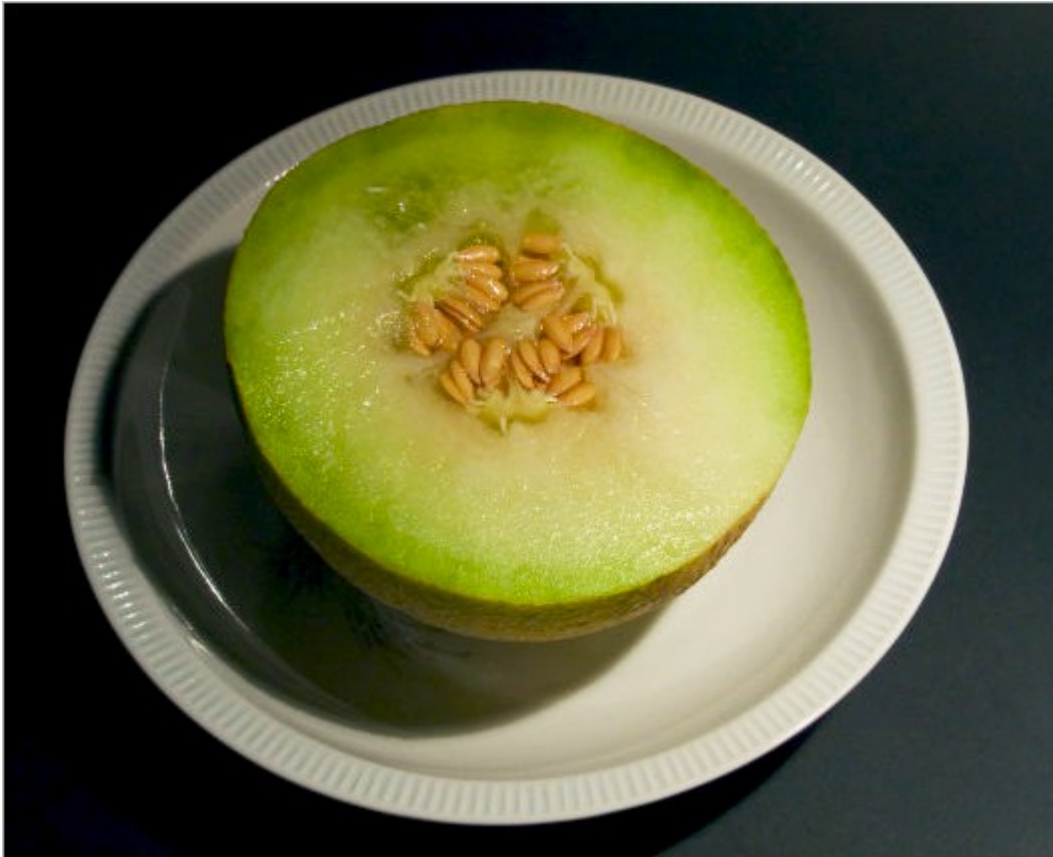


Fruits and Veggies from H to J



Brought to You buy Free-Ebooks-Canada.com

If you would like to pass on this ebook to others, please refer them to original blog post.

Cooking Info Products

[Metabolic Cooking Fat Loss Cookbook](#) - 250 Fat Torching Recipes To Banish Your Boring Diet And Burn Fat Faster!

[Anabolic Cooking & Muscle Building Cookbook](#) -Complete Cookbook And Nutrition Guide For Bodybuilding & Fitness with Over 200 Muscle Building Recipes

[Chef Todd's Web Cooking Classes Online Membership](#) - easy online cooking lessons

[First Timers Cookbook](#) - Online Cooking Course That Will Change The Way Think About Cooking

[America's Favorite Restaurant Recipes](#) - Like You Never Seen Before! Now You Can Cook Dishes Like Pros! Superstar Chef Reveals Everything

[Make Your Favorite Restaurant Dishes At Home!](#) - Secret Recipes From Ny Times Best Selling Author

[500+ Healthy Chinese Recipes Cookbook](#) - Learn How To Cook Low Fat & Low Carb Chinese Food From Master Chef W/ 40 Years Of Cooking Experience

[Ultimate Guide to Back Yard Barbecuing](#) – Best Barbecuing Online Material

[Learn How To Make Sushi](#) - Discover The Secrets Of Making The Ever Popular And Exotic Sushi Dishes

[New Cookbooks & Fresh Recipes](#) - Cookbooks Added Regularly On All Types of Cooking

Contents

Hackberry – Sturdy Shade Plus Some Surprises

Hawthorn – Healthy With A Strange History

Honeydew – Juicy Fruit Wins Sweetness Award

Horseradish – The Bite That Bites Back

Ice Plant – Beyond Nuisance To Nutrition

Indian Apple – The Root Of Evil Or Elixir

Jaboticaba – The Tree Hugging Fruit

Jackfruit – Odiferous Deliciousness

Jicama – Sweet Starchy Dieters Delight

Jojoba – More Than Skin Deep

Hackberry – Sturdy Shade Plus Some Surprises

The Hackberry tree may be familiar to you, but as a food source? Maybe not so much, but there are still some interesting uses for the tree and the berries. This is a common tree in the United States since it can survive many different climates and weather conditions. Still, this common tree has some uncommon uses. Keep reading to find out more.

What is it?

