

China Chestnut

Sterculia monosperma



Common names	Pheng Phok, Noble Bottle Tree Nut, Phoenix Eyes, Seven Sisters' Fruit, Ping Po, Feng Yan Guo, Jiu Ceng Pi.
Origin	Originally from Southern China (Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan and Taiwan) that belongs to Malvaceae family.
Description	Tropical tree with bright red velvety pods containing one or two shiny, hard, oval to roundish black seeds that when cooked taste like chestnuts. Used in Chinese traditional medicine.
Growth Habitat	Tropical and subtropical areas of South China, Taiwan and in the North of Malaysia, mostly in the state of Perak.
Foliage	Dark green, large, oblong leaves with obvious parallel ridges along each leaf.
Flowers	Small, white flowers without petals but with a curved calyx or envelope-type structure that encloses the stamens and pistils. Male flowers growing on different red panicles or branches separately from the female ones.

Fruits	The fruits consist of a green, velvety envelope that becomes red when it matures that opens on one side to release one or two brown to black, shiny, hard seeds.
Soil	Grows well in the dense forests of South East Asia to Southern China.
Pruning	Prune to establish initial shape and to remove dead and diseased branches.
Fertilization	Tropical trees rarely require fertilizing but if needed, fertilize with a complete fertilizer and manure.
Propagation	Not much information can be found on Pheng Phok but a closely related tree called Peanut tree or Sterculia quadrifida says this about its seeds: Propagates from very fresh seed, which germinates easily and quickly, sometimes within 3 days.
Harvest	Prise open the already opened red pods to remove one or two seeds.
Nutritional Properties	The Pheng Phok seed flour has the following composition: 12% fat, 7.8% protein, 73.7 % carbohydrate, 5.5% fibre, 1% ash. 12.3mg/g potassium, 2.30mg phosphorus, 1.87mg magnesium, 0.88mg sulphur, 0.14mg calcium. The fatty acid profile is 42% palmitic, 34% oleic acid, 13% glutamic acid, 17.4% aspartic acid and 12.5% arginine.
Health Benefits	The following nutrients in Pheng Phok can be beneficial for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potassium is necessary for the heart, kidneys, and other organs to work normally. It is also essential for nerve transmission and muscle contractions. • The health benefits of phosphorous include healthy bone formation, improved digestion, regulated excretion, protein formation, hormonal balance, improved energy extraction, cellular repair, optimized

	<p>chemical reactions, and proper nutrient utilization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnesium. Multiple health benefits of magnesium include transmission of nerve impulses, body temperature regulation, detoxification, energy production, and the formation of healthy bones and teeth. • Sulphur is involved in protein synthesis, helps in the production of collagen, also part of keratin, giving strength to hair, skin and nails. Sulphur also helps with arthritis and skin disorders such as acne and eczema. • Calcium is essential for the development and maintenance of bones and teeth. And also important for digestion, blood clotting, wound healing and the acid and alkaline balance in our bodies. • Essential fatty acids support the cardiovascular, reproductive, immune, and nervous systems. The human body needs the essential fatty acids to manufacture and repair cell membranes, enabling the cells to obtain optimum nutrition and expel harmful waste products. A primary function of good fats is the production of prostaglandins, which regulate body functions such as heart rate, blood pressure, blood clotting, fertility, conception, and play a role in immune function by regulating inflammation and encouraging the body to fight infection.
Commercial Uses	Seeds can be boiled and eaten. Taste like chestnuts. Tree can be used as timber. Used in Chinese traditional medicine.
Food Suggestion	When making any Chinese style chicken dish, add parboiled and peeled Chinese chestnuts to dish. First, fry garlic in oil and stir fry the boiled and peeled nuts. Add to chicken dish and season.