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CUCURBITACEAE

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CUCURBITACEAE

S.M.H.JAFRI

Prostrate or climbing herbs, monoecious or dioecious. Leaves often alternate, palmately lobed, mostly with extra axillary tendrils. Flowers 5-merous, regular, unisexual or polygamous, in cymes or sometimes solitary. Calyx and corolla usually 5-lobed. Male flowers mostly with stamens coherent variously. Female flowers with 3-carpellary, syncarpous, inferior ovary; placentas parietal with many ovules. Pistillodes and staminodes frequently present in male and female flowers respectively. Fruit usually fleshy, a berry or pepo, many seeded; seeds mostly flattened, exalbuminous.

About 100 genera and nearly 900 species, mainly of warmer regions. Many plants are valued for vegetable, medicinal or other uses and widely cultivated. Known by 9 genera in Libya, of these only 4 are wild. The taxa known here from cultivation only are marked with an asterisk (*).

1.	+	Filaments all united into a column (anthers free). Fruit 1-seeded	9.**Sechium***
	—	Filaments free or united at the base or in pairs. Fruit many seeded	2
2.	+	Anther cells straight or slightly curved, rarely shortly inflexed at the base or apex	3
	—	Anther cells much curved or twisted, U- or S-shaped	4
3.	+	Stamens inserted at the throat of the calyx-tube	1.**Momordica***
	—	Stamens inserted in the calyx-tube	6.**Cucumis***
4.	+	Corolla campanulate	8.**Cucurbita***
	—	Corolla ± rotate	5

5.	+	Calyx-tube of the male flowers long, cylinder- or funnel-shaped	5.**Lagenaria***
	—	Calyx-tube of the male flowers top- or bell-shaped	6
6.	+	Stamens inserted at the thorat of the calyx	1.**Momordica***
	—	Stamens inserted in the tube of the calyx	7
7.	+	Male flowers in racemes	8
	—	Male flowers solitary or in clusters (yellow)	10
8.	+	Female flowers in racemes or clusters, small	3.**Bryonia**
	—	Female flowers solitary	9
9.	+	Tendrils cleft. Leaves lobed	4.**Luffa***
	—	Tendrils absent. Leaves undivided	2.**Ecballium**
10.	+	Connective of the stamens with a 2-cleft appendage at the apex; tendrils simple (rarely wanting)	6.**Cucumis***
	—	Connectives not prolonged; tendrils mostly 2-3-cleft	7.**Citrullus**

1.MOMORDICA*

L., Sp. Pl. 1009.1753; Gen. Pl. ed. 5:380.1754

Climber; tendrils simple or 2-fid; monoecious or diocious. Flowers white or yellow; males in corymbose racemes; females solitary; pedicels with a sessile bract at base. Calyx and corolla campanulate, the latter segmented nearly to the base. Stamens 3 inserted at the mouth of the calyx-tube. Staminodes and pistillodes absent. Berry oblong, fusiform, irregularly torn or 3-valved when ripe.

About 25 species in Asia and Africa, known for the first time by 2 cultivated species in Libya; used as vegetable and has some medicinal properties.

