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SPECIAL INTEREST HERBS

# GOURMET VEGETABLES

## TOMATILLO

*(Physalis ixocarpa)*



### DESCRIPTION

The **Verde Tomatillo** is best known for its use in verde or green salsa. This annual green Tomatillo looks like a little green tomato covered with a husk and is used in a variety of Mexican dishes. It is a globe shaped tomato with a tangy taste. With additional time, the Verde Tomatillo will become more and more seedy, but will also get sweeter for raw eating. The plant produces fruits of around 57 grams / 2 oz. **Tomatillo Purple**. (Tom-a-TEE-yo) large size beautiful purple fruit. Many are a bright violet color throughout their flesh. Much sweeter than the green types, it can be eaten right off the plant. Turns purple when ripe.

then have its laterals removed from the major leaf axis. Overly harsh pruning weakens the plant, delays fruiting and reduces yield. You only need to shape the staking varieties to one or two leaders and prune laterals. Minimal leaf removal for sunlight penetration is required in outdoor crops. For best results, plant the Tomatillo with basil, the basil will improve growth and flavor and attract bees and ladybirds and deters some pests. Parsley, asparagus, celery, chives, onions and cucumber will also improve Verde growth and flavor and Marigolds and Nasturtium will deter nematodes and insect pests. Do not plant in close proximity to corn or potato.

compatible" which means that pollination can not take place on the same plant, but only between plants. The purpose of this seems to be to increase genetic diversity do best in hot climates, with extra water in spring while the plant is growing and drier sunny conditions while the fruits are ripening. You should allow them to have a full eight hours of sunlight. Grow in rich, moist soil climates. Plants may be grown in a green house but usually the flavor is better when grown outside, provided that they ripen properly on the vine before harvesting. Soil preparation is the key to successful Tomatillo practice. Soils that are suitable for tomatoes need to be fertile, well drained and moisture retentive. If your current garden bed is not suitable, blood and bone is an ideal fertiliser for Tomatillos and can be used safely at planting time, but you will need a potassium source too. A good general purpose organic fertiliser will also do the job. After your first crop, grow tomatoes in the same soil each year with the old stems and leaves dug into the soil for compost. Tomatillos can suffer from a few problems, such as wilt, virus, moulds and Red Spider to name a few.



### USES

The Verde (Green) Tomatillo is best known for its use in salsa dishes. If you are planning on growing this plant to use in salsa dishes, pick the fruit when the husks turn brown and begin to open. They are also great in sandwiches and salads but should be left longer to sweeten.

However, if you keep your plant in good health the diseases risk is lessened.

**Harvest Tomatillos** when the fruits get firm and the husk get dry, papery and straw colored.



### GROWTH

As an indeterminate variety, the Verde requires staking and should be pruned a few leaders, depending on plant vigour, and



### CULTIVATION

Also be aware that Tomatillos are not self fertilizing. Tomatillos need 2 or more plants. "Non-self

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