PLANT FACT SHEET

Annona cherimola x Annona squamosa

GENUS *Annona* **FAMILY** Annonaceae

COMMON NAMES Atemoya, Custard apple

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fruit are eaten fresh. They are also used for drinks and ice cream.

DESCRIPTION

A small tree. It can be 3-10 m tall. The fruit is large and with segments. It is sweet. These are hybrid trees which bear characteristics between cherimoyas and sweetsops. They are semi-deciduous losing many of their leaves during the year. Flowering often occurs as a new flush of leaves is produced. The flesh of the fruit is soft and creamy and sweet. Several named cultivars occur.

HABITAT

They are semi-deciduous and suit the subtropics. The plant is suited to the highlands above 1000 m altitude in the tropics. Low relative humidity (less than 70%) shortens the receptive period of the stigmas and results in flowers falling off. Humidity can be increased by closer spacing, windbreaks and misting. As trees are shallow rooted, windbreaks are important to prevent trees falling over. Trees will grow on a range of soils but more consistent yields come from trees on sandy to sandy loams. Waterlogged soils cause flowers to fall off. They require uniform soil moisture from flowering to harvest.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

A spacing of 6 m apart is suitable. Grafting is used for propagation. Tree pruning and training is done to avoid weak branches which break. Potassium is required in reasonable amounts. Trees are also sensitive to zinc and boron deficiencies. With high yielding varieties, some fruit thinning may be required to maintain fruit size. Flowering corresponds with a new flush of growth and so can be controlled by pruning or removing leaves. The stigmas of the flowers are only receptive for a few hours and this often results in poor fruit set. Hand pollination improves fruit set. This is done by transferring pollen with a brush.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Seedling trees can fruit in 3-5 years. Grafted trees fruit in 3-4 years. It takes about 30 days for a flower to fully open and from fruit development to maturity takes 4-5 months. Fruit weigh 500-600 g.

NOTES

There are about 100-150 Annona species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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