+ Fruits usually short, 5(-7.5) cm long smooth or

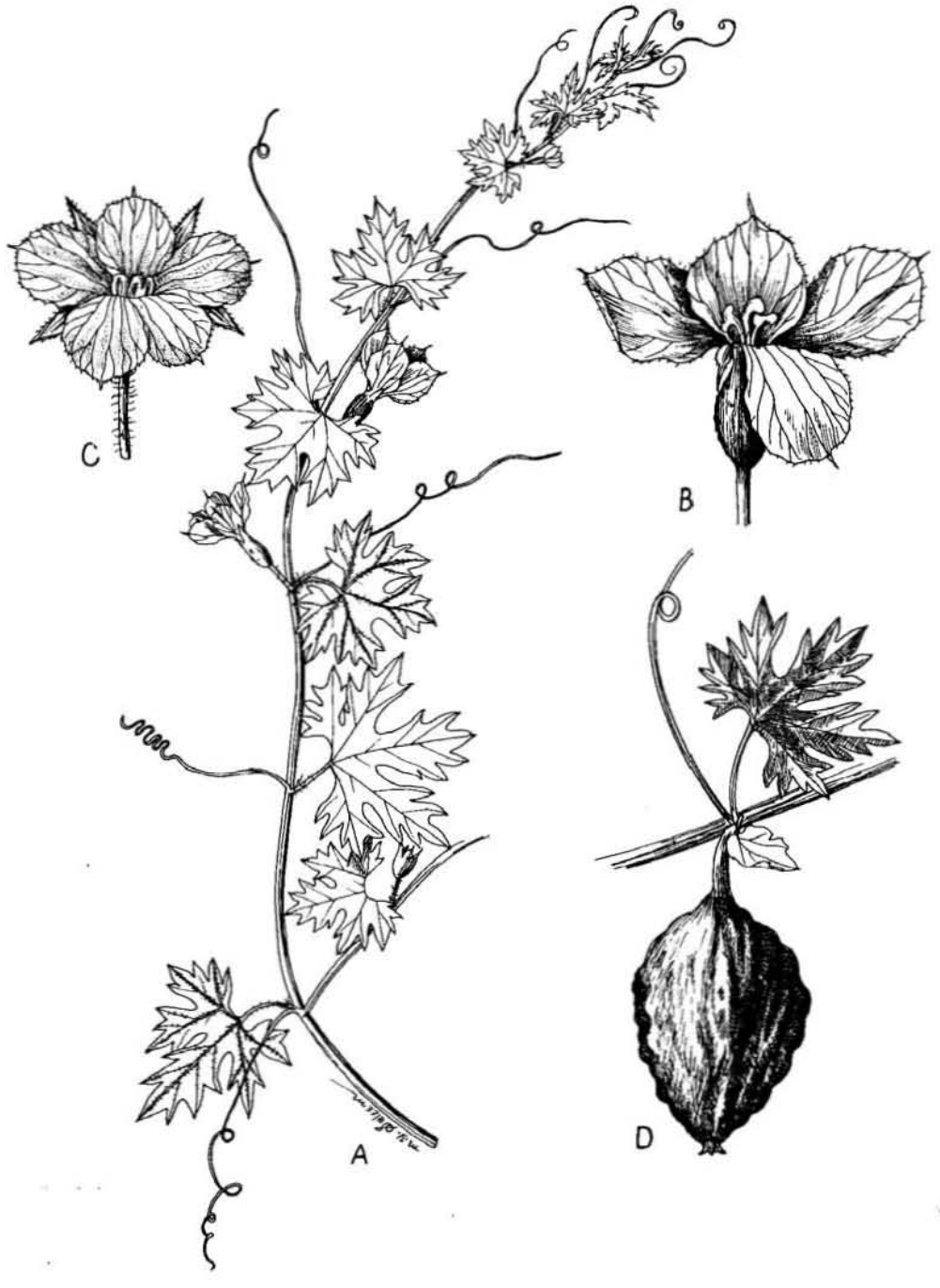

Fig.1 **Momordica balsamina:** A, flowering branch x 0.5; B, female flower x 1.5; C, male flower x 1.5; D, fruit x 1.

slightly muricate, orange-red when ripe. Bracts dissected 1.**M.balsamina***

— Fruits usually long, 10 cm or more, conspicuously muricated, yellow when ripe. Bracts entire 2.**M.charantia***

1. ***Momordica balsamina** L., Sp. Pl. 1009.1753. (Fig. 1)

Climbing, annual or biennial, subglabrous, green, with thin stem and simple tendrils, monoecious. Leaves (3-) 5-lobed, irregularly denticulate- ± orbiculate, 7-12 cm in diameter. Flowers whitish or yellowish, c. 1.5 cm across; bracts dissected, basal. Berry (2.5-) 5- (-7.5) x 2-3 cm, ovoid-ellipsoid, smooth or submuricate, orange-red when ripe, many seeded. 2n=22

Type: « Habitat in India ».

A-3 Zlitan, 15.1.1967, cultivated, *L. Boulos* 1046 (ULT); **E-1** Ghat, climber in a house on wall, flowers whitish, fruit reddish-orange, cultivated, 24.2.1976, *S.M.H.Jafri* 6322 (ULT).

Distribution: india, Bangla Desh, Pakistan, Malaya, W. Asia, Australia and Trop. Africa, introduced elsewhere.

Reported from cultivation in Libya.

Fl. February-April.

2. ***Momordica charantia** L., Sp. Pl. 1009.1753.

Similar to the previous species but bracts entire, fruits longer, conspicuously muricated, yellow when ripe but reddish inside.

Type: « Habitat in India ».

Distribution: Same as the previous one.

Widely cultivated for its fruits which are used as vegetable. It was introduced

in Tripoli by many Asians but probably did not grow well or survived. It can be cultivated in the southern parts of Libya.

2. ECBALLIUM

A.Rich in Bory, Dict. Class. Hist. Nat. 6:19.1824.

(nom cons.)

A monoecious, prostrate, perennating, subfleshy herb, without tendrils. Leaves petioled, ovate-cordate or subtriangular, irregularly repand-dentate. Staminate flowers in raceme, peduncled, pale-yellow; the pistillate flowers often arising from the same axil, with staminodes and oblong ovary having short style and 3 stigmas. Fruit echinate, oblong, characteristically separating from the pedicel and elastically contracting at base to squirt out its juice and oblong seeds to a considerable distance.

A monotypic genus of the Mediterranean region.

Ecballium elaterium (L.) A.Rich in Bory, Dict. Class.Hist.Nat. 6:19.1824; Pamp., Prodr. Fl. Cir. 429.1931; Keith, Prelim. Check List Lib. Fl. 441.1965. (Fig. 2).

Momordica elaterium L., Sp. Pl. 1010.1753

A prsotrate, hispid or scabrous, fleshy perennial herb, up to 60 cm long. Leaves triangular-cordate, up to 10 cm long, sinuate-toothed to obscurely lobed, undulate at margin, tomentose beneath; tendrils absent. Flowers c. 2.5 cm in diameter, yellow, male in racemes, females solitary. Fruit oblong-ovoid, nodding, 3-5 cm long green, hispid, echinulate, explosively detaching itself on maturity and squirting out the seeds from the aperture at its base; seeds oblong, smooth.

Type: « Habitat in Europa australi ».

