

LOOFA

(*Loofa aegyptiaca*)



A few facts

- The loofa pictured above is a smooth loofa, also spelt luffa and loofah and it is in the cucumber family
- Its origins are in Asia and the Middle East
- Angled loofa, which is a different species can also be grown (*Loofa actangula*)
- This plant is a climber and grows all year in full sun.
- The small fruit can be eaten and the older fruit is cleaned and used as a scrubber for washing

LOOFA (*Loofa aegyptiaca*)

How to grow

- Loofa is easily grown all year round, in the full sun, in a free draining place, but particularly loves plenty of water and gets prolific in the wet season, climbing over fences and up trees
- It needs a trellis to climb up and will produce loofas from yellow flowers
- Fertilise with organic fertiliser occasionally

How to grow more

- Easily grown from seed, collected from the dried loofas that make scrubbers. Dried in the sun the seeds can be shaken out
- Best sown directly, but can also be sown in small pots and transplanted out when developing a few leaves

When to plant them/ grow them

- These can be planted all year round, but loves humid conditions (wet season) especially and will cover fences easily.

How to eat them

- The loofa is eaten when small (less than 10cm long) and is soft in the middle, otherwise it is stringy and hard
- Its spongy centre can absorb a lot of flavour and is great in curries, stir-fries and many dishes, used much like a zucchini
- The loofa is a source of carbohydrate, protein and some vitamin C
- The loofas grow quickly, so keep an eye on them or let them grow large, then dry them in the sun and peel them to make a scrubber