

# Sugar Apple

*Annona squamosa*



Common names	Buah nona, anona, sugar apple, sugar-pineapple, sweetsop, custard-pineapple, srikaya, custard apple.
Origin	Native to the tropical Americas and widely grown in Colombia, El Salvador, India, Pakistan and the Philippines, the Caribbean. The species was described as coming from Jamaica. Belongs to Annonaceae family.
Description	Unevenly shaped tree with long branches with green, compound fruit containing white segmented flesh with smooth, shiny, black seeds.
Growth Habitat	The sugar apple tree requires a tropical or near-tropical climate. During the blooming season, drought interferes with pollination therefore the tree should have high humidity but no rain when flowering.
Foliage	Deciduous leaves, oblong and blunt tipped. Dull green on top and pale below. Aromatic when crushed.

Flowers	Along the branch tips, opposite the leaves, the fragrant flowers are borne singly or in groups of 2 to 4. Three fleshy outer petals, yellow-green on the outside and pale-yellow inside with a purple or dark-red spot at the base.
Fruits	The compound fruit is nearly round, ovoid, or conical. The thick rind or skin is composed of knobby segments that are pale-green, gray-green, bluish-green, or a dull, deep-pink colour. The knobby skin separating when the fruit is ripe and showing a mass of segmented, creamy-white, custard-tasting, sweet flesh. Many interior segments enclose a black seed.
Soil	Sugar apples adapt well to any soil and have performed well on sand, oolitic limestone and heavy loam with good drainage. Water-logging is intolerable. The tree is shallow-rooted and doesn't need deep soil.
Pruning	It's important to start pruning and training sugar apples from planting. Start pruning to an open vase shape and maintain that shape for the first four years. Then keep the canopy open, so that light can penetrate and help achieve fruit distribution throughout the canopy.
Fertilization	Fertilize your tree about every 2 months with a mixture of nitrogen (N), phosphate (P), and potassium (K), 6-6-6 or 8-3-9. By placing mulch around the base of the sugar apple tree, more moisture will be retained in the soil around the roots. Water your tree regularly, but don't overdo it. Sugar apples are drought hardy but don't tolerate flooded conditions.
Propagation	While the tree is generally grown from seed, vegetative propagation is practiced where the crop is important and early fruiting is a distinct advantage.
Harvest	Fruit should be picked at the mature stage and allowed to ripen (soften) at room temperature before being refrigerated. Ripe sugar apples may only be stored for 2 to 4 days. Harvest of immature fruit should be avoided. Immature

	fruit will not ripen well but will remain hard, turn brown, and slowly decay.
Nutritional Properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vitamin C, which is an anti-oxidant and helps in neutralizing free radicals.</li> <li>• Vitamin A present in the fruit is good for hair, eyes and healthy skin.</li> <li>• Magnesium, which plays vital role in relaxing muscles and protecting heart against diseases.</li> <li>• Potassium and Vitamin B6</li> <li>• Copper helps to cure constipation</li> <li>• Rich in dietary fiber, which helps with digestion.</li> <li>• As it contains low fat levels, it is good for maintaining optimum health.</li> </ul>
Health Benefits	<p>The paste of the flesh of the fruit can be used for local application on ulcers, abscesses and boils.</p> <p>The fruit, in its unripe form, can be dried, crushed and used for treating diarrhea and dysentery. Sugar apple serves as an expectorant, stimulant, coolant and haematinic and is even useful in treating anemia.</p>
Commercial Uses	<p>A milky latex exudes from all tree parts. This latex is known as chicle and was used to make chewing gum. Heat-extracted oil from the seeds has been employed against agricultural pests. Studies have shown the ether extract of the seeds to have no residual toxicity after 2 days.</p> <p>Sugar apples are used by some societies in India to prepare a hair tonic. The seeds are also ground and applied to hair to get rid of lice; however, it must be kept away from the eyes as it is highly irritant and can cause blindness. In Mexico, the leaves are rubbed on floors and put in hen's nests to repel lice. The seeds of the fruit have insecticidal and abortifacient properties. They are poisonous.</p> <p>In India the crushed leaves are sniffed to overcome hysteria and fainting spells; they are also applied on ulcers</p>

	<p>and wounds and a leaf decoction is taken in cases of dysentery. Throughout tropical America, a decoction of the leaves alone or with those of other plants is drunk either as something that increases menstrual flow, reduces fever, a tonic, cold remedy, digestive, or to clarify the urine. The leaf decoction is also employed in baths to lessen rheumatic pain. The green fruit, very astringent, is employed against diarrhea in El Salvador. In India, the crushed ripe fruit, mixed with salt, is applied on tumors. The bark and roots are both highly astringent. The bark decoction is given as a tonic and to halt diarrhea. The root, because of its strong purging action, is administered as a drastic treatment for dysentery and other ailments.</p>
Food Suggestion	<p>Sugar apples are primarily consumed fresh as a dessert fruit. The pulp has an excellent flavor and may be added into ice cream and milk shakes. (Seeds should be removed first. )</p>