

Custard Apple



Common names	Wild-sweetsop, bullock's-heart, ox-heart, sugar apple, anona, anona colorada, anona rosada, corazón.
Origin	It is believed to be a native of the West Indies but was carried in early times through Central America to southern Mexico.
Description	Closely related to sugar apples, the flavor of custard apple has been described as a cross between papaya, vanilla and pineapple. The ripe fruit is sweet and pleasant in flavor.
Growth Habitat	Tropical climate but with cooler winters than those of the west coast of Malaysia. This species is less drought-tolerant than sugar apple and prefers more humid atmosphere.
Foliage	The slender leaves are not hairy, straight and pointed at the apex (in some varieties wrinkled), 10 cm to 20 cm long and 2 cm to 7 cm wide.
Flowers	Yellow-green flowers, generally in clusters of three or four, 2 cm to 3 cm diameter, with three long outer petals and three very small inner ones.
Fruits	Fruit is 8-16cm in diameter, can be symmetrically heart-shaped, lopsided, irregular, nearly round, or oblate with a deep or shallow depression at the base. The skin is thin but tough, turns yellow or brownish when ripe, with a pink, reddish or brownish-red blush. There is a thick, cream-white layer of

	<p>custard like flesh beneath the skin surrounding the juicy segments. In each segment there is a single, hard, dark-brown or black, glossy seed, oblong and smooth, less than a half of inch long. There are between 55 and 76 seeds in a fruit. The unripe fruit is rich in tannin.</p>
Soil	<p>The custard apple does best in low-lying, deep, rich soil with ample moisture and good drainage. It grows to full size on oolitic limestone but is less productive in light sand and other types of soil</p>
Pruning	<p>Prune for vegetative growth and shape for aeration and light penetration. Pruning branches during the second to fourth year can stimulate the growth of secondary and tertiary branches.</p>
Fertilization	<p>The tree is fast-growing and responds well to mulching, organic fertilizers and to frequent irrigation if there is dry weather during the growing period.</p>
Propagation	<p>Usually by seeds. There are few named varieties and better strains are propagated by air layering and grafting.</p>
Harvest	<p>The fruit is harvested after its colour changes patterns although in some cultivars this does not occur and ripeness is determined by feel. The skin is very thin and the fruit must therefore be handled carefully.</p>
Nutritional Properties	<p>The custard apple is a good source for important minerals such as calcium, phosphorus and potassium and also vitamin C.</p>
Health Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment of dysentery and diarrhea when the unripe fruit is dried and crushed. • Leaves are crushed and applied to sprains. • Leaves and parts of the plant can be crushed and used for local application on boils, ulcers, and abscesses. • The root bark of the tree is used as a toothache remedy. • The fruit of the plant, is used as an expectorant, coolant and stimulant. • Treatment of eating anemia. • The seeds are used in some cases as an insecticide. • Effective in treating diabetes. • The fruit is used to make a hair tonic in some countries. • Treat hysteria (fearful state of mind) and nausea,

	<p>dizziness, or fainting spells - the crushed leaves are used for this purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnant women should not consume custard apples, particularly the roots of the tree are quite powerful and may result in abortions.
<p>Commercial Uses</p>	<p>The leaves have been employed in tanning and they yield a blue or black dye. A fiber derived from the young twigs is superior to the bark fiber from the sugar apple. Custard apple wood is yellow, soft, fibrous but durable, moderately close-grained and it has been used to make yokes for oxen. Leaves contain substances with mosquito insecticide properties. Used to treat sleeping sickness and control lice in hen coops. Flowers have been used to treat eye inflammation. Crushed seeds have insecticidal properties against fruit flies and lice. Paste of the seed powder is used to treat head lice. Also used in cancer treatments. Bark extracts used to treat skin diseases and control intestinal worms, Root extracts are used to treat cancerous tumours.</p>
<p>Food Suggestion</p>	<p>Custard Apple Cream</p> <p>Ingredients :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3tsp gelatin • 1/3 cup boiling water • 500g soft light cream cheese • ½ cup caster sugar • 190ml cream • 1 or 2 custard apples, cut into segments, deseeded and pureed with a squeeze of lemon <p>Dissolve gelatin in one-third of a cup of boiling water. In a bowl beat softened cream cheese thoroughly then add gelatin mixture, caster sugar and cream. Add custard apple puree and beat until smooth. Pour into 8 dessert glasses or pots. Refrigerate for 2-3 hours.</p>