



Ground Cherry

Growing and Harvest Information

Plant ground cherries in full sun in well-drained soil about 2 weeks after the last frost date and after seedlings have been hardened.

If planting seeds, start indoors six weeks before last frost date and in soil kept at 70 F.

Space seedlings at least 4' apart because the plants will sprawl (but won't grow very tall). Ground cherries require little maintenance but be careful not to overwater as this can cause fungal growth and rot.

The small yellow colored flowers will become fruit and are considered ripe when the husks turn to a tan color. Once ripe, the fruit will start falling from the plant. Because they are indeterminate plants, they will continue to produce lots of fruit until the frost sets in so you may need to harvest almost every day.

Introduction

Related to tomatillos, ground cherries are also known as husk cherries because they similarly have papery husks. Though they resemble tomatoes, both tomatillos and ground cherries are part of the nightshade family. The small fruit has a slightly sweet and tropical flavor, with a texture somewhere between a tomato and a grape. Their papery husks resemble small Chinese lanterns.

Preparation & Storage

Storing:

- Keep cherries in their husks to extend shelf-life
- The fruit will spoil quickly if placed in an airtight plastic bag for storage, but fruit kept in a paper bag in the refrigerator will last for two weeks

Freezing:

- Remove husks, wash fruit and dry
- Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet and freeze until solid
- Once frozen solid, you can transfer to plastic bags and seal tightly

Canning:

- Make sure to use new, updated recipes. The National Center for Home Food Preservation is a good resource for recipes: https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_03/tomatillos.html
- For more instruction on canning: <https://extension.umn.edu/preserving-and-preparing/canning-tomato-products-safety-guidelines>

Nutritional Benefits

Source	Rating
Vitamins	EXCELLENT
Minerals	MODERATE
Fiber	MODERATE

Use By Guide

Vegetable State	Use by
Raw (refrigerated)	7 days
Frozen	8-12 months
Home-Canned	1 year



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Fun Fact:

Ground cherries have the phytochemicals called carotenoids, which provide anti-inflammatory and immune boosting properties.

Prepare Ground Cherries Like This:

Baked
Fresh
Frozen
Grilled
Pureed
Roasted
Stuffed

Try Ground Cherries

In:

Cakes
Jams
Pies
Salads
Smoothies
Yogurts

Preparation

Recipe 1: Husk Cherry and Goat Cheese Salad

Serves 4, Preparation: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 lb. field greens, washed
- 1/2 lb. husk cherries
- 4 oz. goat cheese
- 1 tbsp. dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 4 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 tsp salt
- Pepper to taste

Directions

1. Remove cherries from their husks, wash and dry.
2. In a small bowl, whisk mustard, vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper.
3. Mix together lettuce, husk cherries, and dressing. Top with goat cheese and enjoy!

Recipe 2: Ground Cherry Compote

Yields 2 cups, Preparation: 35 minutes

Ingredients

- 1/2 lb. ground cherries; husks removed
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- zest of 1 small lemon
- 2-4 tbs. water
- 2-4 tbs. maple syrup

Directions

1. Add ground cherries, sugar, lemon zest, and 2 tbs. water to medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Stir occasionally as sugar dissolves and fruit softens and simmer for 10-15 minutes. Add remaining water if compote starts to stick/burn
2. The ground cherries should be soft but remain whole, surrounded by loose fruit syrup
3. Remove from heat and stir in 2 tbs. maple syrup; add remaining syrup to taste
4. Let cool slightly before serving. Enjoy on its own or as topping for desserts, pancakes, etc