

# *Momordica cochinchinensis* (Lour.) Spreng.

**Family:**

**Cucurbitaceae**

Sprengel, C.P.J. (1826) *Systema Vegetabilium* 3: 14.

**Common name:**

Balsam Pear; Pear, Balsam

**Stem**

Vine stem diameters to 4 cm recorded. Blaze odour slightly obnoxious.

**Leaves**

Leaf blades deeply 3-lobed with 1 or 2 smaller lobes on the main lateral lobes. Leaf blades about 14-19 x 12-17 cm, petioles about 4-6 cm long. Crushed leaves emit an obnoxious odour.

**Flowers**

Male flowers: Inflorescence about 15 cm long. Flower buds enclosed in broad sheathing bracts about 2 x 3 cm. Peduncles about 10-11 cm long. Flowers large, about 9-10 cm diam. Calyx tube about 6 mm long, lobes about 8 mm long. Petals about 5.5-6 cm long. Anthers about 4 mm long, filaments about 4 mm long. Two stamens with bilocular anthers and one stamen unilocular.

**Fruit**

Fruits spindle-shaped, about 8-9 x 4 cm on a stalk about 6 cm long, surface tuberculate. Seeds flattened, about 13-15 x 8-10 mm.

**Seedlings**

Cotyledons fleshy, rectangular, about 15-17 x 10 mm, venation not obvious. Cataphylls 1 or 2. First true leaves lobed. Seedling emits a foetid odour when handled. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade strongly lobed and the lobes themselves have toothed margins. Oil dots visible from the underside of the leaf blade. Leaf blade sparsely clothed in hairs more so along the major veins. Leaves emit a foetid odour when crushed, Tendrils axillary, simple. Seed germination time 145 days.

**Distribution and Ecology**

Occurs in CYP. Known from the Iron Range, Claudie River area and Silver Plains. Altitudinal range quite small, from 30-60 m. Grows in gallery forest. Also occurs in New Guinea and other parts of Malesia.

**Synonyms**

*Muricia cochinchinensis* Lour., *Fl. Cochinch.* : 596(1790), Type: Cochinchina, Loureiro; holo: BM.

**RFK Code**

2169



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Vine stem bark and vine stem transverse section. © CSIRO

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