

## INTRODUCTION

Spices have a very important role in the domestic consumption and several industries. Crops of family umbelliferae represent the highest portion of these spices. The fruits (seed) of these plants are the most economic parts for consumption, they contain essential oils which have a wide uses in various industrial purposes.

Cumin plant, Cuminum cyminum Linn is a short annual herb, it is grown in Mediterranean areas for a long time, so it is difficult to trace. It is probably native to Turkestan or Upper Egypt Shaarawy (1987). Today cumin is also planted in East India and Southern Russia, (Gaenther 1961). The cultivated area with umbelliferous crops during the last ten years in Egypt reached 31600 feddans per year (Ministry of Agriculture, Egypt) more than 50 % of this area (17145 fed. / year) was cultivated with cumin (Cuminum cyminum). According to the reports of Ministry of Agric., the cultivated area of cumin reached about 5404 feddans in (1986) mainly in El-Minya and Assiut Governorates, which produced a total yield of about 2087 tons/year.

The seeds of cumin are of many uses i.e. making curry powder, flavoring of bread, soup, rice and meat dishes, pickles, cheese, chilli powder. Also used in same medical purposes as an antispasmodic, astringent, stimulant, carminative, stomachic, diuretic and emmenagogue.