

Annona cherimola

[Synonyms : *Annona pubescens*, *Annona tripetala*, *Annona cherimolia*]

CHERIMOYA (English, German, Swedish) is a deciduous shrub or tree. Native to the uplands of Ecuador and Peru, it has small velvety-petalled, fragrant, pinkish-brown flowers with many stamens.

It is also known as *Annone* (French), *Annonier* (French), *Anona* (French, Guatemalan, Spanish), *Anona del Perú* (Spanish), *Anona do Chile* (Portuguese), *Anona poshte* (El Salvador, Spanish), *Anón de manteca* (Cuban, Spanish), *Anone* (French), *Anoneira* (Portuguese), *Atis* (Tagalog), *Cachimán* (Antilles, French), *Cachimán* (Dominican Republic, Spanish), *Catuche* (Colombian, Spanish), *Cerimolia* (Italian), *Cherimoya* (Japanese), *Cherimoja* (Danish), *Chérimole* (French), *Chérimolier* (French), *Cherimoyer*, *Chirimólia* (Portuguese), *Chirimorrión* (Spanish, Venezuelan), *Chirimorriñón* (Portuguese), *Chirimoya* (Cuban, German, Portuguese, Quechuan, Spanish), *Chirimoyabaum* (German), *Chirimuya* (Peruvian), *Corazón* (Dominican Republic, Puerto Rican, Spanish), *Corossol du Pérou* (French), *Custard apple*, *Fruta do conde* (Portuguese), *Grabiola* (Portuguese), *Graveola* (Portuguese), *Graviola* (Brazilian, Portuguese), *Jamaikapfel* (German), *Kirimoja* (Swedish), *Mamón* (Cuban, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rican, Spanish), *Mao ye fan li zhi* (Chinese), *Mutomoko* (Kikuyu), *Pac* (Guatemalan, Spanish), *Peruanischer Fraschenbaum* (German), *Pox* (Mexican, Spanish), *Rahmapfel* (German), *Sugar apple*, *Sweetsop*, and *Zuckerannone* (German).

The leathery-looking, green fruit can weigh from approximately 3 ounces to about 15 lb. and the size of the fruit is often in proportion to the number of seeds it contains

Warning – seeds are said to be poisonous. The juice of them is said to have caused blindness.

Cherimola (and the common name Cherimoya) is derived from a local Peruvian name *chirimuya* for the plant.

Some authorities contend that the banana-pineapple tasting (*Musa/Ananas comosus*), white flesh of this species is superior to that of either the soursop (*Annona muricata*) or the custard apple (*Annona reticulata*). It is eaten raw, made into drinks, and used to make ice creams. Apparently towards the end of the 20th Century the fruit have begun to gain popularity in the wider world market and at the beginning of the 21st Century are providing an export crop for several countries not least Chile and Spain.

The cherimoya (of which there are now several hybrids) was initially introduced to Mexico and then the West Indies from Peru. (Ancient Peruvian graves have revealed terra cotta containers shaped in the form of the cherimoya which would confirm the plant's existence in the Country many centuries ago.) Although the cherimoya itself appeared in hot houses in Europe from about 1690 it only reached California in the southern United States in 1871 (and Sri Lanka, then known as Ceylon, in about 1880) – and it was only relatively recently that these fruits were also established in tropical Asia, in Australia and in Israel.