

Husk Cherries

(*Physalis pruinosa*)

History: Also known as Ground Cherries, and Cape Gooseberries, Husk Cherries are a good source of vitamin C and fiber. A member of the sister of the Tomatillo, Husk Cherries grow wild in temperate, subtropical and tropical areas. They were cultivated in the Cape of Good Hope in the early nineteen hundreds. Similar in appearance to a Chinese Lantern (*Physalis franchetii*), Husk Cherries are marble-sized, yellow-orange fruits hidden in a paper-like, straw colored cover. They store well and can be eaten in a variety of different ways, raw, frozen, dried, canned, as preserves, in desserts and pies. Husk Cherries have a sweet mildly acid taste with a mild bitter aftertaste.

Culture: Seeds should be sown in fine peat mix, 4-6 seeds per inch. They should be started in April or 5-7 weeks before transplanting into the garden. Barely cover the seed. Soil temperature should be kept around 75-90°F until germination. Husk Cherries are slow to germinate, up to two weeks or more. Keep soil moist until seedlings emerge. Once true leaves develop, transplant seedlings into pots or cell-type containers. Transplant into the garden after danger of frost is past, 2-3 feet apart.

Harvest: Husk Cherries fall from the plant when ripe. The husk should be dry and the fruit yellow-orange in color. Husk Cherries will survive a light frost of 30-32°F.