

Tomatillo—*Physalis ixocarpa* Brot. ex Hornem.¹

James M. Stephens²

The tomatillo is a close relative to the husk tomato. Both have small tomato-like fruits enclosed in thin papery husks. Varieties of tomatillo usually have larger fruits than the husk tomato.



Figure 1. Tomatillo
Credits: Blue Goose, Inc.

Tomatillo, which was introduced to the United States from Mexico, is popular with Latinos. For this reason it is grown to a very limited extent in south Florida for the Cuban Americans in that region.

Culture

Both tomatillo and husk tomato grow well in Florida gardens when planted and cultivated in a manner similar to tomatoes. Fall production in Gainesville, FL, has proven very successful. The tomato fruit worm causes severe injury to the fruits at times.



Figure 2. Husk tomato
Credits: James M. Stephens

Use

The round 3-inch diameter green or purplish fruits are used in making chili sauce and in other Mexican dishes.

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