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Garcinia dulcis

RATA is an evergreen tree. Native to the Philippines and Java it has creamy-white flowers. It is also known as Gourka, *Jawura* (Sundanese), *Ma-phut* (Thai), and *Mundu* (Javanese and Malay).

Dulcis is Latin (sweet, pleasant, delightful).

The small yellow fruit which have soft, sour-tasting yellow flesh are eaten raw locally. They are also an ingredient for sherbets, and are especially valued for jam-making, as well as being used to make fruit pastes and butters.

With indigo (*Indigofera tinctoria*) the bark is sometimes used to obtain a brown dye – and in Indonesian Java they combine it with a *Curcuma* (the genus which includes turmeric, *Curcuma longa*) or with a *Pandanus* (one of which is screwpine, *Pandanus utilis*) to get a green colour used for matting.

The tree is sometimes cultivated in Malaysia and in the southern States of North America rata is promoted as an ornamental as well as a fruiting tree.

Some authorities have reviewed the tree's uses in south-eastern Asia and suggest its edible fruit are of prime importance there and that medicinal, timber, dye-producing and gum-yielding attributes fill secondary roles in that area.

Medicinally, local herbalists in Java include pounded seed as an ingredient in a potion applied to swellings, while in Malaya the seeds are used to ease dysentery or diarrhoea.