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

James M. Stephens[2]

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.

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.

Use

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

Figure 1. Tomatillo.
Credits: Blue Goose, Inc.

Figure 2. Husk tomato.
Credits: James M. Stephens, UF/IFAS