

was much valued by the ancients both for food and medicine, and it was also grown for the purpose of feeding oxen. It is referred to by Hippocrates, and was prescribed by Aretæus both for internal and external application. Reduced to a powder, the seeds were recommended by Dioscorides to form cataplasms in inflammatory cases. Pliny refers very fully to its medicinal virtues, and other authors, especially Avicenna, treat of its properties at some length. Pomét, in his 'Compleat History of Druggs,' published in London in 1725, says, "The ancients and some Germans at this time make a decoction of this seed, and eat it as they do other pulse, to remove and expel wind; but I believe few or none will imitate them in this practice, which is so disagreeable to the nose and palate; it is much better for cattle, and especially horses, to mix with their oats to fatten them. It is of greater use externally than internally." These seeds continued to be used for external application, chiefly for cataplasms and fomentations, down to a comparatively recent period, but at the present time their chief uses with us are in veterinary practice, and as a condiment in curry powder. It is not many years since, however, that they were included in the Greek Pharmacopœia. Pomét's opinion that these seeds are "much better for cattle, and especially horses, to mix with their oats to fatten them," seems to have become fully realized, for at one time the powdered seeds of fenugreek were greatly in demand for feeding cattle, and it is said that the patent cattle foods so much advertized at the present time are largely composed of, or seasoned with, these seeds. Be this as it may, it is certain that, when crushed, they are much used for flavouring damaged hay.

Pomét, in the work before referred to, gives a quaint but tolerably accurate description of the plant, as well as a figure. He says:—"Fenugreek, which some call improperly Senegrè and others Bucera or Aigoceros, because the pods which enclose the seed resemble in some manner a goat's horn, is a plant which grows in several parts of France. Its stalks are round, hollow, of a darkish colour, the leaves small, half-round, composed of three and three together, something after the nature of the trefoil, the flowers small and white, bearing a large pod, which is long and sharp, representing, as said before, a bull's, or rather, a wild goat's horn. The seed carries the name of the plant, and is the only part of it which is sold by the name of fenugreek. This seed ought to be fresh, of a lively yellow, towards a gold colour, but it becomes reddish, and changes brown if long kept; it is about half as big as a grain of wheat, hard and solid, and is of a triangular shape, but the smell and taste of it are both offensive. The farmers about Aubervilliers sow and cultivate this as they do coriander seed, which is sent to Paris, and from thence to Holland and other parts."

Woodville in his 'Medical Botany' refers to the plant as a native of Montpellier, and as having been first cultivated in Britain