



Turkey Gold® CHUFA

Written by Ron Brenneman
& Henry Daniel

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Turkey Gold® Chufa (chêw-fa) is one of the most popular crops planted for wild turkeys. Turkeys will readily come to a chufa patch and continue using it for several months. If you want to attract and keep turkeys on you land, chufa should be a part of your habitat management plan. Chufa, *Cyperus esculentus* var. *sativus*, is an African variety of the native nutsedge, which is a warm season perennial plant. Native nutsedge can be a problem weed in some areas. Chufa is not aggressive like the native nutsedges and will not create problems when other crops are planted after it.



Wildlife does not feed on the lush chufa foliage.

PHOTO BY RON BRENNEMAN



Chufa tubers.

PHOTO BY JAY LANGSTON

The tubers are high in carbohydrates and protein. They are edible by humans, having a sweet taste described by some as being like raw peanuts or almonds.

RANGE:

The general rule of thumb is that chufa will grow anywhere corn will grow. The recommended range of chufa includes the entire southern part of the United States from Florida to California, and northward to Pennsylvania, Ohio and Iowa. Chufa is now being grown in most other states as well. Extreme northern range, such as northern Minnesota, may not be suitable for chufa because of short growing seasons and limited use by turkeys during the winter.

Chufa foliage, which grows 1-3 feet tall, is not utilized by wildlife, rather, the small, nut like tubers, which grow under the ground, are what is relished by wild turkeys, ducks and other wildlife. Each plant produces a handful (15-75) of golden tubers a couple of inches under the ground.

Turkeys begin scratching out the tubers in the fall, after the tops have turned brown. In southern areas they will continue using chufa throughout the winter and into the spring. In areas where the ground freezes and snow accumulates, it does not provide a source of food during the winter. Once turkeys begin using chufa, they will visit the field regularly until the tubers are gone or spring greenup provides a more desirable food source. A chufa patch that is being used regularly by turkeys looks like a herd of hogs has been rooting in the field or takes on the appearance of craters on the moon.



Turkeys scratch the tubers out of the ground.

PHOTO BY RON BRENNEMAN

PLANTING TIME:

In the South, chufa is normally planted from April through July, depending on rainfall. In more northern areas the best planting time is April or May. Chufa will mature in approximately 90-110 days. In areas with shorter growing seasons, make sure you have 90-110 con-