A-3 Khoms, *A.El-Gadi;* **A-7** c. 87 km from Baida, barley fields, flowers white, 23.6.1972, *S.I.Ali* 902 (ULT).

Distribution: A weed throughout the Mediterranean region.

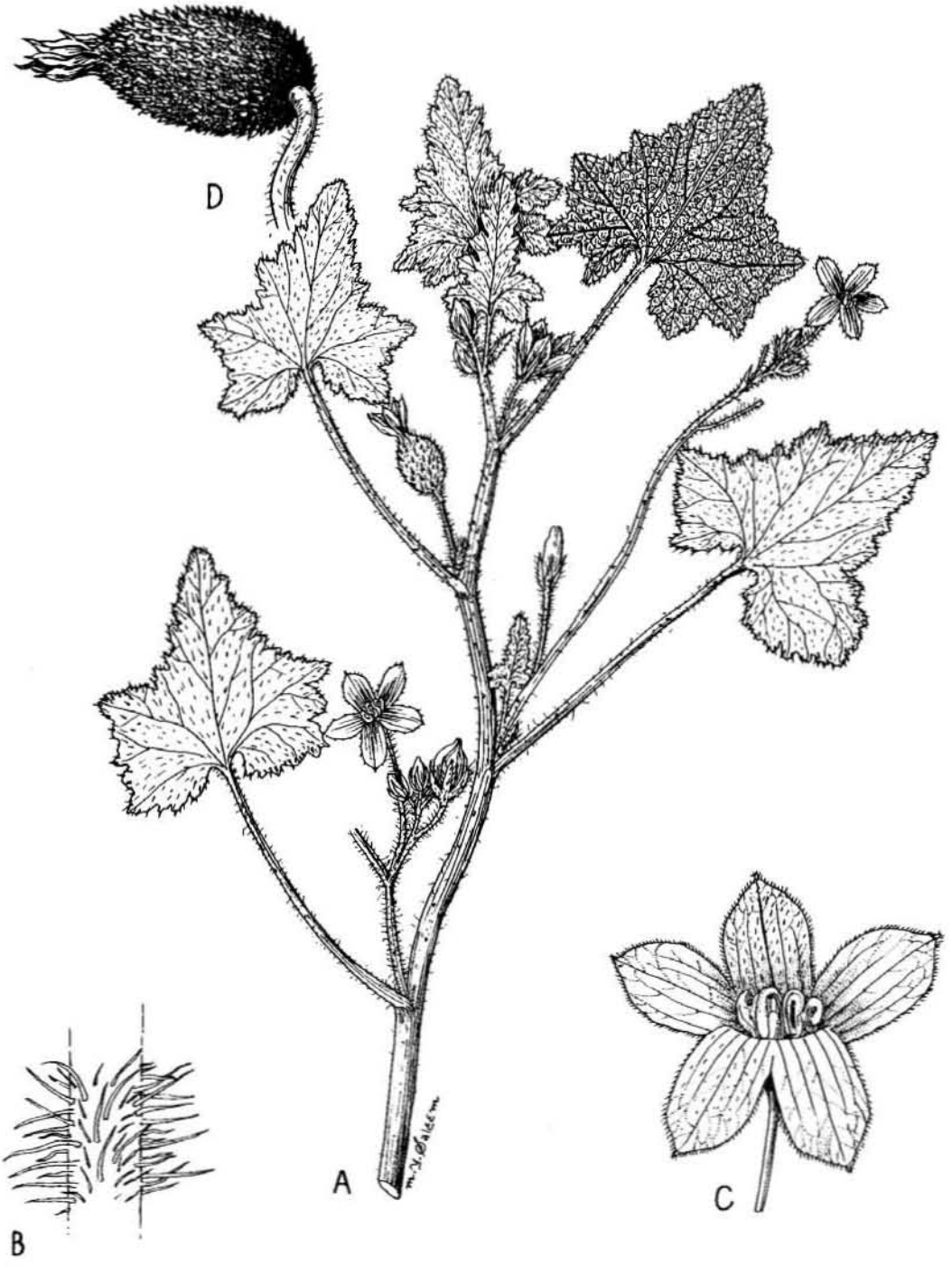

Fig.2 **Ecballium elaterium:** A, branch with male and female flowers x 0.5; B, hairs on a portion of stem x 10; C, male flower x 1,5; D, fruit x 1.

A medicinal plant said to cure bile or liver disturbances. The juice of the fruit is said to be irritating, officinal cathartic.
Fl. Nearly all the year, specially Feb.-Sept. *Vern.* Bit el roul, Oumana, Buzzate, Eshbet Benjoha.

3. **BRYONIA**

L., Sp. Pl. 1012.1753; Gen. Pl. ed. 5:442.1754

Climbing, dioecious, perenating herbs with tuberous roots and usually simple tendrils. Leaves palmately lobed with usually long, acute lobes. Flowers in racemes or clustered (pistillate rarely solitary), greenish-white or pale yellowish; staminate flowers triadelphous with linear anthers; pistillate with spherical ovary having 3-fid styles, each with 2-fid stigmas. Berry spherical, small, smooth, usually red when ripe, few seeded.

About 8 species in Europe, N.Africa and Canary islands, only 1 is reported form Libya.

