

The East London Garden Society

Plant Facts

Chocho



Chocho (*Sechium Edule*) or Cho Cho medicinal herb, is an edible plant belonging to the gourd family. It is not a favourite amongst the children in Jamaica because of its bland taste, but adults who know the value of this herb, use it for medicinal purposes. The most popular name is *Chayote* and it is native to Mesoamerica. However, it is now being cultivated worldwide for various purposes and is rich in Vitamin C.

Cho Cho boasts two unique colours. The main part used is the fruit which is sometimes green and other times is whitish green. It is pear-shaped and carries small thorns that can be a nuisance if not handled carefully. However, in other parts of the world the leaves, the seeds and the shoots are eaten which are also rich in amino acids and Vitamin C.

Some of the common names are *Christophine*, *Vegetable Pear*, *Mirliton*, *Christophine Chouchoute*, *Choko*, *Starprecianté*, *Citrayota*, *Citrayote*, *Chuchu*, *Chow Chow*, *Sayote*, *Pear Squash*, *Seemebadnekai*, *Chayote* and *Iskus*. In Jamaica it is called *Chocho*.

Chocho grows on a broad leaf vine and has many benefits. The preparation of any kind of soup in Jamaica is not complete without Chocho. It is used as a

vegetable, as a salad and in preserves. It is also a good for gravies. Some people consider it more nutritious when it is boiled in the skin.

It is sometimes eaten raw but whether it is consumed raw or cooked, Chayote still possesses the excellent sources of amino acids and vitamin C. To prevent scars from appearing on the skin, slice the raw Chocho medicinal herb and rub it on wounds.

Chocho juice is an excellent herbal remedy for high blood pressure and is effective in reducing hypertension, so many people take of it for this reason. It is also a good medicinal herb for natural weight loss because it possesses 90% water, which makes it a priority both for obese people and for those who suffer diabetes.

Juice it like any other vegetable and if you are using a blender, cut one Chayote into small pieces, put it in your blender with water and blend, but a juicer is much better. It is also a good remedy for atherosclerosis. The medicinal properties of the leaves and fruit are diuretic, cardiovascular as well as anti-inflammatory, the benefits of the tea being derived from the leaves.