



PRODUCT SHEET

Caigua or Achocha (*Cyclanthera pedata* (L.) Schrader)

Family: Cucurbitaceae (Cucumber Family or Cucurbit Family)

Common names: "achocha", "caigua", "wild cucumber", "achoccha", "achokcha", "cayhua", "achojcha", "quishiu".

DESCRIPTION: Monoecious, climbing, annual, with many branches, up to 5 m long. Leaves palmately divided, with 5 to 6 elliptic leaflets or lobes, margins dentate. Flowers unisexual; staminate (male) flowers in groups of 10 to 20; pistillate flowers (female) flowers solitary and sessile. Fruit an elliptic or oblong berry, flattened, hollow, with a curved base; 10 to 20 cm long and 5 to 8 cm wide; the surface is irregular, with longitudinal striations and soft spines; its color varies from dark to light green; the central cavity with parietal placentation (so the seeds are attached to the ovary wall); mesocarp succulent, de 3-4 mm thick; endocarp white and spongy. Seeds square, black, and rugose.

ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION: Probably native to Mexico or Bolivia. *Cyclanthera pedata* grows in warm and humid climates. In Peru, it grows in the Coast, Highlands and the High Jungle, up to 2,000 m elevation. Cultivated from Colombia to Peru.

USED PARTS: Fruit (and seeds).

PROPERTIES: hypolipidemic, hypoglycemic. **Fruit:** reduction in cholesterol levels (hypercholesterolemia), triglyceridemia, diabetes, obesity, diuretic, angina. **Seeds:** vermifuge and reduce high blood pressure. The **juice** against earache.



PHYTOCHEMICALS: **Ripe fruit:** phenols, peptin, galacturonic acid, picrin, lipoproteins, flavonoids, coumarins, mucilage, alkaloids, lipids, tannins, terpenes, resins, carbohydrates, steroidal compound, stigmasterol, 3 beta-d-glucosido, vitamins, thiamine, minerals, dihydroxytryptamine (dihydrostigmasterol). **Unripe fruit:** luteoline, stigmadicine, stigmasterol, diosgenine (which is a basis of production of sex hormones, antiinflammatory, and anabolizants).

