



Bitter Melon - Momordica charantia



The seeds are easy to strike with germination being very high with our fresh seed. They can be germinated in a pot and planted out when they are old enough, or strike them where you hope they will grow and take it from there.

They prefer the weather a little cooler than is

possible during summer. We usually plant when the heat of summer has eased but in mild climates, even late Autumn should be quite suitable.

It is best to strike them in full sun as they grow weedy and thin in the shade.

Place the pots in the garden where you intend to grow them for a week and then transplant them when they seem strong.

Don't be too impatient at the start, as they are slow starters but once they begin to take off, there is no stopping them.

They are not big feeders so just a general sprinkling of fertilizer when they begin to flower is enough.

The seedlings of Bitter Melon need to be protected from chill, wind and strong sunlight.

They will not do well if kept constantly wet but suffer from drying out, so you can be a little fussy to start with but there is no need to be careful once they are mature.

We grow ours over large frames to allow them to climb as much as they wish

They can climb on and over fences and trellis's or, to conserve space and resource we often plant them in the same bed as the pumpkins.

They begin to crop in roughly 60 days from germination and will continue to produce fruit until the plant is exhausted.

Fully mature, green fruit is ideal to consume and the best reliable indicator to maturity is that the seeds from white to pink.

Once the seed coating is red, the fruit is absolutely overripe and may be inedible.

Immature green fruit is often preferred for soups for frying and larger fruit is ideal for stuffing and baking.

They do not store well in the refrigerator and should not occupy the same space as tomatoes and bananas.

The cooked fruit really does drop sugar levels. Quite quickly too.

For continuous use during the year, it is best to create some chutney like spreads.

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