This is a tall tree with a big canopy style top that makes a splendid shade tree in the summer heat. If you see a hackberry tree from a distance, you may think you're looking at an elm, which makes sense since the hackberry is related to the elm family. This tree is neatly arranged, big and cozy looking. It's the kind of tree you want to have a picnic under, except in the fall when the berries start falling. It also is a hardy tree, able to withstand urban pollution and other harsh elements. For these reasons, the hackberry is often planted as landscaping around construction in urban areas. It's also a good choice for beginning home gardeners since it requires little care outside of what Mother Nature provides.

The hackberry tree has a lighter green leaf that will turn pale yellow in the fall. The bark is rough, light grayish in color, and kind of spongy to the touch. The wood itself is rather soft. The fruit of the tree looks like berries and you'll know they are ripe when they turn dark purple. You can eat them directly from the tree, but be careful of the hard seeds. You won't get to eat too many of them, though, because there are many birds who will probably beat you to it.

History

It's hard to track down exactly when it was discovered, but we know there is a fossil record of the hackberry that is millions of years old. So, it's been around for a while. Today, the hackberry tree grows in many regions because of its tolerance for so many conditions. It's common in the northern hemisphere, in southern Europe, southern and eastern Asia, in Central and South America, and central Africa. In the United States, you'll find the hackberry in many regions, again, because of the tolerance to so many conditions.

Much of the history of the hackberry tree is actually rooted, pardon the pun, in myth and legend. One romantic Tennessee legend centers around the lovers, Nocatula and Conestoga, murdered by a jealous suitor and buried together, one with an acorn and the other with a seed in their hands. Soon an oak tree and hackberry tree sprouted from the grave, marking their eternal bond. Unfortunately, the hackberry tree became diseased and had to be removed, and just like a heartbroken lover, the oak tree died shortly thereafter. In Colorado, a lone hackberry tree stood high on a hill and served as a landmark for travelers. Since hackberry trees were not common in the region, this was the thing of myths and legends. One myth is that a Native American chief was buried there with a bag of hackberry seeds still on his person. Since Hackberry seeds were used for medicinal purposes by some tribes, this may be based on a bit of truth.

Health Benefits

As mentioned, some Native American tribes used the hackberry in one form or another for medicinal purposes, as well as for some food and in ceremonies. The bark was actually used

as an aid in the female reproductive system, for something as ordinary as regulating the menstrual cycle and treating venereal diseases, to medically inducing spontaneous miscarriages. Of the more mundane uses, the bark has been steeped like tea and used as a gargle for sore throats.

Fun Fact

One of the freakiest uses for this otherwise common tree is in what is known as a “peyote ceremony.” The peyote cactus is a hallucinogenic and is part of a rather strange ceremony. The hackberry tree itself was burned to create the altar fire at these prayer-based ceremonies. It could be because the wood of the hackberry tree is rather soft, making it burn fast and hot and high; all perfect for an impressive effect. Most of us will encounter this common tree more often in a windbreak along farm fields and roadways or lining neighborhood streets. And, if you see a tree covered with birds during the late summer or early fall months, it's likely that it will be a hackberry tree. Birds love the berries, and you will too, if you can ever get any.

How to Eat

You can pick and eat the fruit right off the tree as long as you are careful when you bite into it; there is a hard seed in the fruit. You'll find the hackberry fruit is used most often for jelly or wine making. You can boil up the fruit, then strain out the seeds and skin, and end up with a delightful jelly. If you're lucky enough to be able to forage for this fruit, by all means do! Once you get a bucketful, you'll find a sweet little treat that is fun to experiment with.

Hawthorn – Healthy With A Strange History

Surprisingly, this is an ancient plant with documentation tracing it back more than 2000 years ago. I say surprisingly because it is common today in a wide variety of different forms, from the green plants to powered capsules and everything in between. Hawthorn is an interesting and unique plant that is rather fun to get to know. Let's take a closer look at this amazing plant.

What is it?

Chances are you've seen hawthorn growing somewhere. This common plant is a relative of the rose family. It's thorny, like a rose bush, and grows to be around five feet tall if left on its own. It likes to grow in wooded regions where it gets some sun, but is also quite tolerant of shade, too. You'll find the hawthorn bush covered in pretty clusters of delicate blossoms in the spring, which ripen into berries called 'haws' in the late summer and early fall. You may also see hawthorn in story books, most notably surrounding castles. In fact, hawthorn is well regarded as a hardy hedge through much of Europe.

History

There is documentation that indicates the use of hawthorn, in various forms, to treat heart disease as far back as the 1st century. Doctors in the United States were reportedly using hawthorn for medicinal purposes in the 1800s for lung and breathing problems, as well as what was referred to as 'blood diseases,' which could include high blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, hardening of the arteries, stroke, blood clots, or other circulatory illnesses or disorders. Much of this history continues in today's medical world. In modern times, we find hawthorn in a supplement form made from either the leaves, flowers, berries, or any combination of the three. Along with this medicinal history, comes a long line of legends and mysticism associated with the hawthorn tree, flowers, and berries. While some celebrated burgeoning life with the hawthorn flowers, others wouldn't allow the blossoms in the home as they brought certain death.

Health Benefits

A well known element known as 'antioxidants' are found in the hawthorn. Antioxidants are substances that destroy 'free radicals' which are the compounds in the body that damage cells causing illnesses and premature aging. External toxins, such as pollution, and internal toxins, such as improper diet, can increase the number of 'free radicals' in the body. Since hawthorn is rich in antioxidants, it is safe to assume that eating hawthorn products may help prevent the 'free radicals' from doing damage to your body's cells.

