

Fenugreek: Benefits and Supplements

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ABSTRACT

Fenugreek is an annual plant of the family Fabaceae with leaves consisting of three small obovate to oblong leaflets. It is cultivated worldwide as a semiarid crop. Its seeds and leaves are common ingredients in dishes from the Indian subcontinent, its use as a food ingredient in small quantities is safe. They are often roasted to reduce inherent bitterness and to enhance flavour. Fenugreek is sometimes used as animal feed. It provides a green fodder palatable to ruminants. The seeds are also used to feed fish and domestic rabbits.

KEY WORKS: Fenugreek, Fabaceae, Obviate Oblong

I. INTRODUCTION

Fenugreek is an erect, smooth and herbaceous plant that can grow up to a height of 40-80 cm. Its stem is erect and branched. The leaves are alternate, compound, trifoliolate, 7-12 cm long, green in colour. The fruits occur as straight or sickle like pods of 2-10 cm long, thin pointed and contain 10-20 seeds. The seeds are 6-8 mm long, oblong or square, green-olive or brownish in colour with a very strong and spice odour. Fenugreek leaves are one of the healthiest green leafy vegetable. This versatile herb is from the legume family. It has been used in cuisines as a flavouring agent for decades. In addition, it is widely used spice in multiple cuisines globally. They add a mild and aromatic bitter- nutty flavor to curries and stir- fries. Moreover, every part of the plant is equally nutrient dense. The fenugreek seeds are also quite similar to the leaves. The high point of these leaves is their health benefits. They are surprisingly nutritious and innumerable. Also they are beneficial for women and polycystic diseases. Research suggests that fenugreek is helpful for heart, diabetes skin and hair health.

Fenugreek is a herb native to the Mediterranean region, Southern Europe and western Asia. Its seeds which smell and taste like maple syrup have been used in cooking and as medicine. Fenugreek is used as an ingredient in spice blends and a flavoring agent in foods and beverages. Fenugreek extracts are also used in soaps and cosmetics. Fenugreek dietary supplements are manufactured from powdered seeds into capsules, loose powders, tea and liquid extracts in many countries. Powders may also be used as a topical medicate or dressing for skin wounds or eczema. India is a major producer of fenugreek and over 80 % of india's output is from Rajasthan.

BOTANICAL CLASSIFICATION

Kingdom Plantae
Division Magnoliophyta
Class Magnoliopsida
Order Fabales
Family Fabaceae
Genus Trigonella
Species *T. foenum-graecum*

Binomial Name

Trigonella foenum-graecum L.



Fenugreek seeds Fenugreek leaves

CHEMICAL COMPOSITION

The major constituent that are present in fenugreek seeds are carbohydrates, proteins, lipids alkaloids, flavonoids, fibers, steroidal saponins, vitamins minerals and nitrogen compounds. The chemical analysis of fenugreek seed showed that the contents of moisture, fibers, ash, protein, fat and carbohydrates were 4%, 6.50%, 3.20%, 28.55%, 4%, 62.48% respectively.

HEALTH BENEFITS

1. Helps to control cholesterol
2. Weight management
3. High in antioxidants
4. Prevents gastric disorders
5. Beneficial for diabetes
6. Prevents clotting disorders
7. Skin and hair health
8. Anticancer properties
9. Improves kidney function
10. Protects liver
11. Antimicrobial activity
12. Improves male fertility

USES

Fenugreek fresh leaves are used in many dry vegetables, curries, meat. Flat breads rice dishes dried methi leaves are used to flavor gravy dishes and to add aroma. Whereas fenugreek seeds are an essential ingredient for making Indian pickles spice powders and for tempering the dals/ curries

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Trigonella foenum-graecum is a nitrogen fixing plant, thus reducing the need of nitrogen fertilizers for subsequent crops. It has low water requirements and its cultivation might reduce the cost of irrigation and save water.

II. CONCLUSION

India is a major producer of fenugreek and over 80% of India's output is from Rajasthan-fenugreek is used as herb (dried or fresh leaves), spice (seeds) and vegetable (fresh leaves, sprouts and micro greens) sotalan is the chemical responsible for the distinctive maple syrup smell of fenugreek. Cuboid, yellow to amber coloured fenugreek seeds are frequently used in the cuisines of the Indian subcontinent, used both whole and powdered in the preparation of pickles, vegetable dishes, dal and spice mixes. They are often roasted to reduce bitterness and to enhance flavour. Fenugreek is sometimes used as animal feed.

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