Bryonia cretica L., Sp. Pl. 1013.1753; Durand & Barratte, Fl. Lib. Prodr. 158.1910; Pamp., Prodr. Fl. Ciren. 428.1931; Keith, l.c. 304; Tutin in Tutin et al, Fl. Europ. 2:297.1968 (Fig. 3).

B.dioica Jacq., Fl. Austr. 2:59.t.199.1774; Keith, l.c. 304; *B. sicula* (Jan.) Guss., Fl. Sic. Syn. 2:621.1844; *B. acuta* Desf., Fl. Atlant. 2:360.1799; *B. cretica* ssp. *dioica* (Jacq.) Tutin in Feddes Report. 79:61.1968; Fl. Europ. 2:297.1968; ssp. *acuta* (Desf.) Tutin in Feddes Report. 79.61.1968; Keith, l.c. 304 (as var.)

A perennating climber, 1 m ore more long, branched, with simple tendrils. Leaves palmately (3-) 5 (-7)-lobed, cordate-ovate, up to 10 x 12 cm; variable, hispid or roughly hairy with short, appressed haris, petiolate; lobes entire or with few, large, subobtuse teeth; the central lobe usually ± longer than the others, up to 3 cm broad. Flowers in axillary cymes, those of the male plants peduncled, corymbose, 3-8, pale-green, c. 1.5 cm in diam.; those of female plants ± sessile, umbellate, 2-5, greenish c. 1 cm in diam. Sepals triangular, spreading, densely glandular hairy to almost eglandular in male flowers. Corolla twice or more as long as the sepals.

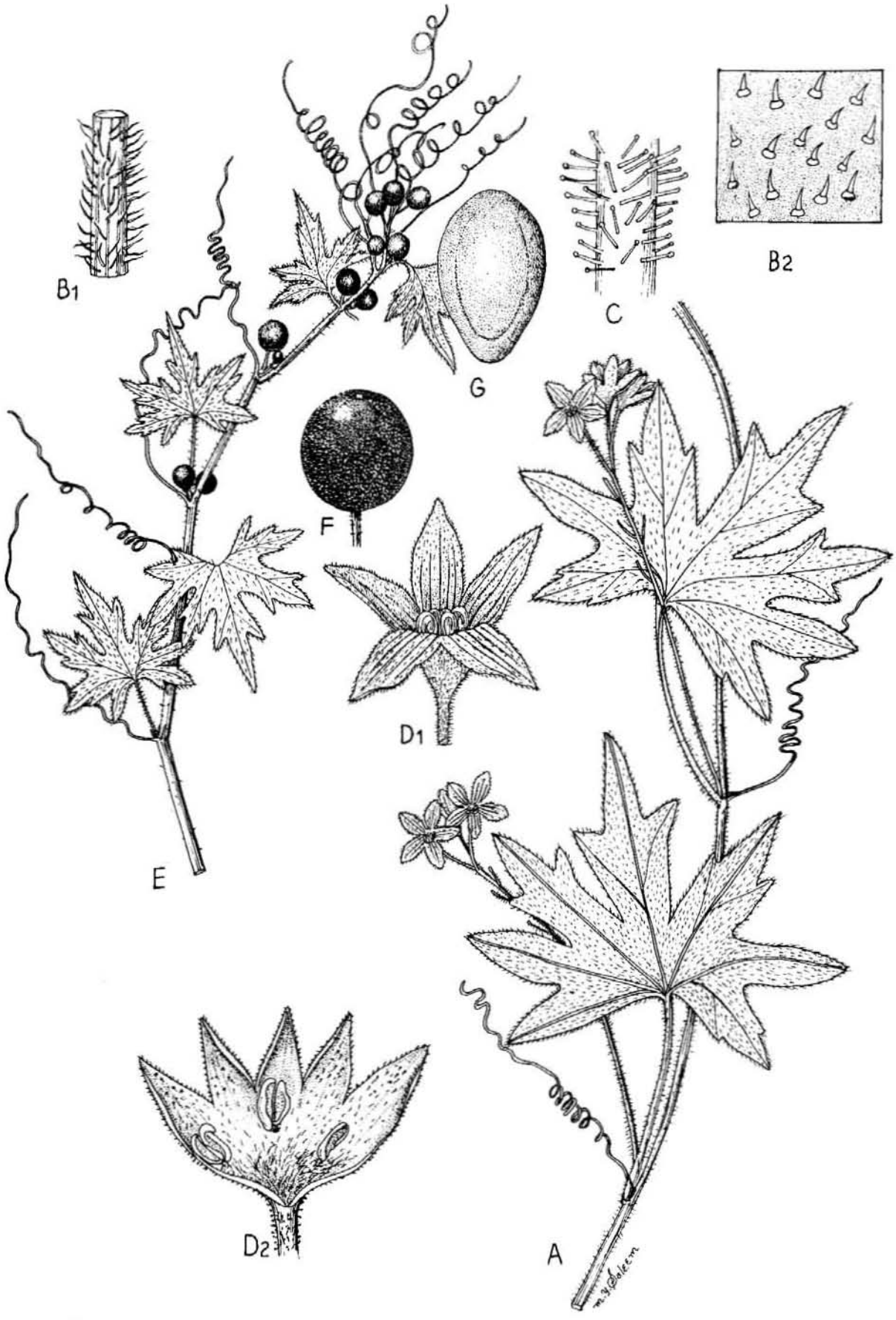

Fig.3 **Bryonia cretica:** A, male flowering branch x 0.5; B_1, hairs on the stem x 5; B_2, hairs on the leaf x 15; C, hairs on the pedicels x 20; D_1, male flower x 3; D_2, the same with opened corolla showing stamens x 3; E, female fruiting branch x 0.5; F, fruit x 2; G, seed x 5.

