

CUSTARD APPLE

Sugar Apple, Anona, Bullock's Heart, Anona Colorada, Corazón, Noi Nong, Nona Kapri, Sarikaya

Annona reticulata

Annonaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Description

Custard apples are small deciduous trees commonly found in parts of Central and South America. The 8-15 cm wide fruit are variable in shape, but are largely heart-shaped and yellow or nearly brown when ripe. The creamy-white flesh of the fruit is described as custardlike, with a sweet but less distinct flavor than other *Annona* species.

Uses

Custard apple is mainly grown for its fruit. Fruits are often made into deserts, drinks, or ice cream. The leaves, young fruits, and crushed seeds have insecticidal properties. Other *Annonas* are often grafted on to custard apple.

Common Names

- Spanish
 - anona corazón
- German
 - Netzannone
- French
 - annone réticulée
- Portuguese
 - biribá
- Vietnamese
 - Bình bát
- Indonesian
 - Buah nona
- Russian
 - Аннона сетчатая

Cultivation

- **Elevation** – 0-1,500 m
- **Rainfall** – 600-2,200 mm (1,200-1,400 optimal); intolerant of drought
- **Soil Types** – well-drained soils; more tolerant of unfavorable soils than other *Annonas*
- **Temperature Range** – 7-34 °C (23-27 °C optimal; needs cool winters to flower and fruit)
- **Day Length Sensitivity** – N/A
- **Light** – Light/partial shade (young trees) to full sun

Custard apple can be propagated by seed, with seedlings transplanted to the field when 8 to 15 months old and when they have at least four mature leaves. Trees grow best with mulched, fertile soil. Regular irrigation is needed during dry periods. Fruiting occurs in spring or late winter. Prune the branches for ease of fruit picking. Healthy trees can produce up to 45 kg of fruit per year.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Fruits should be harvested when they are ripe, not green; usually yellowish brown, and feel slightly soft to the touch. Over ripe fruits drop to the ground. For seed saving purposes, seed from ripe fruit should be cleaned and stored in a cool, dry environment. Seed viability is short, often not surviving more than a year in storage.

Pests and Diseases

Similar to other *Annonas*, the custard apple is attacked by fruit flies, and other various fly species which often ruin the fruit before it makes it to the table. Many fruits dry out on the tree, if not covered and protected from insects by the use of bags or sprays. Certain fungal rots are common on fruit surfaces as well, which may reduce marketability.

Cooking and Nutrition

The flesh of the fruit is generally eaten fresh and is a reasonably good source of carbohydrates, minerals, and vitamins. Chilling is said to improve flavor. CAUTION: Non-fruit portions have toxic properties and should not be eaten.

References

Morton, J. 1987. [Custard Apple](#). P. 80-83. In: Fruits of Warm Climates

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De Q. Pinto, A.C. M.C.R. Cordeiro, S.R.M. de Andrade, F.R. Ferreira, H.A. de C. Filgueiras, R.E. Alves. And D.I. Kinpara. 2005. Annona Species International Centre for Underutilised Crops, University of Southampton, Southampton, UK.