



# PEPINO FRUIT



## FAMILY

Solanaceae

## BOTANICAL NAME

*Solanum muricatum* Aiton.

## CULTIVARS

El Camino, Kawi, Puzol, Quito, Sweet Long, Sweet Round, Turía, Valencia

## COMMON NAMES

Pepino dulce, Pepino, Melon Pear, Melon Shrub, Pear Mellon, Mellow Fruit, Tree Melon, Sweet Cucumber, Sweet Pepino

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## CULTIVATION

### PERIOD

Spring (after last frost)

### PROPAGATION

The growing techniques commonly used for tomato can be used for pepino cultivation. Cultivation under temperate conditions is possible as long as winter protection is provided. Can also be grown as an annual crop in a greenhouse. Can be propagated by cuttings and seeds. Cuttings can be 7.5 to 12.5 cm. (3-5 in.). It has an upright growth habit and grows to about 0.9 m. (3 ft.) and can be pruned or trellised. It may require additional support. Seedlings are intolerant of weeds. For field planting, plants should be spaced between 0.6 to 0.9 m. (2 to 3 ft.) apart.

### GROWING CONDITIONS

Soils: Tolerant of most soil types and salinity but prefers fertile soils. Soil pH: Tolerates between 6.5 -7.5. Temperature: Survives a low temperature of -2.5°C (27.5°F). High temperatures reduce sugar content during ripening of the fruit. Requires constant moisture for good fruit production. Yields 2-3 times more in a greenhouse than outdoors. Nitrogen fertilization should be limited to avoid excessive vegetative growth. The plant needs no pollination to set fruit. Unless the pepino plant is being trained to trellis, there is no need for pruning.

### CARING FOR THE GROWING PLANT

Trellis if desired, fertilize and water. Control weeds, insects and diseases. Rotate with other crops to minimize disease occurrence in field production.

### DAYS TO MATURITY

Produce fruits within 4 to 6 months after planting.

## AREAS COMMONLY CULTIVATED

Warm, relatively frost-free climates

## PLANT DESCRIPTION

Pepino fruit resembles a melon (*Cucumis melo*) in color. But its flavor is a mixture of honeydew and cucumber. It is a ground cover and trailing plant and an evergreen shrub.

## VISIT US

<http://www.pvamu.edu/cahs/carc/plant-systems/>

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## HARVEST /YIELD POTENTIAL

Completely mature fruit should be picked. Ripe fruits require careful handling. Fruit should store well for 3 to 4 weeks.

## GROWING STEPS

Buy seeds and start seedlings indoors, in a greenhouse or high tunnel if you want to use seedlings to begin your garden. Prepare your site or containers. Plant when conditions are optimum. Mulch and trellis if desired. Water as needed. Feed with fertilizer when plants are grown. Control weeds, diseases and pests. Harvest when mature.

## POTENTIAL PESTS AND DISEASES

### PESTS

Attracts beetles, aphids, mealybugs, whiteflies, and spider mites

### DISEASES

Bacterial spot, anthracnose, blights caused by *Alternaria* spp. and *Phytophthora* spp.

## CULINARY USES

Ripe fruits can be eaten as dessert, and not fully ripe fruits can be included in salads like cucumber.

## NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS

It is a source of antioxidants, vitamins A, B, C, and K. It also contains iron, zinc, copper, manganese, calcium, potassium, and phosphorus. Fruits and leaves contain alkaloids, flavonoids, and tannins. It is a source of beta-carotene and other carotenoids, protein, and fiber.

## REPORTED HEALTH BENEFITS

Antioxidants, anti-diabetic, anti-inflammatory, anti-tumor properties. Fruits have been used traditionally as remedy of diabetes mellitus, hypertension and stomach problems. Also good for controlling heartburn.

## REFERENCES

Anonymous. 1996. Pepino Dulce. *Solanum muricatum* Ait. California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc. Available at: <https://crfg.org/wiki/fruit/pepino-dulce/> (Accessed 30 July 2021).

Herraiz, F.J., M. D. Raigón, S. Vilanova, M. D. García-Martínez, P. Gramazio, M. Plazas, A. Rodríguez-Burruezo, J. Prohens. 2016. Fruit composition diversity in land races and modern pepino (*Solanum muricatum*) varieties and wild related species. Food Chemistry 203:49-58.

Mahato, S.K., Gurung, S., Chakravarty, S., Chhetri, B. and Khawas, T. 2016. An Introduction to Pepino (*Solanum muricatum* Aiton): Review. IJEAB 1(2):143 - 147.

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