

Terengganu Cherry

Lepisanthes alata / *Otophora alata*



Common names	Perupok, pokok Johor, belimbing cina, kelelek, gegelek, Chinese Averrhoe, Malaysian Lepisanthes, Kurumei, Engkili, Rambai Istana, Ya Ho.
Origin	Native to Southeast Asia. Belongs to Sapindaceae family.
Description	A rare attractive tree with young purple leaves turning to green and purple-red flower clusters. The globose fruits with 3 to 4 seeds are bright red.
Growth Habitat	Tropical areas of the world.
Foliage	Young leaves are a soft purple, growing opposite to each other on the stem in pairs or compound pinnate that eventually become dark green. They are tapered and winged, about 50cm in length.
Flowers	The scentless, pink to purple flowers grow on inflorescences, mostly unisexual, male and female growing on the same branch with short stems.

Fruits	The Terengganu cherry is a globose berry, about 2 to 3cm in diameter. It grows in large clusters of 20 fruits that are a shiny, deep red with a pointed tip. Sweet but a little tart with 3 seeds per fruit. Flesh is yellow, sweet and crunchy and the skin can be astringent if not fully mature.
Soil	Terengganu trees are often found in the tropical jungles of Southeast Asia with sandy to heavy clay soils.
Pruning	Prune to establish initial shape and to remove dead or diseased branches.
Fertilization	Tropical jungle trees rarely need fertilizing but if needed, fertilized with a complete fertilizer and manure.
Propagation	Can be propagated through seeds.
Harvest	Pick in clusters when the fruits turn to a deep red. If too young, the thin, outer skin is astringent or dries out the mouth.
Nutritional Properties	100g of Terengganu cherry contains 77.7% moisture, 9.5% dietary fibre, 0.8% sugar, 16mg of Vit C.
Health Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vitamin C in Terengganu Cherry fruits could be beneficial for protection against immune system deficiencies, cardiovascular disease, prenatal health problems, eye disease, and even skin wrinkling. • A tree similar to the Terengganu Cherry, Maa Wo from Thailand (<i>Lepishanthes senegalensis</i>) in the book "Medicinal Plants in Thailand", uses its fruit as a tonic and in the treatment of cerebral malaria, fever with vertigo, chest pain, nosebleed and to relieve muscular spasm.

Commercial Uses	Terengganu cherry trees are often used as ornamental trees because of its attractive young, purple foliage and long, purple inflorescences that become bright, shiny, red clusters of fruit.
Food Suggestion	The young leaves are cooked and eaten as vegetables in South Thailand.