

Ciku

Manilkara zapota



Common names	Sapodilla, chico sapote, zapote chico, tree potatoe , sapodilla plum, naseberry, chikoo, ciku., baramasi, sapota, beef apple.
Origin	The sapodilla belongs to Sapotaceae family, is believed native to Yucatan and possibly other nearby parts of southern Mexico, as well as northern Belize and Northeastern Guatemala.
Description	Ciku fruit are brown in color with a sandy "potato like" outer surface. The flesh is brown with black smooth seeds. The ripe fruit has a juicy, brown-sugar, malty flavour.
Growth Habitat	A ciku tree prefers a sunny, warm, preferably frost free location. They grow well in tropical and sub-tropical climates. They are highly wind tolerant and can take salt spray.
Foliage	The leaves are 7.5 to 11.5cm long and 2.5 to 3.75cm wide. They are medium green, glossy, alternate and spirally clustered at the tip of forked twigs.
Flowers	Ciku flowers are small, inconspicuous and bell-like, about 1cm in diameter. They are borne on slender stalks in the axil of the leaves. There are several blooms of flowers throughout

	the year.
Fruits	Ciku fruit is brown in color with sandy "potato-like" outer surface. The flesh is white with sticky latex called saponin in unripe fruits. Latex disappears once the fruit ripens and the flesh turns to brown color. The flesh is very sweet with smooth or grainy texture and contains 3-5 smooth, black, shiny, bean-shaped inedible seeds in the center.
Soil	Ciku trees adapt well to many types of soil. It grows well in very poor soils but thrives also in deep, loose, organic soil, as well as light clay, sand or lateritic gravel. Good drainage is essential; the tree does not grow well in low, wet locations. It is highly drought resistant and it is like the date palm in its tolerance of soil salinity.
Pruning	As trees mature, most of the pruning is done to control tree height and width and to remove damaged or dead wood. If the canopy becomes too dense, removing some inner branches will help in air circulation and light penetration.
Fertilization	A ciku tree is not demanding in its fertilizer requirements. After planting, when new growth begins, apply 113 g of a young tree fertilizer such as a 6-6-6-2 (%nitrogen-% phosphate-% potash-% magnesium) with minor elements with 20 to 30% of the nitrogen from organic sources. Repeat this every 6 to 8 weeks for the first year, then gradually increase the amount of fertilizer to 227 g, 341 g, 454 g as the tree grows. Use 4 to 6 minor element (nutritional) foliar sprays per year from April to September.
Propagation	Ciku is most commonly propagated by seed, which remain viable for many years if kept dry. Easily germinated, they take five to eight years to bear. Veneer grafting with seedlings as rootstock is the best method. Air layering and rooting of cuttings have not been successful.

Harvest	<p>If the skin is brown and the fruit separates from the stem easily without leaking of the latex, it is fully mature but must be kept at room temperature for few days to soften. Another test is to lightly scratch the skin; if it is brown underneath, it can be picked, but if it is green or oozes latex, the fruit is not fully mature. Ripe fruit can be kept in fridge or freezer up to one month.</p>
Nutritional Properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich in dietary fiber (5.6 g/100g), which makes it a good bulk laxative. • Rich in antioxidant poly-phenolic compound tannin which have potential anti-inflammatory, antiviral, anti-bacterial, and anti-parasitic effects. • Vitamin C (24.5% of recommended daily intake per 100g of fruit) and vitamin A. <p>A good source of minerals like potassium, copper, iron and vitamins like folate, niacin and pantothenic acid.</p>
Health Benefits	<p>The fruit's digestible pulp, made up with simple sugars like fructose and sucrose, when eaten replenishes energy and revitalizes the body instantly. Because of the tannin content, young fruits are boiled and the decoction taken to stop diarrhea. An infusion of the young fruits and the flowers is drunk to relieve pulmonary complaints. A decoction of old, yellowed leaves is drunk as a remedy for coughs, colds and diarrhea. A "tea" of the bark is regarded as a febrifuge and is said to halt diarrhea and dysentery. The crushed seeds have a diuretic action and are claimed to expel bladder and kidney stones. A fluid extract of the crushed seeds is employed in Yucatan as a sedative and soporific. A combined decoction of sapodilla and chayote leaves is sweetened and taken daily to lower blood pressure. A paste of the seeds is applied on stings and bites from venomous animals.</p>

Commercial Uses	Ciku wood is strong and durable and timbers in Mayan temples have been found intact in the ruins. The white gummy latex called 'chicle' is used to make chewing gum and was first chewed by the Mayas.
Food Suggestion	Ciku Smoothie (one serving) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 125ml milk• 1 Tbsp honey• 1 tsp brandy (optional)• 125ml ciku pulp• 4 cups of ice <p>Place the ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth.</p>