Many reputable studies have shown that hawthorn berry is effective in treating heart conditions by improving circulation, strengthening blood vessels, and even relieving symptoms of congestive heart failure. Breathing difficulties and fatigue have also been shown to benefit from taking a form of hawthorn berry. Hawthorn supplements, from the berries, leaves, and flowers, have all been sold with varying degrees of popularity. Many people swear by the results they get for everything from digestive and intestinal trouble to anxiety to menstrual problems. Even as a topical preparation, hawthorn is making news as a healing ointment for skin irritations, infections, and even frostbite.

Fun Fact

The wood of some Hawthorn varieties is quite hard and valued as a farmer's best choice for fence posts and handles for shovels, axes, rakes, and hoes. These seem to be some of the more 'earthly' uses for the Hawthorn, aside from the health benefits. In the 'other worldly' arena, Hawthorn has been regarded as a symbol of hope and also believed to heal a broken heart. The flower was often used in the May crowning of the Virgin Mary in churches through the centuries. It's also the May birthday flower.

On the darker side, some folklore claims that a stake made of Hawthorn wood is the only kind of wood that will kill a vampire when plunged through the heart. Of all the plants on the planet, it seems the Hawthorn has suspicion, mystery, ceremony, and supernatural stories galore.

How to Eat

The berries, leaves, and even flowers can be used in a variety of ways, for eating and for the treatment of health related issues. The ripe berries can be used raw, cooked, or dried much like any other berry. If picked young enough, the flower buds can be used steeped for a tea or even sprinkled over a salad and enjoyed. Young leaves, before they fully form, are also often used in salads. It is generally believed that once the leaves and flowers mature, they lose their edible quality, getting bitter or woody. However, some say you can pick the leaves and flowers anytime and they make a nice addition to a salad or side dish. I would stick to the younger buds to be honest with you.

Through the ages, the hawthorn bush has been used to make a variety of jellies, wines, and liqueurs, as well as in ceremony and storytelling. You won't have any trouble finding some way to enjoy this bountiful botanical.

Honeydew – Juicy Fruit Wins Sweetness Award

The aroma of a ripe honeydew melon is unmistakable. One of the sweetest treats you'll find, this juicy melon is light, fresh, and about 99% water. What makes this pale green fruit one of our favorites? Let's take a look.

What is it?

The honeydew melon is a member of the gourd family, just like cucumbers and squash. You'll recognize it by its smooth, firm pale yellow rind and its sweet, juicy, pale green flesh. Most are round and somewhat larger than a cantaloupe, ranging in weight from four to eight pounds. The rind turns from green to white to yellow as it matures. As the honeydew ripens, its skin transforms from very hard and smooth to a velvety texture and often develops a slight stickiness as if the juice was trying to escape.

History

The name 'honeydew melon' is the American name for what is also known as 'Balian' or 'Wallace' melon. There is documentation indicating that this melon was cultivated in the warm climates of southern France and Algeria in the 15th century. Because honeydew plants need a hot dry climate to grow and produce fruit, these melons didn't make it in America until the 1800s, after areas like California and Arizona were populated and farmed.

Once the honeydew melon is introduced to the proper climate, it usually flourishes. If it gets what it needs, a hot, dry climate with plenty of sunshine, it will take off like crazy. One of the reasons is the honeydew plant produces both male and female flowers on the same vine. That means you have a plant that 'self pollinates' without any help from bees or humans intervention. You can plant your melon seeds and basically walk away. The biggest commercial producers of honeydew melon are Turkey and China, followed by California and Arizona. This hardy plant that self-pollinates and grows in hot dry climates can be a lifesaver for otherwise barren regions, which makes this fruit a big part of history around the world.

Health Benefits

Honeydew melons are not only sweet, juicy, and delicious, they are also all business when it comes to nutrients. With just one small serving of honeydew melon, you receive almost half the recommended daily allowance of Vitamin C along with a healthy dose of potassium. Research indicates that honeydew melon is also a respectable source of pantothenic acid and Vitamin B6 which can help lower blood pressure and increase metabolism. Some studies also find improvement for skin disorders when honeydew melon is added to ones diet.

Even if you're counting carbs to lose weight, honeydew melon may be one fruit to consider eating. Along with the nutritional value, honeydew melon is filled with juice, which, along with the fiber, makes you feel full. Honeydew melon is an excellent choice for both weight control and general health.

Fun Fact

Honeydew melons are at their nutritive and sweetest best when fully vine ripened. But, this fully

vine ripened melon had a problem - they simply didn't ship well because they were so perishable. Once the ripe honeydew melon is picked, it starts to deteriorate quickly. The rind is delicate, and the insides are fully ripe when picked, so there's none of the 'ripen while shipping' element. Even refrigerated, the insides will start to spoil very quickly because the rinds simply are not hard and solid. But, things have changed. After some research, scientists have found a way to preserve the delicate honeydew melon without losing the vine ripened goodness. The honeydew melons are still picked ripe, but then are steeped in a solution that penetrates the rind and turns it into a more protective shield. Shelf life is increased and now more of us can enjoy the fresh juicy sweetness of this delicate fruit.

How to Eat

One thing to remember is that once a honeydew melon is picked, it won't get any sweeter. A honeydew melon sweetens totally on the vine until it is fully ripened. If it's picked at this time, it will have a high sugar content, making it super sweet and juicy. So, with this said, once you bring a honeydew melon home, there's no need to let it sit on the counter and 'ripen' like you do other produce, like avocados, for instance. Check the honeydew melon in the store before you buy to make sure it has reached its peak ripeness. If the blossom end yields to gentle pressure when pressed with your finger, it's ripe.

