

Jack Fruit

Botanical Name: *Artocarpus heterophyllus* (Moraceae)

Common Name: Jackfruit

Distribution: Jackfruit is believed to have originated in India gradually spreading to South East Asia and now widely cultivated in tropical regions throughout the world.

Australian Distribution: Mostly tropical regions of Queensland, Northern Territory and West Australia

Preferred Climate and Soil Types: Jackfruit prefers a warm humid tropical climate, mostly lowland coastal areas below 1000 metres with more than 1500mm annual rainfall. It has poor cold, drought and flooding tolerance, but can tolerate moderate winds and salinity. It performs best on deep well drained alluvial, sandy or clay loam soils with pH 6.0 – 7.0

Description: Jackfruit is a medium sized evergreen tree that ranges from 9-12 metres, with deep green, shiny leaves. They are monoecious (male and female reproductive organs borne on separate parts of the plant), with very small flowers grouped into tightly packed inflorescences. The fruit are the largest of all cultivated fruits, and can weigh up to 50kgs, and contain seeds enclosed in a sweet, aromatic edible flesh. The flesh texture and aroma can vary depending on the cultivar.

Varieties: Jackfruit is cross pollinated and mostly seed propagated, therefore much variation exists. There are basically two types, soft flesh and crisp flesh.

Culture: Spacing is generally 6-9 metres and seedling trees take 2-4 years to produce fruit. Air layering, inarching, grafting and bud grafting are methods of propagation that have varying degrees of success.

Pests and Diseases: Some of the major pests and diseases include shoot borers, bark borers, mealy bug and scale insects, blossom and fruit rots, and bacterial dieback.

Fruiting Season: Mainly from September to November

Harvesting: The fruit is mature when there is a change in colour from pale green to a darkish green brown, the spines flatten out and there is a characteristic aroma. Cut the stalk with a sharp knife and lower carefully. Waiting for it to fully ripen on the tree and not checked daily will result in an overripe fruit within 24 hours. It is also harvested when small and green and cooked in stews and curries.

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The NT has several commercial growers of Jackfruit sending many tonnes to interstate markets. To counter the latex when cutting the fruit, use a little vegetable oil on your hands and the knife to stop it from sticking.



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