Sepals and petals smaller in female flowers. Stigmas papillose-hairy. Berry 5-8 (-10) mm in diam., red when ripe with 3-6 seeds.

Type: « Habitat in Creta ».

Note: Observations given in brackets in the following gatherings are of the present suthor;
A-2 Reana, sandy plain, moist soil, 5.5.1972, (male infl. glandular), *S.I.Ali* 400 (ULT); Yefren, Ain Rumea, 9.4.1974, (male infl. glandular with long hairs) *coll. ing.* (ULT); Ain El Rumia, 9.4.1974 (male infl. glandular with long hairs), *G. Faris* 354 (ULT); Garian, ripe fruits red coloured, 29.9.1976, *H.Haidar* 60 (ULT); Rumia, limestone hills, 15 km from Yefren, 9.4.1974 (male infl. glandular with long hairs), *S.I.Ali* 1833 (ULT); **A-3** Sabrata, (male infl. very glandular), 10.2.1967, *L. Boulos* 1534 (ULT); Abugilan, 74 km from Tripoli, 6.4.1972 (male infl. eglandular); *S.I.Ali* 158 (ULT); Leptis Magna (Lebda), 5 km after Khoms, 1.5.1974, (female) *A.Razig* 464 (ULT); *F. Faris* 615 (ULT); *M. Godeh* 329 (ULT); Abugilan, 29.4.1976 (female) *Randa* 40 (ULT); **B-4** Sirte, 26.1.1969, *L. Boulos* s.n. (ULT).

Also reported from Benghazi, Ajdabia, Tobruk, Kufra etc. by Durand & Barratte (l.c.).

Distribution: Europe, N. Africa and W. Asia.

A very variable desert species, split into 3 subspecies by Tutin (l.c.) on the basis of: (i) eglandular or almost so male inflorescence and white spotted immature fruits (ssp. *cretica),* (ii) glandular male inflorescence with uniformly green young ruits whithout long hairs on inflorescence (ssp. *dioica)* and (iii) with long hairs (ssp. *acuta*). However, our plants have all these characters intermixing but do not seem to have any white spots on the young fruits. The tendency seems to be more towards the ssp. *dioica* (Jacq.) Tutin (incl. ssp. *acuta* (Desf.) Tutın) in having mostly glandular male inflorescences. However, any such differentiation is not possible in female plants.

Fl. Feb.-April; *Vern.:* Fachira, Queriona

4. LUFFA*

Mill., Gard. Dic. ed. 8.1768

Annual, monoecious climber with branched tendrils. Leaves 5-7-lobed, eglandulose. Flowers large, yellow or white, males in racemes, female solitary, Fruits usually cylindrical, fleshy green when young, fibrous, brownish when ripe, many seeded.

About 6 tropical species; only 1 species is sometimes cultivated as an ornamental or for the spongy fibres of its fruits in Libya.

Luffa cylindrica (L.) M. Roem. Syn. Monogr. 63.1846.

Momordica cylindrica L., Sp. Pl. 1009.1753; *M. Luffa* L., l.c.; *L. aegyptiaca* Mill., l.c.

A yellow flowered, long climber with cylindrical fruits, 10-25 cm long, 5-10 cm broad.

Syntypes: « Habitat in Zeylona, China ».

Distribution: Widely cultivated in Asia and Africa for its fruits; used as vegetable and fibres otained from it for bathing.

It thrives well in Tripoli and fruits abundantly. Recorded for the first time from here.

Fl. Oct.-December; *Vern.: Leef, Loofah*

5. LAGENARIA*

Ser. in Mem. Soc. Phys. Genev. 3 (1):25.t.2.1825

A large, usually monoecious, viscid pubescent climber, with large, long-peduncled white lowers, slightly lobed leaves and branched tendrils.

About 5 tropical species, only 1 is cultivated in Libya.

***Lagenaria siceraria** (Molina) Standley, Publ. Field. Mus. (Chicago) Ser. bot. 3:435.1930; Tutin in Tutin et al, Fl. Europ. 2:298.1968

Cucurbita lagenaria L., Sp. Pl. 1010.1753; *C. siceraria* Molina, Sagg. Chile 133.1782; *L. vulgaris* Ser., l.c.; *C. leucantha* Duch. in Lam., Encyc. 2:150.1786; *L. leucantha* (Duch.) Rusby in Mem. Torr. Bot. Club 6:43:1896; Keith, l.c. 590.

A large, viscid-pubescent climber with large white flowers 5-10 cm across on long peduncles. Fruit long, cylindrical to bottle-shaped, pale greenish and white-fleshy when immature, pericarp becoming woody and strong at maturity, many seeded.