Honeydew melon can be enjoyed in a wide variety of dishes. You'll find it often in simple fruit salads, but honeydew melon pairs so well with mint and lime, that it begs to be part of a larger culinary adventure. Blend it for cold soups, smoothies, or sauces. You can even mix with savory ingredients and chop up into beautiful salsas to be served with fish. Remember, honeydew melon has a lot of moisture so it blends well into a lot of beverages. You can store cut honeydew melon in the refrigerator for a couple days, but I suspect once you cut into a ripe honeydew melon, there won't be any left to put away.

Horseradish – The Bite That Bites Back

This is one of the most loved, or most hated, condiments on the grocery store shelves. A little dab is all it takes to turn a simple dish into a bite that will make you break out in a sweat. The taste is distinctive, and the watering eyes come with the territory. So, what makes some people crave this fire-breathing food? Let's take a closer look at the spicy condiment with the strange name.

What is it?

When we refer to horseradish, we could be referring to one of two things; the root or the condiment. The root is the basis for the condiment, but many of us would never dream of buying a horseradish root and using it as is. Even though a horseradish root looks and smells rather benign in the produce counter, when you get it home and cut into it, you'll be treated to an incredible sinus clearing, whether you wanted one or not. The horseradish is part of the mustard family, Brassicaceae, and as far as mustards go, horseradish would be on the top of the stingy scale.

Once the horseradish root is peeled and grated, it is mixed with vinegar to create the condiment we know as horseradish. The vinegar helps to not only produce a delightful texture, but it also puts the brakes on the super stingy oils that are causing your sinuses to scream. If you were going to attempt to make the condiment horseradish at home, you would want to grate the horseradish directly into a bowl of vinegar to help reduce the assault to the eyes, nose, and sinuses. You may then add spices, salt, sugar, cream, or oil to make a specialty style condiment.

History

Knowledge of the horseradish root dates back some 3000 years. Horseradish has been used for everything from an aphrodisiac to the treatment of rheumatism. You'll find it mentioned in ancient Greek cookbooks and used in Passover seder meals as a bitter herb. In German, the word for horseradish is 'meerrettich' which some say translates to 'sea radish' and others say 'large radish.' It may have mistakenly become known as 'horseradish' simply because in English the German word 'meer' was mispronounced 'mare' becoming 'mare radish' and eventually 'horse radish.' Then again, you'll find some indication that the word 'horse' was often used to describe something large, so the 'large radish' also makes sense. In America, we can credit our German immigrants not only for the name, but for bringing the horseradish to our shores sometime around the late 1800s. This hardy crop was important in German cooking and beer making.

Today, Illinois provides about 60 percent of the world's supply of horseradish. The winters are cold and the summers are long enough for this root to grow well. The horseradish is celebrated in Illinois at the International Horseradish Festival in Collinsville. The events during the festival might be challenging for many of us. With horseradish eating contests and cooking contests, this is not a festival for the timid taste buds. But, no matter how you enjoy your horseradish, how it got its name, or how it's celebrated, we have to agree that horseradish has come a long way from aphrodisiac and rheumatism; or not.

Health Benefits

Horseradish has been prized for its medicinal qualities for centuries. If you have ever eaten horseradish, it should come as no surprise that horseradish has been used effectively to relieve sinus discomfort. The traditional treatment for sinusitis is to eat or drink a half teaspoonful of grated horseradish sauce twice a day. There will be a powerful feeling in the back of your head, followed by a sensation of the sinuses clearing, sometimes accompanied with sweating of the forehead and perhaps a few tears, as well. But, your sinuses will be cleared, so many say a small price to pay. Along with sinusitis, a little horseradish rubbed on the forehead is believed to relieve headaches.

It is believed that horseradish also contains antibiotic properties. This suggests that horseradish can be used to treat urinary tract infections; not only the bacteria but because horseradish stimulates the elimination of urine so that the bladder may be flushed out more often. The antibiotic properties of horseradish are also put to work to destroy bacteria in the throat to help prevent bronchitis, coughs, and related upper respiratory illnesses. Due to the stimulating effect horseradish has on the blood capillaries, it is also regarded as an aid in water retention.

Fun Fact

It would probably surprise you to know that in the US alone, it is estimated that around 12000 tons of horseradish roots are harvested yearly. That means about 5 million gallons of horseradish sauce ends up in those little jars on the grocery store shelves every year. Horseradish is still planted and harvested mostly by hand, making that 12000 tons even more astounding. Bottled horseradish was bottled and sold commercially as early as 1860, making it one of the first condiments sold as a convenience food.

How to Eat

To relish the full flavor of processed horseradish, be sure it's fresh. Color of processed horseradish in jars varies from white to creamy beige. As jarred horseradish ages, it browns and loses potency, so watch the color to know how fresh your horseradish sauce really is.

Of course, one of the best known uses for horseradish is probably as an ingredient to make cocktail sauce, typically served with shrimp. But, horseradish also adds a rich and spicy zing to sandwiches, cold cuts, or roast beef. A tiny dollop of horseradish in mashed potatoes is another winner. You don't even need to use processed horseradish sauce. You can grate a few shreds of horseradish root into many dishes to add pure horseradish flavor. Try a little in beef stew to take your old recipe up a notch or two.

You'll find the classic jar of simple prepared horseradish sauce in every grocery store, but you may also be surprised by the variety of flavored, seasoned, creamy, and herbed horseradish sauces available. Look for beet horseradish and even dehydrated horseradish. Add any of these to recipes where a bit of 'bite' works well, such as marinades for beef and pork. If you want to see horseradish used in unique ways, take a trip to Germany where you'll find horseradish schnapps and many beers with horseradish as an ingredient.

