



Picture taken by: User:BotBln as seen on <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chickpea>

The chickpea (*Cicer arietinum*) (also garbanzo bean, Indian pea, ceci bean, bengal gram, chana, kadale kaalu, sanaga pappu, shimbra, Kadala) is an edible legume of the family Fabaceae, subfamily Faboideae. Chickpeas are high in protein and one of the earliest cultivated vegetables. 7,500-year-old remains have been found in the Middle East

- Taken from Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia; www.en.wikipedia.org, search Chickpeas

Introduction

Six countries account for the chickpea production, with India growing over 60%. Other countries include: Mexico, Australia, Pakistan, Canada, and Turkey. Pea production in Canada is rapidly growing. In 2001 there were 134,000 acres of chickpea grown in the USA.

Chickpeas have deep roots that allow it to be drought tolerant, and like high temperatures during flowering. Many peas are planted in early May and are harvested in mid-September.

Chickpeas are considered a vegetable crop, an annual grain legume that is sold into the human food market. Chickpeas are divided into two types by color. The Desi chickpea has a pigmented seed coat of tan to black and is a small seed. The Kabuli type has a white to cream colored seed coat and is much larger.

The plant is an erect plant with fern type leaves, often resembling the foliage on carrots. Most flowers produce pods that are individual and oval and can contain one or two seeds. The plants can range from 10 inches to 20 inches in height, with seed pods dispersed all over the plant. These plants grow well in warm climates and fields that are well drained.

Market Information

Chickpeas are sold as high quality human food product. Seed size is a factor when selling; the color is the single most important factor to determine if the crop is marketable. Dark or discolor seed coats will not be accepted by food processors. The chickpeas that are light yellowish-cream color are highly sought after by processors; growers need to consider this when planning the harvest.

Production Considerations

Beans grow best in full sun and well-drained, fertile and crumbly soil. Adequate moisture is especially important from flower bud to formation pod set. Too much or too little, or excessive heat causes blossom and pod drop. Extremes in soil moisture can lead to malformed pods in which only the first few seeds develop, leaving the rest of the bean pod shriveled. It is suggested that the garbanzo beans be planted at the same time peas are planted.

Chickpeas will grow as long as there is moisture. This can hinder harvest by causing uneven field

ripening. Green pods could last and not dry by the first fall frost. Harvesting some green pods is acceptable, but green seeds are not wanted by commercial food manufacturers. Many growers find they may cut their fields many times to ensure all pods are dried and matured to the favorable color.

Plants are considered mature when the seeds in the uppermost seed pods change color. Some growers combine when the pods are straw yellow to ensure maturity. The chickpea has a slow shattering potential, but hot dry days like those at the end of August and the beginning of September can cause shattering from the heat.

Chickpeas are harvested by combine. The lowest pods grow relatively close to the ground, at a height of 4 inches, so it may take an experienced combine operator to swath and combine the chickpeas. Delayed harvest can result in darkened seed coats.

A combine can be used, but speeds, cylinders, sieves and air must be adjusted to prevent seed breakage. Chickpea seeds have a small protruding beak-like structure that must not be damaged if selling to commercial food manufacturers.



References and More Information

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Economics

Chickpeas can grow in Ohio; unfortunately northwest Ohio does not have enough acreage in the optimum growing climate to make growing chickpeas for food manufacturing profitable. A large plot of chickpeas could be raised for ones own use, but harvesting would have to be by hand, and shelling the peas would take many man hours for a small amount of useable peas. This is a very interesting crop, and would be recommended for those who have room and enjoy hummus. Otherwise, it is not fbe the most profitable option for northwest Ohio growers.
