

# FGCU Food Forest

## Plant Database

### Edible Hibiscus (*Abelmoschus Manihot*)

**Origin:** Tropical Asia

**Description:** The leaves are

**Harvest:** Perennial. Flowers July to

**Flower:** Large, up to 15 cm (6 inches) hibiscus-like flowers. Colored a brilliant lemon with deep purple

**Tolerance:** Subtropical to tropical;

lows down to about 20 degrees F so long as they are in very well-drained



**General Description:** Edible Hibiscus is a leafy green perennial plant that has yellow flowers during the summer months. The leaves have a distinct glossy texture and can be eaten raw or cooked (steamed or boiled). In cold weather it can be deciduous. The plant grows fast and can reach as high as six to ten feet.

- **Native Origin:** Tropical and subtropical regions of Asia.
- **General History:** Originally from south or Southeast Asia, Edible Hibiscus, or *Abelmoschus manihot* is widely used in the islands of the Pacific, particularly in the Melanesian archipelago (New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia). Researchers think that it was probably first cultivated there because so many distinct varieties are found in this area. This plant goes by literally dozens of names in many Pacific island languages. It is commonly known as Aibika and Bele in Micronesia. This plant was placed into the genus Hibiscus, the subsection Abelmoschus by Linnaeus, but in 1787 a botanist named Medikus proposed that this group of plants be made a separate genus and it's been so ever since. It was introduced into Europe around 1712 from India and is listed in an American seed catalog dated 1806. The leaves of the

many varieties are highly variable. Some are heart shaped, some spear shaped, and some are palmate with 3, 5 or 7-lobed similar to the maple leaf, but often more deeply cut.

- **Distribution:** Native to tropical and subtropical regions in Asia; widely distributed throughout Asia. Also can be found in Northern Australia. It can grow in Mediterranean, subtropics, temperate or tropics climate. Grows well in Florida, Hawaii, and California.
- **Season of Harvest:** January through May.
- **Culinary Uses:** Leaves can be cooked or used in salad as spinach. The bigger leaves can be used as a wrap. Nutritious, full of protein and iron. Drinking a tea made from the leaves will lower blood pressure. The flower petals can be added to salads or cooked as well.

<b>Edible Hibiscus</b>	
<b>Scientific Classification</b>	
Kingdom:	Plantae
Subkingdom:	Tracheobionta
Superdivision:	Spermatophyta
Division:	Magnoliophyta
Class:	Magnoliopsida
Subclass:	Dilleniidae
Order:	Malvales
Family:	Malvaceae
Genus:	<i>Abelmoschus</i> Medik.
Species:	<b><i>Abelmoschus manihot</i> (L.) Medik.</b>

**Sources:**

<http://www.finegardening.com/hibiscus-manihot-abelmoschus-manihot>  
<http://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=ABMA9>  
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<http://www.hibiscus.org/species/amanihot.php>  
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