Rub it on your forehead to relieve a headache, or mix it in ketchup to dip your shrimp in. No matter how you approach this root crop, the bite will be unmistakable!

Ice Plant – Beyond Nuisance To Nutrition

If you have ever taken a long road trip, you may have seen Ice Plant dominating the median and wooded areas along the highway. This plant is considered a nuisance in most areas, but the good news is that this plant is also a great source of nutrition. Let's find out more about this nuisance plant that will quickly become a delicious friend.

What is it?

Ice plant is often more commonly known as kudzu. These plants were once introduced for a noble reason, to control other growth along the highways to keep the roadways safe, but quickly got out of control. Ice Plant is a rather pretty nuisance, sparkling like it's ice covered, thus the name. The plant has bright yellow, soft pink, or pure white flowers. The leaves may turn red or yellow in the Fall. Much like ivy, ice plant is often used for decorative purposes in landscaping.

History

Though it was once grown in California, Australia, the Mediterranean as a decorative plant, it has become more commonly known as a plant that takes over the landscape and chokes out all other plants. Ice plant was first introduced to California in the early 20th century when it was used to stop soil erosion around the railroad right-of-ways. There are other forms of this plant which are popular in Asian regions that are also used in the same way, to help control erosion.

Health Benefits

Various regions around the world use this common plant to treat different health conditions, including colds, fevers, and even glaucoma. Ice Plant has anti-inflammatory properties and other compounds that have been shown to improve cardiovascular health. Ice Plant is also high in Vitamin C. No matter how you look at this 'nuisance' plant, the more you learn about the benefits, the more likely you are to appreciate it.

Fun Fact

Despite the beautiful sparkle of the Ice Plant, it is a nuisance in many regions where it was imported. Ice plant has proliferated quickly, harming many native species. Ice plant dominates the areas where it grows, resulting in very low biodiversity and depriving other species of the resources they need to grow, such as soil, nutrients, sunlight, and space. Ice plants reproduce both through fruit, which is produced year round, and through segmentation, meaning that any shoot can put down roots. A single shoot can grow three feet or more in a year. Thus, the invasive nature.

How to Eat

There are a few ways to eat Ice Plant. The first and most common way is to steep it as a tea. Not only does this break down the succulent into its nutrients, it is a great way to begin absorbing the vitamins and minerals. Another way of eating Ice Plant is to serve it as a green in salad. The plant itself doesn't have much of a taste, similar to Romaine. But it is light and filled with water, so it will highlight any vegetable and flavors you choose to dress it with. Do your bit

Fruits And Veggies From H To J

for the environment and put some Ice Plant on your plate tonight.

Indian Apple – The Root Of Evil Or Elixir

If you have ever watched or read the Harry Potter series, you have actually heard of this fruit. Sort of. Do you recall the Mandrakes from the first book? Yes, their scream was insufferable, but the Indian Apple will not begin screaming if up-rooted. The Indian Apple, also known as Mandrake or Duck's Foot, is an interesting plant that is both beneficial to your health and potentially poisonous. Want to find out more?

What is it?

Indian Apple can be found growing in wooded areas of eastern North America. A herbaceous perennial, the stems can grow up to 40 cm high with umbrella-like leaves. If you could imagine a plant that looked like something Dr. Seuss would dream up, then you have a good idea about what the Indian Apple looks like. A single white flower with 6 to 9 petals blooms in May and matures into a greenish-yellow fruit about the size of a plum tomato. You may know this plant by one of its other names, such as Duck's Foot, Ground Lemon, Hog Apple, Love Apples, Mandragora, May Flower, Raccoon Berry, and Wild Lemon.

History

The history of the Indian Apple is filled with mystery and wonder. It has been part of occult practice and other witchcraft. There have been myths and legends created that run the gamut from a deadly scream when uprooted to the sacred ingredient in creating a poisonous apple.

Health Benefits

The ripened fruit is edible in moderate amounts. The witchcraft practice associated with the Indian Apple may come from the fact that when consumed in large amounts, the fruit is in fact highly toxic. The rhizome, foliage and roots are also poisonous, so it is important to know what you are cooking with before you start. Interestingly, the Indian Apple contains podophyllotoxin, which is used as a highly effective topical ointment to treat viral warts. Again, you can see where the mystery and witchcraft stories comes from.

Indian Apple has been used by Native Americans to treat constipation, rheumatism, and liver disorders. In old times, the root was boiled in water to make a thin broth which was used to cure stomach aches.

Fun Fact

In the legend about the screaming roots, the way farmers would pull the human-shaped roots was to tie their dog to the plant and place a piece of meat just out of the dog's reach. When the farmer was a safe distance away from the plant, he would give the command to the dog to retrieve the meat which would uproot the plant. Per the myth, the human-shaped root would be pulled from the ground screaming, but the awful noise didn't seem to bother the dog. Once the plant was finished screaming, the farmer would come over and retrieve the plant because it was then safe to pick up. Fun fact or scary fact? Either way, it's crazy.

How to Eat

The root can be soaked in whiskey, making a tincture, and taken for rheumatism and as a purgative for a digestive system cleanse. Powdered root can be used on ulcers and sores and can also be mixed into drinks to relieve constipation. It is important to know exactly what you are doing with the Indian Apple plant and is generally advised to have it professionally prepared; think puffer fish in sushi applications. Because of the highly toxic nature of this plant, pregnant women and young children should always consult a doctor before consuming Indian Apple. In other words, leave this root to the experts.

