines.
- + Genus: *Cucumis*
- + Species: *metuliferus*
- + Common Names: Horned melon, kiwano, jelly melon, African horned cucumber, melano, and hedged gourd.
- + Relatives: cucumber, watermelon, squash, pumpkin, zucchini, and gourds.

# Geography of Cultivation

- + The Horned Melon is native to central and south Africa.
- + The fruit is now grown in California, Mississippi, Australia, New Zealand, and Chile.
- + In Zimbabwe it is called the *gaka* or *gakachika*.



# Morphological Description

- + The horned melon is an annual vine that can grow at anytime, provided the right temperature.
- + Up to 100 fruits can be produced from a single vine.
- + The fruit is ellipsoid in shape, is bright yellow-orange in color, and shaped like a cucumber with spikes when mature.
- + Leaves and stems are covered with hair.



# Features of Cultivation

- + It is recommended to soak seeds in trays and then transplant to fields when they are at a true two leaf stage.
- + The best time for planting is in the spring, when temperatures are about 15 degrees Celsius.
- + Season is about three and half months.
- + If cultivated in a greenhouse, it is important that bees are introduced.

# Plant Uses

- + Mostly used as a fruit.
- + Also used for ornamental purposes.
- + It is one source of water in the Kalahari Desert during the dry season.
- + In Zimbabwe, it is commonly used as a fruit in salads, rather than for decoration.

# Historical Facts

- + Historically it's used as a fruit source as well as a supplement by the local population in south and central Africa.
- + The name "Kiwano" is actually trademarked by John Kenneth Morris and Sharyn Ernesta Morris of New Zealand.
- + It is now grown in California, Mississippi, Chile, Australia, and New Zealand.
- + It has not found significant use in western cuisine.

# Use In North America and of Native Americans

- + The fruit has only been cultivated and eaten in the U.S. for a short period of time.
- + There is no known use by Native Americans.





# Health Benefits

- + Vitamin A, Vitamin C, and Iron are all abundant in the horned melon.
- + The peel is very rich in Vitamin C and also fiber.
- + As noted earlier, it has a high water content, useful in deserts during the dry season.

# Fun Facts

- + Cucurbitacines, compounds known to be toxic to mammals, are found in some horned melon accessions. This makes the fruit extremely bitter and slightly toxic to small mammals, which prevents mammals from ingesting them.
- + The horned melon is also resistant to many root-knot nematodes.
- + The taste is a combination of a cucumber, banana, melon, and lime.
- + In the Southeastern U.S., it is called the blowfish fruit.
- + Its genome has been sequenced.

# References

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