Type: Desceibed from Chile

G-8 Gebel Uweinat, 7.11.1968, *L. Boulos* 3147 (ULT).

Distribution: Widely introduced and cultivated for its fruits used as vegetable and when mature the epicarp becomes woody, hard and then the fruit is used for making containers or musical instrument.

Fl. Oct.-Nov. *Vern.* Garra, Gherra, Thuila

6. CUCUMIS*

L., Sp. Pl. 1011.1753; Gen. Pl. ed. ed. 5:442.1754

Monoecious spreading or climbing, hispid or scabrous, usually perennating herbs with simple tendrils and yellow flowers, similar to *Momordica* but the stamens inserted on calyx-tube, connectives produced into papillose appendages; fruits globose, smooth or echinulate.

About 25 species, chiefly Afro-Asian; known from 3 cultivated species from Libya.

1. \+ Leaves suborbicular or reniform, 5-angled or shallowly 3-7-lobed. Fruits usually globose or ovoid (Melon) **1.C.melo***

— Leaves 3-5-lobed. Fruits oblong 2

2. + Fruits (2.5-) 3-7 (-7.5) cm long, spiny. Leaves very deeply lobed (Bur cucumber) 3.**C.anguria***
— Fruits much longer than 10 cm. Leaves not so deeply lobed (Cucumber) 2.**C.sativus***

1. ***Cucumis melo** L., Sp. Pl. 1011.1753; Durand & Barratte, l.c. 156; Keith, l.c. 400.

Annual, hispid with villous leaves, 8-15 cm in diameter and 2-3 cm long corolla with acute lobes. Fruit very variable in size, globose or ovoid, often becoming glabrous and sweet when ripe.

Type: Not precisely designated.

Cultivated for its fruit in Libya.

Distribution: A tropical Afro-Asian species, widely introduced and cultivated.

The melon is cultivated widely for its edible fruit.

Vern. Battikh, Shammam, Ghel-awi, Kantaluby

2. ***Cucumis sativus** L., Sp. Pl. 1012.1753; Durand & Barratte, l.c. 156; Keith, l.c. 401.

Annual, hispid, with 3-5 acutely lobed, villous-scabrid leaves, 7-18 cm in diam; flowers similar as above, fruits cylindrical, terete or angled, glabrous, tuberculate or mildly aculeate, green.

Type: Not precisely designated.

Widely cultivated for its fruit in Libya.

Distribution: Widely cultivated, probably of Indian origin.

Cucumber is eaten raw and much liked by Libyans.
Vern. Khiyar

3. ***Cucumis anguria** L., Sp. Pl. 1011.1753; Keith, l.c. 399

Smaller than the previous species, leaves deeply lobed, fruits small.

Type: « Habitat in Jamaica ».

Bur cucumber, a West Indian species, is cultivated in Libya for its fruit usually used in pickles.

C. utilissima Roxb. *(C.melo* var. *utilissima* (Roxb.) Duthie & Fuller) locally called « faghoos » or Gerresh is sometimes seen in the market. This has long greenish fruit, edible like cucumber.

7. CITRULLUS

Schrader in Ecklon et Zeyher, Enum. 279.1836. *(nom. cons.)*
Colocynthis Mill., Dict. ed. 8:1768.

Similar to *Cucumis* but tendrils simple or branched, leaves much dissected, flowers solitary, connectives of anthers not prolonged beyond the cells.

3 species of trop. Afro-Asian and Mediterranean region; 2 are recorded from Libya.

+ Annual; ovary densely lanate (Water melon)	1.**C.lanatus***
— Perennial; ovary sparsely hispid (Colocynth.)	2.**C.colocynthis**

1. ***Citrullus lanatus** (Thunb.) Mansfeld. Kulturpfl. 2:321.1939.

Mmordica lanata Thunb., Prodr. Fl. Cap. 13.1794; *Cucurbita citrullus* L., Sp. Pl. 1010.1753; *Colocynthis citrullus* (L.) O.Kuntze, Rev. Gen. 1891; *C. vulgaris* Schrader, l.c.; Durand & Barratte, l.c. 157; Keith, l.c. 371.

Annual, densely and softly villous (sometimes almost glabrous) with

pinnatisect leaves, 8-20 x 5-15 cm; segments regularly lobulate. Calyx-lobes narrowly lanceolate; corolla lobes ovate-oblong, obtuse, c. 15 mm long, ovary densely lanate. Fruits large, usually c. 20 (-30) cm in diam. in cultivation but much smaller in the wild conditions and subglobose to ellipsoid, smooth, greenish with red pulp when ripe, succulent-juicy; seeds black.

Type: Caput bonae spei, *Thunberg*

A-3 Qasre Khiyar, by the bank of wadi, sandy soil, ploughed field, flowers yellow, 17.11.1976, *Alavi & El-Gadi* 1010 (ULT); **G-8** Gebel Uweinat, 7.11.1968, *L. Boulos* 3146 and 3250 (ULT).

Distribution: A south African species, widely cultivated for its edible fruits (Water melon).

Water melon is cultivated widely in Libya for its edible fruit. It readily hybridizes with *C. colocynthis,* the next species, producing smaller and bitter fruit, Therefore, *C. colocynthis* must be eradicate from the area before cultivating water melon. Many varieties (cultivars) have been introduced including the seedless Japanese one.