Jaboticaba – The Tree Hugging Fruit

This fruit bearing tree with the funny name is little known outside its natural range. Perhaps the most popular native tree of Brazil, other areas may not recognize this tree at all. That is, unless you mention its family name – myrtle. Then the tree with the thin bark that sheds becomes more familiar. But, there's so much more to learn about. Let's take a look at this fun tree with the crazy name.

What is it?

A jaboticaba tree in full bloom is a beautiful example of 'cauliflory' which means the flowers of the tree appear on the main trunk or branches of the tree instead of in the leaves. The fruit matures from these flowers so they end up clinging to the trunk and branches rather than hanging. This gives the tree a unique appearance, at least to those outside of Brazil. These trees are grown in the interior of a region because they don't do well in salty soil and air conditions, such as by the ocean. The fruit's skin is tough and will prevent bruising if shipped carefully, but the fruit has a very limited shelf life and will start to ferment quickly once harvested. This is another reason we don't see jaboticaba fruit often outside of its native region.

The tree has salmon-colored leaves when young, then turning green as the tree gets older. These are very slow growing trees which prefer moist acidic soils. When the tree is tended and irrigated routinely, it will produce fruit year round. Even though jaboticaba species are subtropical, they can tolerate mild, brief frosts. Cultivation of the fruit in the Northern Hemisphere isn't so much hampered by temperature and climate as it is by the tree's very slow growth and the short shelf-life of the fruit, making it commercially undesirable. Seed grown trees may take up to 20 years to bear fruit, making this tree not very popular as an orchard tree but very popular for bonsai and ornamental container planting.

History

One of the earliest mentions of the jaboticaba tree found in Brazil was in a publication in Amsterdam in 1658. It wasn't until 1904 that the United States received the first trees in California, but all disappeared by 1939. Florida received one variety of the jaboticaba tree in 1911 which finally started bearing fruit in 1932. Seeds and seedlings were sent throughout the years to many other locations, including Cuba, Honduras, and the Philippines. In the 1940s an experimental garden was established once again in Florida and soon started producing trees for sale for home gardens as ornamental trees. This tree survived a hurricane in 1926 that wiped out a large nursery only because two of the seedlings had been taken out and planted in a private home garden. Trees from these two surviving seedlings flourished and were sent out to find root in Panama and Columbia. The struggles to get these trees established was certainly worth it. This is one unusual tree that will always be noticed and appreciated.

Health Benefits

In Brazil, the skins of the fruit are traditionally dried and steeped to use as a treatment for upper respiratory ailments, as well as diarrhea and dysentery. This liquid is also used as a gargle to sooth inflammation of the throat and tonsils. Several potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds are found in the fruit, including a compound called jaboticabin. These compounds

have been shown to have both colon cancer and lung cancer fighting elements. The fruit is also a good source of Vitamin C. One negative about the fruit is the skin has a high tannin content and should not be eaten frequently or in large quantities because tannin is a known carcinogenic.

Fun Fact

One of the most interesting facts about the Jaboticaba is the way the flowers and fruit grow. As we mentioned, instead of the flowers and fruit blossoming and growing in the leaves, they actually sprout and cling to the tree's trunk and larger branches. This gives the tree a funny look when it has fruit; sort of like someone stuck big grapes all over it. The name itself is also fun. It is pronounced either JA-bo-ti-ca-ba or ja-BO-ti-ca-ba.

How to Eat

The fruit is small in size, about 1 inch, more or less, and has usually about 3 or 4 seeds. The skin is rather thick and purplish in color, and not typically recommended for eating. The insides are sweet, and either white in color or light pink, with a rather gel-like flesh. Jaboticabas are typically eaten fresh and in Brazil have a popularity that is similar to the popularity of grapes in the US and similar regions. When eaten fresh, the method is to squeeze the fruit until the skin splits, then pop the inside of the fruit out of the skin and into your mouth, spitting out the seeds.

Jaboticaba fruit has a very short shelf life, making it pretty much unknown in parts of the world which this plant is not grown. The fruit starts to ferment within days after harvested, which actually makes the production of wines and liqueurs a favorite use. If you are lucky enough to have a jaboticaba tree in your backyard, you can use the fresh fruit to make jelly or marmalade, again removing at least some of the skin before you do to avoid the tannins. The skins should also be removed if you make any sort of beverage with the fruit. Other than these uses, if you have fresh jaboticaba fruit available, go ahead and peel it, take out the seeds and mix up a fruit salad, make sherbet, or bake a cobbler.

This funny looking fruit tree with the crazy name is definitely something you won't forget once you see it. If you're ever in a region that grows these trees, it's well worth the trip to pick a handful of jaboticaba fruit from the trunk and enjoy its juicy goodness.

Jackfruit – Odiferous Deliciousness

For a fruit that is the size of a small watermelon to grow like a bunch of bananas just seems impossible. Is this nature gone awry? It may be puzzling, but once you get past the appearance and the smell, you will find an amazing fruit that is perfectly suited for a number of culinary treats. Let's learn more.

What is it?

Jackfruit is the largest of all fruits that grow on trees. You will find jackfruit anywhere from 8 inches to 3 feet long and can weigh as much as 100 pounds! The rind encases large bulbs of yellow, banana-tasting flesh. It's lucky we even know about jackfruit because it's a miracle anyone ever opened one. Unopened jackfruit has a strong odor similar to rotting onions. But, once you get past that smell, the flesh of the fruit is very sweet and pleasant and smells like a combination of banana and pineapple. I can only imagine the first person to open a jackfruit did it either by accident or on a dare. There is no hint from the rather unattractive, smelly, and sticky outside that anything good would be lurking inside.

