

BITTER MELON

Momordica charantia



Areas of application

- Lowering blood sugar levels and cholesterol levels
- stomach problems
- biliary disorders
- Cramps
- Inflammation and fever
- Dietary management of severe obesity

Family

(Cucurbitaceae)

Based in

This tropical plant is native to India and China and is now cultivated in the tropical and subtropical regions of Africa, Asia and the Americas.

Plant parts used

Fruit, seeds and seed oil

Ingredients

Protein, amino acids, vitamins (provitamin A, vitamin C and B vitamins), minerals and trace elements (calcium, potassium, magnesium and iron), various bitter compounds

Usage/Indications

Bitter melon, also known as bitter melon, is characterised by its intense, bitter taste, which is due to the bitter compounds it contains, such as momordin and charantin. In traditional medicine, bitter melon has been valued for centuries. Its main indication is as a supportive treatment for elevated blood sugar levels. Studies suggest that bitter melon promotes glucose uptake into cells and can thus have a regulating effect on sugar metabolism. Its use in cases of extreme obesity is explained by the fruit's metabolism-boosting and low-calorie properties within the context of dietary management. Furthermore, it is traditionally used for digestive complaints, loss of appetite and to stimulate the metabolism in general. Traditional uses include stomach complaints, bloating and general digestive weakness. Thanks to its bitter compounds, the plant stimulates the production of gastric juices and bile, which is why it has also been used for biliary disorders. It is likewise used in folk medicine for cramps, inflammatory processes and fever. Due to its pronounced cooling and drying properties, it is also regarded in folk medicine as helpful for skin problems.

Good to know



Bitter melon contains an insulin-like peptide ('polypeptide-p'), which is why it is colloquially referred to as 'plant insulin' in some countries – although, of course, it is no substitute for medical treatment.

Furthermore, the more bitter the fruit tastes, the higher its content of certain bio-active bitter compounds is generally – so bitterness is considered a quality feature.

Side effects/Contraindications

Abdominal pain, diarrhoea or nausea may occur. If taken alongside antidiabetic medicines or insulin, there is a risk of hypoglycaemia. Caution is also advised in children (as components of the seeds may be toxic) and in people with G6PD deficiency.

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