

## Nutritional Importance and Uses of Fenugreek

(*Trigonella foenum-graecum*)

(\*Sowmya P.T. and Ashok Kumar Bajya)

M Sc. Horticulture, PSMA Department, KNK College of Horticulture, Mandsaur

\*Corresponding Author's email: [sowmyapt92@gmail.com](mailto:sowmyapt92@gmail.com)

Fenugreek is one of the important winter season leguminous crops growing mainly for its seeds which has both spice and medicinal properties. Fenugreek is cultivated mainly in Northern India, mainly in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

Fenugreek seeds are rich in protein (6.3%), fat (9.5%), carbohydrates (42.3%), vitamin A (1040 W) and have calorific value of 370 cal/100 g. Besides, it contains gum (22.06%), trigonellin (0.13-0.35%), diosgenin (1.0 g), gitogenin (0.1 g) and a trace of triogenin per kg of dried seeds. The fixed oil content in the seed is about 7 per cent. The fatty acid of the seed consists largely of linoleic, oleic and linolenic acids. The oil has a disagreeable odour and bitter taste. Seeds contain volatile oil (0.02%) which is brown and slightly odorous. The leaves and stems are rich source of calcium, iron, carotene, ascorbic acid and protein.



**Fenugreek as spice:** As a spice, fenugreek seeds add to the nutritive value and flavour of foods. Because of this character, it has gained considerable importance in vegetarian diet. Fenugreek was and remains, a food and a spice commonly eaten in many parts of the world. Fenugreek seed is commonly used in cooking as it has a strong flavour and aroma. The leaves and seeds are also widely consumed as a spice in food preparations and as an ingredient in traditional medicine. In Egypt and Ethiopia, fenugreek is a popular ingredient of bread, known to the Arabs as 'hulba'. In Greece, the seeds (boiled or raw) are eaten with honey. In India, fenugreek seeds are one of the important ingredient in curry powder, chutney powder, pickles, masala powder, *etc.* It is also used in the preparation of chapati, halva, *etc.* along with wheat flour and forms a nutritious and delicious food.

**Fenugreek as medicine:** Apart from its culinary usage a wide range of medicinal uses were found for fenugreek from ancient times. Fenugreek is one of the oldest known medicinal plants in the recorded history. Seeds are extracted for steroidal substance "diosgenin" a sex hormone and oral contraceptive in family planning. Fenugreek leaves and seeds have been used extensively to prepare extracts and powders for medicinal uses. Medicinally it was used for the treatment of wounds, abscesses, arthritis, bronchitis, ulcer and digestive problems. Traditional Chinese herbalists used it for kidney problems. Fenugreek is also reported to have anti-diabetic, anti-fertility, anticancer, anti-microbial, anti-parasitic effects. Reference to fenugreek has been made in Indian Ayurvedic and Traditional Chinese Medicines where it is recognized as a galactagogue or lactation stimulant in women after child birth as well as for its ability to treat wounds and sore muscles. Seed in powder or germinated form exhibits anti-diabetic properties, hypocholesterolaemic effect and anti-cancer effect. Also used to prevent constipation and stimulate spleen and liver.