The jackfruit tree is a member of the mulberry family. It is quite stately, growing as much as 70 feet tall with big glossy, evergreen leaves that are thick and leather-like. The entire tree contains a sticky, white latex and oozes out when you pick the fruit or break off a leaf. Between the awful smell of the jackfruit and the sticky ooze, I can understand why this is a fruit that is prized in some areas of the world and allowed to go to waste in others.

History

The first known use of the word 'jackfruit' was in 1563 by the naturalist Dr. Garcia de Orta. With archeological diggings finding evidence of jackfruit more than 3000 years ago in India, we know this plant has a rich and far reaching history. Beyond these findings in India, the tree has been cultivated in many tropical regions including Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Jackfruit is also found in parts of East Africa, as well as throughout Brazil.

Jackfruit became a part of the Jamaican landscape when in 1782 plants from a captured French ship destined for Martinique were taken to Jamaica. Jackfruit is still rare in the Pacific islands, even though it was planted in Hawaii in the late 1800s. Introduced into northern Brazil in the mid-1800s, jackfruit is more popular there now than anywhere else in the New World. Florida was the recipient of jackfruit trees very late in the game and there are only a handful of jackfruit trees remaining in South Florida, making these mainly a curiosity and not for the fruit.

There are over 11,000 acres of jackfruit trees planted to Ceylon, mainly for timber, with the fruit being a nice bonus. Away from the Far East, the jackfruit has never gained the same appreciation that its close relative, the breadfruit, enjoys. Again, this could be due largely to the distinctive stench of the unopened jackfruit. However, canned jackfruit has hit more and more markets, making the whole stinky issue obsolete. With that in mind, the jackfruit may just increase in popularity as time goes on.

Health Benefits

Apart from its delightful taste, jackfruit is rich in important nutrients like vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, potassium, iron, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, magnesium and the list goes on. Because jackfruit is such an important part of the diet and commerce of so many large regions, it has been the subject of many studies. This important food source not only provides inexpensive nutrients, but the studies show the fruit also helps protect against cancer, strengthen the immune system, aids in healthy digestion, and also helps to maintain healthy skin and eyes.

Fun Fact

The jackfruit wood has been used to make musical instruments, such as drums, lutes, and string instruments. It is also used for ornate seating in religious Hindu ceremonies. Buddhist monks have used the wood as a dye, giving their robes a light brown shade that distinguishes their sect from others.

How to Eat

If you're looking for fresh jackfruit, you most likely will find it in an Asian food specialty store. Fresh jackfruit can be eaten fully grown, but still unripe, to avoid the nasty smell. In this form, it would still have the sticky latex but you wouldn't get the stink. It would just be cut up and cooked, boiled and salted, and served as a vegetable.

A fully ripened fruit can be eaten cooked or raw, but you just have to get past the smell when you open it. Be sure if you get a ripe jackfruit to open it outside. The smell will permeate the house quickly. Once you reach the edible insides, you will find a wonderfully sweet taste that is perfect to turn into jam, jelly, chutney, or even ice cream. Jackfruit can also be made into a paste, then spread over a airy surface and allowed to dry in the sun to create a naturally chewy candy. Choose jackfruit that's somewhat firm and you will be able to can it in a simple syrup with some sort of citric acid added.

You can find jackfruit already canned or frozen. Dried jackfruit chips are available and make delicious snacks. There are plenty of ways to enjoy this fruit once you find it. With so much of the world cultivating and enjoying jackfruit, wouldn't you like to give it a try, too?

Jicama – Sweet Starchy Dieters Delight

This crispy sweet, nutty flavored root looks a bit like a turnip, even though they are not in the same family. Jicama is so tasty and versatile, it's one food that is well worth getting acquainted with. It's a fun food to experiment with and is perfect for imparting new flavors in old recipes. And did I mention it's sweet and starchy AND low carb, low fat, and low calorie? Now that definitely deserves a look!

What is it?

We call jicama a root, but it's technically a legume grown for its tuberous roots. Jicama can grow pretty big, but will then get woody tasting because the sugars have converted into starches. If you bite into a raw jicama and it tastes like a raw baking potato, then it's too big. You should have a definite sweet taste when you eat a piece of raw jicama. This wonderfully unique flavor is perfect for many uses. Once peeled, you can cut it up and eat it raw, or throw it in stir fries, or roast it, or boil it up.

History

Jicama is as old as the hills, the Andes Mountains to be precise. Cultivation can be traced back for eons in Mexico, Central America, and South America. It's been around so long, you'll find much of Mexican cuisine includes jicama somewhere. You may even hear it referred to as a Mexican potato. Jicama grows best in warm, dry climates. Although you'll find jicama grown year round, it develops better during the winter months after long months of sunshine and moderate rain. Jicama is very hardy in the right climate, but it's also hardy because it has a built-in insecticide in the vine, keeping itself safe from pests. Many cultures would not have survived without this prolific, nutritious, and delicious crop. As a matter of fact, a devastating drought during the 1980s wiped out much of the potato production, leaving jicama the crop to focus on producing.

Health Benefits

In just one cup of raw jicama slices, you get a whopping 6 grams of dietary fiber along with a respectable showing of other essential vitamins and minerals. And if you're eating low carb, you'll be happy to hear that same cup of raw jicama only has 11 grams of carbs. Subtracting the fiber from the carbs and you've got only 5 net grams of carbs. Yes, this sweet and starchy treat is low carb, so enjoy!

This same cup of raw jicama also offers 40 percent RDA of vitamin C, is fat free, and has only around 35 calories. Raw jicama also has about the same amount of water in it as a cucumber, which is a great bonus for dieters, offering that full feeling with less bulk. Generally speaking, jicama has a lot to offer everyone, but is especially desirable for people eating low carb, low fat, and low calorie.

