

CHICKPEA

CHICKPEA Garbanzo, Gram, Bengal Gram, Cece, Homos, Chana

Cicer arietinum

Fabaceae – Pea

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Origin

Chickpea's origin is possibly western Asian, specifically southeast Turkey.

Uses

Chickpea is the second most important pulse crop in the world. The immature green pods and tender shoots are used as vegetables. The greatest usage, however, is as a pulse prepared as dahl or flour.

Cultivation

It is adapted to cool to moderate temperatures (8-22° C/46-72° F) for growth but tolerates a lot of heat during fruiting and ripening period. It is grown as a cool season annual in a broad belt through the Mediterranean region to the sub-tropical and tropical regions of Asia, Europe, Central & South America. The Chickpea grows in a variety of soils but does not tolerate wet or saline soils very well. Very heavy soils may cause problems in emergence of seedlings. It grows as a herbaceous annual branching close to the ground. Some varieties are semi-erect with a main stem and only a few branches while others are semi-spreading types with profuse branching.

Under good cultivation the plant grows up to 20-45 cm (10-18 in) in height. Seeds are borne in short pubescent pods, 1-2 seeds per pod. Small black seeded types are associated with earliness and tolerance to adverse soil conditions while white seeded types appear to be higher yielding under favorable conditions. There is evidence that Chickpeas help release phosphorus into the soil. Plant at beginning of cooler growing period when moisture is expected to be adequate. Seeds are sown about 25 cm (10 in) apart and harvested 4-6 months after sowing. Plants are not strongly competitive with weeds. Generally one weeding, 45 days after emergence, is enough to keep weeds under control. Prolonged contact with the fluid exuded from the hairs on the plant may cause disintegration of garments, especially shoes.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Before harvesting, plants should be well dried either in the field or pulled out and dried in the sun. Threshing is accomplished by hand flailing taking care not to crack or split the seeds.

Pests and Diseases

Chickpeas are not generally susceptible to many pests and diseases. Watch for cutworms, the red gram plume moth, and the bollworm. May be sensitive to root-knot nematodes.

Cooking and Nutrition

Chickpeas are eaten fresh or the dried seeds are used as a pulse. Can be fermented into tempeh. Dried seeds can be ground and used as a coffee substitute. A strong acid dew forms on the plant overnight that is gathered and made into vinegar or cooling drinks. Young leaves, tender shoots, and green pods are eaten as a green vegetable. Dried seeds are about 60% carbohydrates and 23% protein. The seeds have very good digestibility.