

Quararibea cordata

[Synonyms : *Matisia cordata*]

CHUPA-CHUPA (Colombian, English, German, Peruvian), is an evergreen or semi-deciduous tree. Native to Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, it has large clusters of yellowish-white or rose tinged flowers with conspicuous stamens.

It is also known as *Mamey colorado* (Venezuelan), *Matisia*, *Numiallamihe* (Amazonian), *Sapota* (Brazilian, Ecuadorean), *Sapota-do-Perú* (Portuguese), *Sapota-do-solimões* (Brazilian, Portuguese), *Sapote* (Colombian, English), *Sapote-de-monte* (Colombian, Peruvian), *Sapote-do-peru* (Brazilian), *Sapote-du-Pérou* (French), *Sapote tree*, *Sapotillo* (Colombian, Peruvian), *South American sapote*, *Zapote* (Colombian, Peruvian), *Zapote chupa* (Colombian, Peruvian), *Zapote chupa-chupa* (Colombian, Peruvian), *Zapote-chupa* (Spanish), *Zapote-de-monte* (Spanish), and *Zapote tree*.

The flowers can produce copious amounts of nectar and are pollinated by humming birds, bees and wasps. Some tropical bats feed on the nectar.

The downy, brownish-green fruit are ripe when a whitish ring appears around its stalk. The fruit's sweet taste is said to be reminiscent of apricot (*Prunus armeniaca*) and mango (*Mangifera indica*). Each fruit can weigh over 1½ lb.

Cordata is derived from Greek *cordi-* (heart) component meaning 'heart-shaped' with reference to leaf shape. The common names *Sapote* or *Zapote* (used for several fruit) are derived from a Middle American Nahuatl Indian word meaning 'soft sweet'.

The fruit can be found for sale in local markets in South America where the trees are native but they are also shipped to other parts of the region. They are eaten locally fresh from the hand (although they can be full of insects sometimes). Apparently the less fibrous ones have been prepared in various ways for puddings, and their juice (and occasionally the nectar) have also been used for cooking.

This wood has long been employed in construction work, as well as for making furniture. It has also been burnt as fuel.

The trees themselves are often cultivated as shade trees for avocados (*Persea americana*) – in addition to providing their own fruit and wood.

Medicinally, the fruit flesh has been used as an ingredient in a remedy made up by the Tikuna South American Indian tribe for treating some period problems.