Fun Fact

Jicama is known by several other names, such as sengkwan, singkamas, yambean, yacon, yacuma, Mexican potato, and Mexican turnip. Not all the jicama plant is edible. The rest of the

plant is very poisonous. In fact, the seeds are used as a toxin to poison insects. Not such a fun fact for bugs.

How to Eat

When choosing jicama, you want a small to medium size root that feels very firm to touch. If it has a soft spot, it's not good and could rot quickly. The larger the jicama, the closer it will get to a starchy, woody flavor. When you get your jicama home, you can keep it in your refrigerator for a couple weeks, much like potatoes. You don't need to refrigerate it if you have a very cool place to store it. It won't keep as long if it's not cold, so just keep watch. Of course, they won't last long in your house once you get a taste.

Peel the jicama like you would a potato or turnip, making sure you get the brownish layer under the skin. Slice off a bite and taste it. You'll notice it has a taste that's similar to a very firm raw apple; slightly sweet but also fresh and light in flavor. Unlike apples, however, you won't see the raw jicama turn brown if you leave it out in the air.

Jicama is excellent raw and is often eaten as a snack. Just cut it into strips and serve with a splash of lime juice and a sprinkling of chili powder. You can chop them up as a substitute for water chestnuts in Asian style recipes, adding just before serving to maintain flavor and texture. You can throw raw jicama in your food processor and experiment with the texture to create side dishes, soups, and even drinks. Slice it thin and put it in the oven to bake into snack chips.

Raw, roasted, baked, boiled, broiled, blended, and juiced... whatever you use this versatile food for, it will surely be a hit. Not only for the taste, but as your diet's new best friend!

Jojoba – More Than Skin Deep

Chances are, if you've bought any moisturizers lately, they probably contain jojoba oil. Manufacturers are beginning to get away from using petroleum in cosmetics and are opting for this ingredient, instead. So, while there are not many food applications for this plant, there are a bunch of uses for the oil that comes from the seeds. Let's take a look at this new beauty basic.

What is it?

Jojoba grows to about six feet tall, with a broad, dense crown. Each plant is what is known as single-sex, either male or female, which makes natural pollination difficult. The fruit is acorn-shaped, about an inch long, and partly enclosed at the base by the sepals. The mature seed is a hard oval, dark brown in color and contains a liquid wax which is harvested and processed into the oil that is highly sought after. Grown commercially just for the oil, this is the stuff you'll find more and more now in beauty products. However, the plant is also commonly used to combat and prevent desertification, as well as other uses.

History

Jojoba, is a shrub you'll find in desert climates such as the southwest United States as well as the Mojave desert and Mexico. Locally, the jojoba shrub may be referred to by other names such as deer nut, pig nut, goat nut, or even quinine nut. Most often, though, the shrub is referred to as jojoba or wild hazel. Centuries ago, Native Americans used the oil from the seeds to treat wounds. Commercial plantings in the United States started during the 1970s, expanding rapidly until now almost 50000 acres of jojoba can be found in production throughout the American southwest. The major producers of jojoba for commercial use are the United States and Mexico, with exports of large amounts going to Europe and Japan.

The interest in jojoba production intensified for several reasons. Because of the plant's ability to survive in a harsh desert environment, many regions that will not support other agricultural crops are able to support this plant. Thus, jojoba has become a major asset to the economy of these desert regions. Also, the ban on the importation of sperm whale products in 1971 led to the necessity to find a substitute for the whale oil used, particularly in cosmetics. Since necessity is the mother of invention, it was soon discovered that jojoba oil not only could replace the oil from whales, but was in fact superior to it in applications in cosmetics and other industries.

Health Benefits

In large quantities, the seed is toxic to many mammals, and ingesting the wax acts as a rather undesirable laxative in humans. Only one small species of mouse is known to be able to digest the wax found inside the jojoba seed. So, as far as health benefits for humans is concerned, we look to the oil as a curative when applied topically. And, considering scientists have found that jojoba oil is similar in biological structure to the oil manufactured in the human body, this is a natural oil we can appreciate for moisturizing and healing purposes. Many people who suffer from skin disorders such as eczema, psoriasis, and acne can appreciate the properties of jojoba oil for health.

Fun Fact

Botanist Johann Link, originally named the species *buxus chinensis*, after misreading the original packing label which read "Calif" as "China." Other interesting things to know about jojoba is that, as we mentioned, scientists believe the oil is similar to the oil produced by human skin, but can also be used to control insects on crops, being approved in the US as a pesticide in 1996. However, when used as a pesticide, farmers should be careful not to allow jojoba products to be released into the waterways as the oils are generally dangerous to aquatic life. Jojoba oil can also be used as a lubricant in industry. It's safe to use on a variety of electronic parts. We may even be filling our vehicles with it some day since it also has potential as a biodiesel fuel. Yes, it's a 'natural' beauty oil, but also has industrial uses.

How to Use

The jojoba shrub offers food for grazing animals of the desert regions. Whether wild or ranched, this food source is very important to a wide variety of large and small animals and birds. However, as we mentioned, when ingested by humans, there are serious health consequences.

So, how do we humans use jojoba most often? Just look at your lip gloss, body lotion, and hair products. Jojoba oil is easily refined to be odorless, colorless, and stable, making it perfect for use in cosmetics, fragrances, and topical treatments for skin disorders. Jojoba is fascinating in the wide range of characteristics and uses it has, but most of us are just thankful to this plant for our smooth skin and silky hair.