

CHERIMOYA

Cerimolia, Yuructira

Annona cherimola

Annonaceae – Annona

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Description

The Cherimoya species is thought to have originated from the inter-Andean valleys of Ecuador, Colombia, and Bolivia.

Uses

The fruit is of excellent quality and considered one of the best of all the Annonas. Cherimoya is an important backyard crop throughout much of Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Peru. Chileans consider the Cherimoya to be their “national fruit.” The delicious fruits are white and juicy, and are best eaten out of hand. The toxic seeds of the fruit are toasted, crushed, and used for insecticidal purposes. They should NOT be eaten.

Common Names

- Spanish
 - Cherimoya

Cultivation

- Germination: 14-21 days; A pre-soak period of 24 hours is recommended prior to planting.
- Soil: medium soil structure with moderate fertility although it will do well in a wide variety of soils
- Elevation: 800-2000 m
- Rainfall: 30-80 in
- Temperature: subtropical or mild-temperate climate; a young seedling can survive -3°C (26°F), but below this it will suffer damage.

The tree is somewhat shrubby and spreading, growing to a height of 8-10 m (16-30 ft). This species is not suited to the lowlands. Cherimoyas thrive in dry environments with long days. Cherimoyas can be propagated by cuttings, seedlings, or grafting. Preferably seeds are soaked for 1 to 4 days before they are planted. Seeds should germinate within 3-5 weeks. It begins to bear 3-4 years after planting or 4-5 years after sowing. Production of fruit is better if hand pollinated since the flowers rarely self-pollinate. The female part of the flower matures at a different time than the male part of the flower (the pollen) requiring the transfer of pollen from one flower to the mature female part of another flower. (Further information about hand pollination of Annona species can be found in ECHO Development Notes issue 94, January 2007, available online at www.echotech.org.)

Harvesting and Seed Production

The fruit is heart-shaped with a white flesh inside; the flesh has a pleasing aroma and delicious taste. The fruits are harvested by hand when the skin becomes shiny and turns a lighter shade of green (about a week before full maturity). A heavy crop can produce over 11,000 kg (24,200 lb) of quality fruits per hectare. Cherimoya fruits weigh, on average, 160-510 g (0.3-1.1 lb).

Pests and Diseases

Cherimoya plants are resistant to nematodes and, in many regions, have very few problems except for occasional infestations of mealybugs at the base of the fruit which can be flushed off. In other areas, however, the trees may be defoliated by caterpillars and attacked on the trunk and branches by a scale insect, *Conchaspis angraeci*. There also are reports of attacks by leaf miners, fruit flies, and seed borers.

Cooking and Nutrition

The Cherimoya is essentially a dessert fruit best eaten out of hand, but it also can be pureed and used in sauces, poured over ice cream and custards, or used in cakes, pies, sherbets, and other desserts. The fruit pulp is often turned into juice drinks, and the juice makes a delicious wine. The numerous small, black seeds within the fruit are toxic if chewed and swallowed. Cherimoya is a sweet to sub-acid fruit containing moderate amounts of calcium and phosphorous and a modest amount of Vitamin A. It can also be a good source of thiamine, riboflavin, and niacin.

References

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