

# Tomatillos



# Tomatillo

- Also known as husk tomato
- Fruit is generally green but can be orange, yellow, red or even purple
- Enclosed in a papery wrapping called a calyx
- The condition of the calyx is commonly used as an indicator of freshness
- Native to Mexico and Guatemala

# Tomatillo - Varieties

- Not grown extensively in Texas
- Varieties:
  - Cape Gooseberry
  - Golden Nugget
  - Mayan Husk Tomato
  - Mexican Husk
  - Rendidora



# Tomatillo – Soil and Climate

- Prefer well-drained, sandy loam soil with a pH between 5.5 and 7.3
- Do not grow well in wet conditions
- Sensitive to cold
- Best growing conditions are 80 to 90 degree days with 60 to 70 degree nights, low humidity and sparse rainfall

# Tomatillo - Planting

- Can be planted as seed or transplants
- Space 'Rendidora' varieties 16 inches between plants and 4 feet between rows
- For other varieties, plant every 2 feet in rows 5 feet apart
- If starting with seeds, plant 3 or 4 tomatillo seeds 2 feet apart; when plants reach 4 to 5 inches tall, thin to one plant every 2 feet

# Tomatillo - Pests

## Pests

Name	Damage	Control
<b>Cutworms</b> <i>Agrotis segetumor</i>	Larva feeding inside the fruit and on the stems and leaves	azadirachtin, abamectin, bifenthrin, cyhalothrin, deltamethrin, flubendiamide, carbaryl, gamma-lambda-cyhalothrin
<b>Root-knot nematode</b> <i>Meloidogyne sp.</i>	Wilting caused by galls created on the roots	Nematicide
<b>Tobacco budworm</b> <i>Heliothis virescens</i>	Larva feeding inside the fruit	<i>Bt</i> subspecies <i>kurstaki</i> strain HD1
<b>Whiteflies</b> <i>Trialeurodes vaporariorum</i>	Feeding on the leaf underside; also can transmit disease-causing organisms	azadirachtin, pyrethrin

# Tomatillo - Diseases

<b>Diseases</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Damage</b>	<b>Control</b>
<b>Black spot</b> <i>Diplocarpon</i>	Black lesions, primarily on the leaves but can spread to the fruit	Fungicide
<b>Tobacco mosaic virus</b>	Wilting, dwarfing, loss of yield	Quarantine

Before using a pesticide, read the label. Always follow cautions, warnings and directions.

# Tomatillo - Harvesting

- Plants begin bearing fruit 65 to 85 days after seeding or transplanting and continue for 1 to 2 months or until the first frost
- Fruit are picked just as the calyx bursts
- If left on the plant too long, the flavor and quality will suffer
- Harvesting is done by hand, typically every day
- A plant may produce 60 to 200 fruits in a growing season
- Average yield is 2 ½ pounds per plant



# Tomatillo – Uses

- Often used in soups and sauces, most notably in green sauces for Mexican and Guatemalan dishes
- Some tomatillos are preserved as jam or canned whole for later use



**Figure 2.** Tomatillos are often used in Mexican dishes, such as green sauces for enchiladas verde, and green salsa dips for chips.