Fl. Nov.-Dec. *Vern.* Battikh, Dilla

2. **Citrullus colocynthis** (L.) Schrader in Linnaea 12:414.1838; Durand & Barratte, l.c. 157; Keith, l.c. 369. (Fig. 4)

Cucumis colocynthis L., Sp. Pl. 1011.1753.

Perennial, roughly hispid, leaves 1-2-pinnatisect with 3-5 sinuate-lobed segments, 5-12 (-15) x 3-8 cm. Flowers small, yellow with corolla lobes c. 5 mm long, ovate, acute, ovary sparsely hispid. Fruit small, globose, yellow when ripe, 4-6 (-9) cm in diam., smooth; ± whitish within, bitter in taste.

Type: Not precisely designated.

A-2 Kabau, Wadi Carrive, clay soil, prostrate, yellow flower, 7.6.1974, *B. Faris* 535

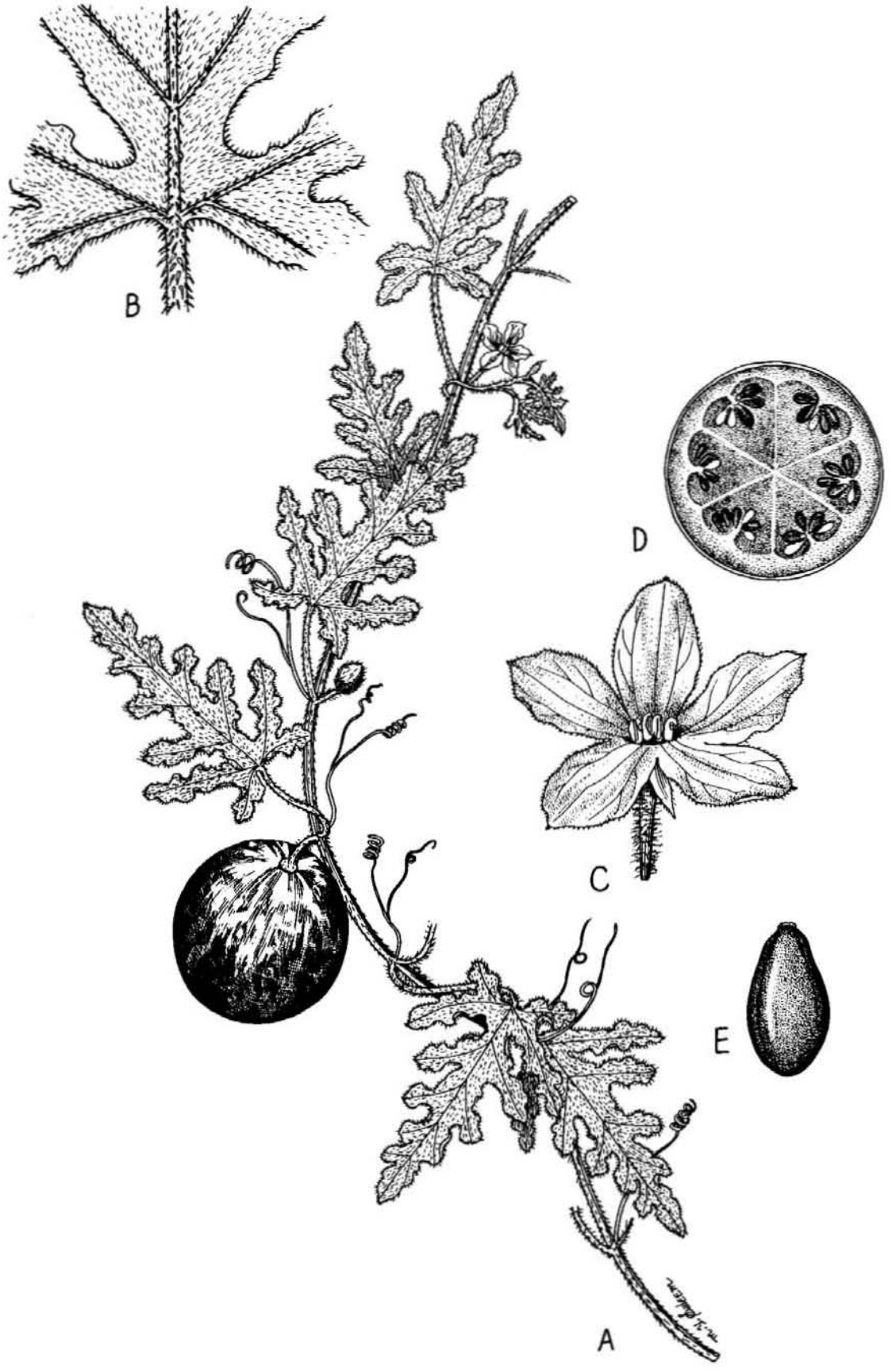

Fig.4 **Citrullus colocynthis:** A, flowering and fruiting branch x 0.5; B, aportion of leaf showing hairs x 2; C, male flower x 2; D, T.S. fruit x 0.5; E, seed x 3.

