

# *Trigonella foenum-graecum* L.

Standardized Common Name: Fenugreek

**Other Common Name:** Greek Hay

**Family:** Fabaceae (Leguminosae)

**Taxonomy:** *Trigonella* includes about 50 species; its most important center of diversity is in the Mediterranean and South-west Asian region, to which *T. foenum-graecum* is native.

**Description:** Annual herb; stems erect, branching from base, to 50 cm high. Leaves alternate, stipulate with stipules fused to petiole, long-petioled, trifoliolate; leaflets obovate to oblanceolate, 1–3 cm long; apex obtuse to emarginate; margins dentate. Flowers axillary, solitary or paired; calyx tubular, 7–8 mm long, with 5 long teeth; corolla bilaterally symmetrical, 12–18 mm long, yellowish-white, sometimes violet-tinged; keel petal free of wings, standard petal obovate; stamens 10, 9 with filaments basally fused into a group, 1 free; gynoecium of 1 carpel, superior. Fruit a legume, 5–12 cm long, 3–5 mm broad, with beak 1–3.5 cm long, more or less terete, straight or moderately curved. Seeds 3–5(–6) mm long, oblong to rhomboidal, flattened, yellowish-brown, with deep diagonal groove.

**Parts in Commerce:** Seeds

## Identification:

- 3–5 mm long, 2–3 mm broad; not smaller, nor as broad as long
- Oblong to rhomboidal, with distinct angles, irregular, somewhat flattened
- Diagonal groove running across both broad faces toward one narrow end, often giving “mitten-shaped” appearance; radicle is found in corner defined by groove, cotyledons in remaining larger portion of seed
- Groove originates from depressed area on long narrow side, where hilum appears as small white spot

- Often appearing shriveled, with few but conspicuous wrinkles; bearing minute bumps
- Yellowish brown outside, yellow inside
- Odor characteristic, similar to elm
- Taste slightly bitter, floury and mucilaginous or oily

## References:

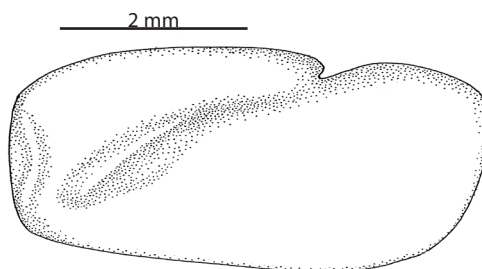
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**Figure 78:** a–c, *Trigonella foenum-graecum* seed.