

FGCU Food Forest

Plant Database

Jicama (*Pachyrhizus erosus*)

Quick Facts

Origin: Central America
Description: Lengthy, leafy vine
Culinary Uses: Many, very similar to potatoes
Harvest: Usually between October and December, before frost
Flower: Blue/White
Cold Tolerance: Frost will kill the vine

General Description: Jicama is a vine that typically grows 2-4 meters but is dependent on a support structure. The root and tuber system can reach lengths of 2 meters and weighs typically between 5-15 kg. The leaves of the vine are compound palmate and the flower is a small bluish-white. There are also legumes that grow off the side of the vine. For optimal harvests, the plant should be grown in an environment with 9 continuous months of frost-free weather.



- **Native Origin:** Mexico and most of Central America.
- **Harvesting Techniques:** It is best to dig the underground tubers as late as possible before a frost affects the vine. If a frost is not expected, you can harvest the tubers 150 days or more after it has been transplanted or since the last harvest if the vine survives the cold season. When harvesting, make sure not to damage the main root systems and merely cut the tuber from its offshoot. Do not refrigerate harvest. Any temperature below 50 degrees Fahrenheit could ruin the tuber. Do not eat leaves, flowers, or seeds of this plant. They are mildly poisonous.
- **Season of Harvest:** Typically between October and early December in southwest Florida, but it varies.

- **Culinary Uses:** Raw jicama is a great addition to salads or a veggie dip. It has a crunchy texture with a slightly sweet starchy taste. Great with humus. Besides being great raw, you can cook jicama in many of the same ways potatoes are.
- **Nutritional Value:** High in starch, vitamin C, calcium, phosphorous, and natural fiber. Overall jicama is a healthy tasty addition to many meals.

Jicama Scientific Classification
Kingdom: Plantae
(unranked): Angiosperms
(unranked): Eudicots
(unranked): Rosids
Order: Fabales
Family: Fabaceae
Genus: Pachyrhizus
Species: P. erosus

Sources

Various Jicama Nutrition & Health Benefits.

Retrieved from http://www.smgrowers.com/products/plants/plantdisplay.asp?plant_id=1169.

Growing Jicama.

Retrieved from <http://bonnieplants.com/growing/growing-jicama/>

Pachyrhizus erosus. (n.d). In Encyclopedia Wikipedia online.

Retrieved February 17, 2013 from the OLPC Wiki: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pachyrhizus_erosus