(ULT) **B-1** 25 km from Nalut towards Wazen, soil clay rocky, 7.6.1974, *B.Faris* 616 (ULT); **B-4** 7 km to Bugrain, along the way to Al Buayrat, 15.1.1967, *L. Boulos* 1071 (ULT); **E-1** Ghat, Barkat, sandy soil, near cultivated fields, fruit small, c. 4 cm in diam., yellowish, common, 24.2.1976, *S.M.H.Jafri* 6325 (ULT); **G-8** Gebel Uweinat, 7.11.1968, *L. Boulos* 3212, 3246, 3276, 3280, 33296, 3343, 3347, 3352, 3365 & 3400 (ULT).

Distribution: S. Europe, N. Africa, Arabia, eastwards to India and Ceylon.

A desert species, common almost throughout Libya. The fruit is said to have purgative effect and the dried powdered pulp is called « Pulvis colocynthidis ». The plant can be used for fixing light soil.

Fl. Almost thorughout the year. *Vern.* Handel, Alcot, Alkod, Tahillilut.

8. CUCURBITA*

L., Sp. Pl. 1010.1753; Gen. Pl. ed. 5:441.1754

Robust procumbent or climing herbs, monoecious, usually with branched tendrils, ovate, variously lobed leaves and large, yellow solitary flowers. Corolla campanulate, lobed to the middle, Fruit often large, ± orbicular, many seeded, pericarp becoming woody and strong when ripe.

About 15 American species, of these 5 are long cultivated; known from 3 cultivated species in Libya.

1.	+	Fruiting peduncle hard, ± expanded below the fruit	2
	—	Fruiting peduncle soft, corky, not expanded at the attachment to fruit	3.**C.maxima***
2.	+	Plants softly hairy. Leaves shallowly lobed	2.**C.moscata***
	—	Plants harshly hispid-setose. Leaves usually deeply lobed	1.**C.pepo***

1. **Cucurbita pepo** L., Sp. Pl. 1010. 1753; Durand & Barratte, Fl. Lib. Prodr. 156. 1910; Keith, l.c. 402 (partly).

C. melopepo L., l.c.; Keith, l.c. (as variety).

Harshly hispid, long procumbent annual herb with prickly stem up to 1 cm broad; leaves ovate-cordate, variously acutely lobed, hispid setose. Calyx-lobes linear-lanceolate; corolla 7-10 cm in diam., deep yellow. Fruit 15-40 cm in diam, globose to cylindrical, green or yellow, smooth or somewhat tuberculate; seeds white.

Type: Not precisely designated.

Distribution: A Central American species, widely introduced and cultivated.

The pumpkins with « vegetable marrrow » or summer squash are cultivated for their fruits used as vegetable.

Vern. Kusa, Kar Kosah, Gre-a

2. ***Cicurbita moscata** (Duch.) Duch. ex Poiret, Dici. Sci. Nat. 11:234. 1818; Keith, l.c. 402.

C. pepo var. *moschata* Duch. in Lam. l.c.; Keith, l.c. 403.

Like the previous species but leaves shallowly lobed to almost entire, softly hairy. Peduncle of female flowers strongly expanded above. Calyx-lobes large, leaf-like. Fruit asymmetrical, curved, brown or reddish-yellow with musky odour.

Distribution: Probably American species widely introduced and cultivated for its fruits used as vegetable.

Musk melon is cultivated for its fruits used as vegetable in Libya.
Vern. Kar-a miski

3. ***Cucurbita maxima** Duch. in Lam., Encycl. Meth. Bot. 2:151.1786; Durand & Barratte, l.c. 157; Keith, l.c. 402.

C. pepo var. *maxima* Keith, l.c. 402.

Like the previous species but leaves orbicular, not lobed, peduncle not expanded above; fruit often very large, glaucous ± globose or variously shaped, up to 100 kg in weight.

Distribution: A Central American Species, widely cultivated and introduced. « Melon Pumpkin » or « squash gourd » is cultivated in Libya for its fruits used as vegetable.

Vern. Gar-a Hmra Quar Khulu, Takasaim

9. SECHIUM*

P. Br. Hist. Jamaic. 355.1756. *(nom. cons.)*
Chocho Adans., Fam. 2:500.1768; *Chayota* Jacq.,
Select. Am. ed. Pict. t. 245.1780.

Monoecious, climber with branched tendrils and membranous, 3-angled or lobed, cordate leaves. Flowers small, greenish or cream-coloured, staminate in samll clusters and the pistillate solitary, axillary. Calyx-tube saucer-shaped, 5-lobed; corolla deeply 5-lobed with ovate-lanceolate segments; filaments connate into a central column. Fruit obovate-oblong, pearshaped to subglobose, longitudinally grooved, fleshy, 1-seeded.

A monotypic genus of Central America, introduced elsewhere.

***Sechium edule** Swartz, Fl. Ind. Occ. 2:1150.1768; Keith, l.c. 884.

Roots tuberous; annual; stems up to 15 m long; leaves 10-15 cm long, deep green, somewhat rough, scarcely hairy. Fruit (7-) 10-15 (-20) cm long; seed flat, 2.5-5 cm long, attached above.

Distribution: A Central American species.

The edible fruit resembles the summer squash and sometimes cultivated locally (Keith, l.c.) as vegetable. The whole plant is considered as fodder for livestock.

Vern. Chaco, Shayut.

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