

*Averrhoa carambola*

[Synonyms : *Averrhoa pentandra*]

**CARAMBOLA** (English, German, Italian, Spanish, Swedish) is an evergreen shrub or tree.

Native to Indonesia it has small fragrant, rose-lilac flowers each with backward curving downy petals.

It is also known as *Arbol de pepino* (Spanish), *Balimbing* (Filipino/Tagalog), *Balingbing* (Sundanese), *Belimbing* (Filipino/Tagalog), *Belimbing batu* (Malay), *Belimbing besi* (Malay), *Belimbing manis* (Indonesian, Malay), *Belimbing pessegi* (Malay), *Belimbing saji* (Malay), *Belimbing sayur* (Malay), *Bilimbi*, *Bina* (Hindi), *Blimbing alas* (Javanese), *Camerunga* (Brazilian, Portuguese), *Camruna*, *Caramba*, *Carambola apple*, *Carambole* (French), *Caramboleiro* (Portuguese), *Carambolera* (Spanish), *Carambolero* (Spanish), *Carambolier* (French), *Carambolier doux* (French), Chinese gooseberry, Coolie tamarind, Coromandel gooseberry, Country gooseberry, Five corners fruit, *Fransman birambi* (Dutch), *Gorenshi* (Japanese), *Kamaranga* (Sanskrit, Singhalese), *Kamrakh* (Gujarati), *Karambola* (Finnish), *Karambole* (German), *Karanbora* (Japanese), *Limas de Cayena* (Brazilian, Portuguese), *Ma-fu'ang* (Thai), *Nak fuang* (Laotian), *Pepino de la India* (Spanish), *Sa bue* (Thai), *Spu* (Khmer), Star apple, Starfruit, *Sternfrucht* (German), *Tamarindo chino* (Spanish), *Tamarindo dulce* (Spanish), *Tamarta* (Tamil), Tree sorel, *Wu lian zi* (Chinese), *Yang tao* (Chinese), and *Yeung toe* (Chinese).

Like those of bilimbi (*Averrhoa bilimbi*), carambola leaves will hang down from their normally horizontal position if touched during daylight, and at night they droop naturally.

*Carambola* is derived from a northern Indian name for the fruit *kamranga* (itself developed from Sanskrit *karmara* meaning 'food appetizer').

The juice of the fruit is used to remove stains from linen, and it is also used to burnish copper and brass.

The fragrant golden-yellow to pale orange-brown fruit (that are star-shaped in cross-section) can be eaten raw as a sweet or savoury dish, or made into jams and other preserves. Apart from eating the ripe fruit the Indians and the Chinese enjoy it unripe as a vegetable. In Java (now an Indonesian island) the flowers have been added to salad, while the fruit juice has provided a popular seasoning in the Philippines.

Medicinally, in south-eastern Asia the fruit are considered to be an antidote for high blood pressure – and alcoholic over-indulgence. Malaysians have also used the leaves in different forms in the treatment of chicken-pox, headaches and ringworm.