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Nephelium lappaceum

[Synonyms : *Euphoria nephelium*]

RAMBUTAN (English, German, Javanese, Malay, Sundanese) is an evergreen tree. Native to Malaysia it has small scented, greenish-white flowers.

It is also known as *Ngo* (Thai), *Phruan* (Thai), Pulasan, Rambootan, Rambosteen, *Ramboutan* (French), Rambustan, Rambosteen, *Rambutano* (Esperanto), and *Ramtum* (Singhalese).

Warning – it has been alleged that the seeds are poisonous.

Lappaceum is derived from Celtic *llap* (hand) and Latin *lappa* (bur) components meaning ‘bur-like’.

Arab traders introduced rambutan to Zanzibar and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) hundreds of years ago and the fruit continue to be popular there as they are in many other parts of south-eastern Asia.

Although the fruit flesh is normally eaten raw (in fruit salads) it can be stewed and it can also be made into jam. The fruit flesh can be added to sauces as flavouring to accompany seafood and chicken dishes.

In Indonesia the leaves have provided an impermanent black dye, the young shoots have been used to change yellow silk to green, and the fruit have been an ingredient in a process for changing the colour of red silk to black.

Medicinally, the roots have been used in Malaysia for treating fever, and the bark has been used to treat tongue disorders.