

*Eriobotrya japonica*

[Synonyms : *Crataegus bibas*, *Mespilus japonica*, *Photinia japonica*]

**LOQUAT** is an evergreen shrub or tree. Native to China and southern Japan, it has small very fragrant, yellowish-white flowers.

It is also known as *Bibassier* (French), *Biwa* (Japanese), Chinese loquat, Chinese medlar, *Eriobotriia* (Russian), *Eriobotrio Japania* (Esperanto), *Iaponika mousmoula* (Greek), Japanese loquat, Japanese medlar, Japanese plum, *Japaninmispeli* (Finnish), *Japanische Mispel* (German), *Japanischer Mispelbaum* (German), *Japanische Wollmispel* (German), *Japán naspolya* (Hungarian), *Japense mispel* (Dutch), *Japansk mispel* (Danish, Swedish), *Lokat* (Hindi, Nepalese), *Lokva* (Russian), *Lokvát* (Czech), *Lokvatti* (Finnish), *Lokwat* (Dutch), *Loquate* (German), *Lukaath* (Nepalese), *Lukwart* (Afrikaans), *Meskouliá* (Greek), *Mespilea e iaponika* (Greek), *Mišpule* (Czech), *Mišpule japonská* (Czech), *Mousmouliá* (Greek), *Mousmouliá e koini* (Greek), *Murungati* (Kikuyu), *Mushmula iaponskaia* (Russian), *Muzhanje* (Shona), *Naspli* (Maltese), *Nèfle du Japon* (French), *Nèflier du Japon* (French), *Nêsperas do Japão* (Portuguese), *Nespereira* (Portuguese), *Nespola del Giappone* (Italian), *Nespolo del Giappone* (Italian), *Nispero* (Canary Island), *Nispero de España* (Spanish), *Níspero del Japón* (Spanish), *Níspola del Japón* (Spanish), *Nispolero* (Spanish), *Nhót tây* (Vietnamese), *Nokkotta* (Tamil), *Pi ba* (Chinese), *Pi pae* (Thai), *Suvana aalu* (Nepalese), *Tayok hninthi* (Burmese), *Wollmispel* (German), and *Yangi dunyā* (Turkish).

The flowers are attractive to bees.

Warning – the seeds are potentially poisonous.

*Japonica* means ‘of or from Japan’.

In both China and Japan loquat has been cultivated for over 1000 years. It is suspected that Chinese immigrants introduced loquat to Hawaii. Loquats were introduced to Kew Gardens in Britain in 1787. However authorities suggest that it was only cultivated in the Mediterranean from the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century and it is alleged that interest there in the small pear-shaped fruit only ‘blossomed’ from the middle of that Century. By the 1870s loquats were a familiar sight as an ornamental tree in California, in the southern United States as well.

The slightly sweetish-tasting yellow fruit can be eaten raw, or cooked for preserves, pies and tarts – and they can also be used to make jams and chutneys. Loquats have been made into wine and in Bermuda the fruit are also used for making a local liqueur.

Some authorities have noted that the wood is suitable for use in drawing instruments – and it is also prized by violin-makers.

Medicinally, in India the fruit have been used to quell vomiting and thirst, and an infusion of the leaves has been taken to treat diarrhoea. The leaves have also been used in some parts of Asia in poultices to ease swelling.