

*Artocarpus heterophyllus*

[Synonyms : *Artocarpus integer*, *Artocarpus integra*, *Artocarpus integrifolia*, *Artocarpus integrifolius*, *Artocarpus jaca*, *Rademachia integra*]

**JAK FRUIT** is an evergreen tree. Native to tropical Asia (particularly India) and Malaysia it has greenish-yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Arbol del pan* (Spanish), *Baramil* (Korean), *Bo lo muk* (Chinese), *Bo luo mi* (Chinese), *Cakki* (Hindi), *Chakka* (Malayalam), *Derakhte nan* (Persian), *Falso albero del pane* (Italian), *Fenesi* (Swahili), *Finésy* (Malagasy), *Fruta del pobre* (Spanish), *Halasina hannu* (Kannada), *Indischer Brotfruchtbaum* (German), *Jaca* (Portuguese, Spanish), *Jackfrucht* (German), *Jackfruchtbaum* (German), *Jackfrugtrae* (Danish), *Jackfruit*, *Jackfruit tree*, *Jackträd* (Swedish), *Jacquier* (French), *Jak* (English, Singhalese), *Jaka* (Spanish), *Jaque* (French), *Jaqueiro* (Spanish), *Kanthal* (Bengali, Hindi), *Kanthal of India*, *Katahal* (Hindi), *Kathal* (Bengali, Hindi), *Keledang* (Malay, Timor), *Kha-nun* (Thai), *Khnor* (Khmer), *Kos* (Singhalese), *Langka* (Filipino/Tagalog), *Maak lang* (Thai), *Mai mi* (Laotian), *Makmee* (Thai), *Mak mi* (Laotian), *Ma mi* (Laotian), *Mi* (Laotian), *Mít* (Vietnamese), *Mu bo luo* (Chinese), *Nangka* (Bali, Dutch, Indonesian, Malay), *Nangka bubor* (Malay), *Nongka* (Javanese), *Palaa* (Tamil), *Panasa* (Oriya, Sanskrit, Telugu), *Panasam* (Sanskrit), *Paramitsu* (Japanese), *Phanas* (Gujarati, Marathi), *Phannasa* (Gujarati), *Pilapalam* (Tamil), *Pilla-kai* (Tamil), *Pono lo mi* (Chinese), *Poor man's bread*, *Rukh kutaherr* (Nepalese), and *Shu bo luo* (Chinese).

Authorities believe the jak fruit is one of the largest fruits in the world. An individual fruit (which can be barrel- or pear-shaped) can weigh as much as 15-110 lb. (averaging at 40 lb.) and reputedly can be as much as 3 ft. long. The fruit have a strong, disagreeable smell when ripe that is especially attractive to fruit-bats.

Warning – the raw seeds are poisonous (they have to be cooked before they are consumed).

*Heterophyllus* is derived from Greek *hetero-* (different) and *phyllo-* (leaf) components meaning 'furnished with leaves of different shapes'.

The waxy, flaky white or yellowish fruit flesh is eaten as a vegetable with curries and is also eaten raw, boiled or fried, particularly in central Java (now an Indonesian island). Here it is the prime ingredient in *gudeg* (a sweetened curry-like Javanese dish that is said to have a creamy, spicy taste). The Chinese have candied these very sweet tasting fruit with their banana/pineapple (*Musa/Ananas comosus*)-like smell). The seeds (known as 'nuts') are boiled (with a change of water) before being served as food. The roasted nuts are said to have a chestnut-like (*Castanea*) flavour. They have also been used to make flour.

In India the yellow, brown or pale green fruit are relished by cattle and the leaves are said to be particularly enjoyed by animals, not least deer and goats.

A yellow dye obtained from the heartwood is used to dye both Buddhist priests' robes and mats.

In northern India and the Philippines the moderately hard, durable wood is used to make local percussion instruments, as well as furniture – and it has been exported to Europe for making furniture there as well. It was used for building houses and palaces in Java (now an Indonesian island) and throughout the south-eastern Asian peninsular it was this yellow wood (which ages to a dark mahogany red) that was reserved by Buddhists for

their temples. Today in Sri Lanka it is used for the commercial construction of buildings. Authorities believe the tree was introduced to Hawaii in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century for its fruit. In some regions in Asia this tree was said to be the source of bezoar stones (solidified secretions normally associated today with stony matter sometimes found in the stomachs of animals such as goats or antelopes). From wherever, these stones acquired a reputation either as an antidote for poison or more generally as a cure in faith-healing. (Any from the jak fruit tree are believed to have been caused by accumulation of resin in an injured cavity.)

The jak fruit is currently undergoing commercial cultivation trials in northern Australia. Medicinally, in India the leaves have been used to treat snake bites and skin diseases. The Malaysians have used juice from the root to treat fever.