

Annona muricata

[Synonyms : *Annona bonplandiana*, *Annona cearensis*, *Annona macrocarpa*, *Annona muricata* var. *borinquensis*, *Annona macrocarpa*, *Guanabanus muricatus*]

SOURSOP is an evergreen shrub or tree. Native to tropical America and the West Indies, it has long greenish-yellow, unpleasant-smelling flowers with many stamens.

It is also known as *Annona muricata* (Russian), *Araticum* (Portuguese), *Araticu-manso* (Portuguese), Brazilian pawpaw, *Buah sirsak* (Indonesian, Malay), Bullock's heart, *Cachiman épineux* (French), *Catuche* (Caribbean, Mexican, Spanish, Venezuelan), *Ci guo fan li zhi* (Chinese), *Corossol* (Antilles, French), *Corossol épineux* (French), *Corossolier* (French), *Couassol* (West Indian), *Durian belanda* (Brunei, Malay), *Durian salat* (Brunei, Malay), Graviola, *Graviolo* (Esperanto), Guanabana (English, German), *Guanábana* (Cuban, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rican, Spanish), *Guayabáno* (Filipino/Tagalog, Spanish), *Guyabáno* (Filipino/Tagalog, Spanish), *Katu-anoda* (Sinhalese), *Khanthalot* (Laotian), *Khièp thét* (Laotian), *Kowosol* (Creole), *Ma thurian* (Thai), *Mullanjakka* (Malayalam), *Mullu-chitta* (Tamil), *Nangka londa* (Javanese), *Nangka sabrang* (Indonesian, Malay), *Nangka walanda* (Sundanese), *Pinha* (Portuguese), *Pinha azeda* (Portuguese), Prickly custard apple, *Sapotille* (French), *Sauersack* (German), *Seetha* (Tamil), *Sirkaya belanda* (Malay), *Sorsaka* (Dutch), Soursap (English, Sierra Leone), *Soursapi* (Sierra Leone), *Stachelannone* (German), *Thurian kaek* (Thai), *Thurian thet* (Thai), *Tiep banla* (Khmer), *Tiep barang* (Khmer), *Toge banreishi* (Japanese), *Yabana* (Filipino/Tagalog, Spanish), and *Zuurzak* (Dutch).

Warning – the glossy, brownish-black seeds are said to be poisonous. Children have been said to have died from a medicinal overdose of soursop.

Muricata means 'sharp-spined or with roughened surface with hard points' with reference to the fruit.

This is the largest tree of the *Annona* species – and probably the most familiar species in the genus in Europe. It was introduced there like the cherimoya (*Annona cherimola*) in about 1690 when it was grown in greenhouses.

In the Caribbean the soursop's pungent, glossy green leaves have been used to repel lice and mosquitoes, and the unripe softly prickled, green fruit have been cooked as a vegetable or in Java (now an Indonesian island) added to soup.

The fruit can weigh up to 6 lb. and its fibrous white pulp freezes well. The ripe fruit can be eaten raw or the pulp can be used to make both non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks. Locally the fruit juice has also been mixed with lemon juice and sugar to make an ice cream. Attempts are being made at commercial exploitation, especially in Brazil, but farmers are meeting many problems including climatic conditions, pollination difficulties, and attacks by diseases and pests.

In India the seeds have been used for fish poison and insecticide - while in Africa the root bark is preferred and used as a fish poison.

Medicinally, in the West Indies the leaves (as an infusion) have been used to treat colds, fever and heat rashes. On Dominica local people believe fruit eaten or the application of a fruit poultice can stimulate breast milk in nursing mothers, and Jamaicans have prescribed the leaves and fruit as a remedy for intestinal worms. While in Africa the bark has provided a

treatment for dysentery and worms, the plant has been used for treating fever, colds and coughs, as well as dizziness, and shock and pain have been said to have been eased by rubbing the leaves against the face. The leaves have also been included in Malaysia in cough and rheumatism remedies and have been used to treat skin disorders in children.