

Mangosteen

Botanical Name: *Garcinia mangostana* (Clusiaceae)

Common Name: Mangosteen or Purple Mangosteen. Mangostino (in Spanish), Mangouste (in French), Mangostanbaum (in German). Also called 'Queen of the Fruits'

Origin: The Mangosteen is native to the Malay Archipelago and Indonesia.

Distribution: Mangosteen was first domesticated in Thailand and Burma. Its main distribution now includes Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Burma, Malaysia and Singapore. Also grown to a lesser extent in parts of Sri Lanka, India, Philippines, and parts of Africa, the Caribbean and South America.

Australian Distribution: It was introduced into Australia around the 1850s and planted in southern Queensland and New South Wales, but none of these survived. Subsequent test plantings were then mainly concentrated in northern Queensland, where commercial production is centred on Bloomfield, Babinda and Innisfail.

Preferred Climate and Soil Types: Mangosteen requires a tropical climate, and cannot tolerate temperatures below 5°C. It prefers deep, rich organic soil, and in fact, it prefers a little clay in the Top End soils possibly because of moisture retention during the dry.

Description: An evergreen tree, between 6-10 metres around Darwin, with short, thick leathery leaves. The trunk of the tree has a dark brown coloured bark. The fruit itself can range from 50 – 75mm round. It has a purple colour rind when ripe with a white aromatic sweet flesh, which has 4-8 segments. It is very sweet with flavours of strawberry, peach and vanilla ice-cream. The fruit is very popular in South East Asia where it is known as the 'queen of fruits', or 'fruit of the gods'.

Culture: Spacing of trees is between 8-10 metres, they are slow growing, and can take up to 8 years to fruit. They require protection from the south-easterly dry season winds in the Top End, and benefit from a micro climate where irrigation can be misted on them over the top of their canopy.

Pests and Diseases: Generally no serious pests, however Mangosteens can suffer from a physiological problem called 'gamboge', whereby latex oozes onto the outer surface of the fruit and branches during periods of heavy rain. This can simply be washed off the fruit.

Fruiting Season: Generally in and around Darwin it extends from November, through the wet season into January

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Harvesting: Harvest the fruits by hand, but do not allow fruits to fall on the ground. Ripeness can be determined by darkening of colour and a softening of the fruit. The fruit needs to be fully matured on the tree before picking commences, otherwise it will not continue to ripen.



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