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*Garcinia xanthochymus*

[Synonyms : *Garcinia pictoria*, *Garcinia tinctoria*, *Xanthochymus tinctorius*, *Xanthochymus pictorius*]

**GAMBOGE** is an evergreen tree. Native to northern India it has small white flowers.

It is also known as Ceylon gamboge, *Cochin-goraka* (Singhalese), *Dampel* (Hindi), Egg tree, False mangosteen, *Garcinia*, *Gelbe Mangostane* (German), Himalayan garcinia, *Jharambi* (Marathi), *Kulavi* (Tamil), *Ma-da-luang* (Thai), *Mundu* (Malay), Mysore gamboge, *Seemai-goraka* (Tamil), Sour mangosteen, *Sitakamraku* (Telugu), *Tamal* (Bengali), *Tamala* (Sanskrit), and Yellow mangosteen.

*Xanthochymus* is derived from Greek *xantho-* (deep yellow) and *chymo-* (juice) components. In India the juicy yellow pulp inside the leathery-skinned dark yellow fruit is used to make sherbets.

The trunk is tapped and the sap (known as ‘gamboge’) is not only used as a black dye for cotton (particularly the robes of Buddhist priests) but also in watercolours.

The tree is cultivated in Malaysia and other parts of south-eastern Asia.

It is perhaps surprising to note that according to some authorities the edible fruit are of more importance in south-eastern Asians than the tree’s medicinal, timber or dye-producing attributes.

Medicinally, the fruit are used in Indian medicine.