Old World cucurbitaceae
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Cucurbitaceae (taxonomy after Jeffrey via Walters 1989)

Tribe Melothrieae
Cucumis melo L. subsp. agrestis wild melon (Near East through Central India, also China?)
Multiple domestications
C. melo ssp. melo domesticated melons
C. sativus L. Sativus domesticated cucumber
C. sativus ssp. hardwickii wild progenitor of western Himalayan foothills

Tribe Joliffieae
Momordica charantia L., bitter gourd or bitter cucumber, cultivated throughout the tropics; two domestications:
Himayans (India/Nepal), and Yunnan, China (Marr et al. 2005, Economic Botany)
Wild= subsp. abbreviata Ser..
Cultivar groups, divided on the basis of fruit size, into minima and maxima.
M. balsamina L., a pantropical of dry areas which can also be eaten (Reyes et al 1993). Indian origin
M. cochinchinensis (Loureiro) Sprengel, sweet gourd or spiny bitter cucumber, a root-tuberous perennial, is grown
widely in mainland and island southeast Asia, as well as China and Japan, and occurs in the wild
throughout much of this range, but appears absent from Java (Reyes et al. 1993). Chakravarty 1959:
Burma, Assam, Bengal: Chittagong, Garjania, Khulna and Jessore, Madras, one collection by Wright no. 1130 Kew from Madras.
M. subangulata Blume, Indonesia and Malaysia known as kamas; in southern Thailand as phakmae
is used from wild populations, distributed in mainland Southeast Asia and Java, and a little in India
(Chkaravarty 1959)
M. dioica Roxb. ex Willd. A root-tuberous perennial. Extends from Burma through India, partially cultivated in
some parts of India for fruits (Chakravarty 1959)

Tribe Trichosantheae
Trichosanthes cucumerina L. var. anguina (L.) Haines snake gourd (domesticated), cultivated India, China, SE Asia
Trichosanthes cucumerina L. var. cucumerina wild snake gourd, India, Yunnan, Burma, mainland Southeast Asia
Trichosanthes globosa Blume; another species also called “snake gourd”, wild but eaten in South Asia
(syn. Trichosanthes cucumeroides (Ser.) Maxim.)
Trichosanthes dioica Roxb., pointed gourd, palwal, South Asia
Trichosanthes tricuspidata Lour. Reported to be eaten; wild from India through Guizhou, mainland & island
Southeast Asia
Other wild species include: T. quinquangulata A. Gray [mainland Southeast Asia, Yunnan]; T. globosa Blume
[Indonesia]; T. rosthornii Harms (south China); T. villosa Blume [southwest China, mainland and island
Southeast Asia]

Tribe Benincaseae
Subtribe Luffinae
Luffa acutangula (L.) Roxb., ridge loofah, domesticated India
Luffa aegyptiaca Mill. (syn. L. cylindrica M. Roem.) sponge loofah; also cultivated as vegetable; domesticated
twice, South Asia (Himalayan foothills, Yunnan South China).

Subtribe Benincasinae [see Walters and Decker-Walters in Econ Bot 1989: 274-8]
Benincasa hispida (Thunb.) Cogn., the wax gourd, winter melon; important in China and Japan. Native to
Southern China/ Yunnan/ maybe eastern India
Four cultivar groups: Unridged winter melon, rindged winter melon, fuzzy gourd, wax gourd, Moderately dry
lowland tropics, up 1000m, optimal growth 23-28 C temp. Mature fruits 100-160 days after sowing

Citrullus lanatus (Thunb.) Matsum. & Nakai water melon. Origins Africa, Sahara(?); advanced large, sweet juicy
forms may have been developed in India and dispersed in Arab period.
Cultivar= subsp. Lanatus
Progenitor: Citrullus lanatus (Thunb.) Matsum. & Nakai var. citroides (L. H. Bailey) Mansf.
Currently wild in Southern part of Africa; formerly in Sahara(?)
Citrullus colocynthis (L.) Schrad. Colocynth dist includes wild in Western and Central India though Sahara and
Sahel. May have been cultivated or collected for the seeds.
Citrullus eeirosus Cogn. Tsama melon, collected wild by Namib hunter-gatherers

Lagenaria siceraria L. - The bottle gourd, originally wild only in Africa(?); 4 other wild species in Africa in
genus. Widely translocated and cultivated(?) since Palaeolithic times.