

Menispermum canadense L.

common moonseed

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Drs. Brinkman and Phipps retired from the USDA Forest Service's North Central Research Station (review of the literature by Jill R. Barbour, a germination specialist at the USDA Forest Service's National Tree Seed Laboratory, Dry Branch, Georgia, found no new information).

Growth habit, occurrence, and use. Common moonseed—*Menispermum canadense* L.—is a climbing woody vine growing to a height of 3.6 m (Rehder 1940) that is capable of spreading from underground stems (Wyman 1949). It is native from Quebec and western New England to southeastern Manitoba, south to Georgia, Alabama, and Oklahoma (Fernald 1950). The plants are seldom eaten by livestock (Van Dersal 1938), but the fruits are of value to wildlife, although reportedly poisonous to humans (Kingsbury 1964). This species has been cultivated since 1646 for its attractive foliage and fruit (Rehder 1940).

Flowering and fruiting. The dioecious flowers appear from May to July and the bluish-black drupes ripen from September to November (Grimm 1966; Redher 1940). The seeds are flattened stones in the form of a crescent or ring (figures 1 and 2).

Collection of fruits and seed extraction. Fruits may be collected from September to November (Rehder 1940). Seeds may be extracted by washing the macerated fruits in water. One sample showed 16,758 seeds/kg (7,600/lb) (Brinkman and Phipps 1974).

Germination. Stratification of one seedlot at 5 EC for 60 days resulted in 65% germination in 11 days and 98% in 26 days. An unstratified seedlot showed germination of 83% in 28 days and 92% in 60 days (Brinkman and Phipps 1974). Germination was tested in sand under light at alternating temperatures of 30 (day) and 20 EC (night).

Nursery practice. Common moonseed is propagated readily by seeds stratified and sown in the spring or planted as soon as ripe (Bailey 1935). Vegetative propagation also is possible from cuttings.

References

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Figure 1—*Menispermum canadense* L., common moonseed: fruit, H 1; seeds, H 4.

Figure 2—*Menispermum canadense* L., common moonseed: longitudinal section through a seed, H 8.