

Longan

Botanical Name: *Euphoria longana* (Sapindaceae)

Common Name: Longan, also known as 'Eye of the Dragon Fruit'

Origin: Southern China and Burma

Distribution: An important food crop in Thailand, China, Taiwan, India and Vietnam

Australian Distribution: Longans were possibly introduced to North Queensland in the late 1800's by Chinese miners. Trees have been in North Queensland and other areas of eastern Australia since that time.

Preferred Climate and Soil Types: Longans prefer an acidic soil, and on high-pH soils may develop nutritional deficiencies. Trees have poor salt tolerance and should not be planted where they are exposed to strong salt winds.

Description: Longan is an evergreen tree with pale yellow flowers and leathery, glossy-green color leaves. It has round fruits with a thin, brown-colored inedible shell, the flesh of the fruit is translucent white, soft, and juicy. It surrounds a big, black seed from which it derives its name of 'Dragon's Eye Fruit' or 'Eye of the Dragon'. They are yellow-brown to greenish-brown when mature. Longan is a member of the same family (Sapindaceae) as some other valuable fruits, including lychee and rambutan.

Varieties: Biew Kiew, Kohala, Haew and the NT T/A selection.

Culture: It requires change of seasons for satisfactory flowering, and a cool dry season of 2-3 months can result in abundant flowering. Propagation is mainly from marcotting and grafting. Space trees approximately every 7 metres apart. They are pollinated mostly by small insects and also by wind.

Pests and Diseases: A range of pests can afflict the Longan, including mites, scales, fruit flies, aphids, stem borers, leaf and flower eating caterpillars, mealy bug, and fruit piercing moth. Birds and flying foxes are also attracted to Longan fruits.

Fruiting Season: Bi-annual fruiting January to March in and around Darwin.

Harvesting: The fruits have a leathery brown skin which is easily broken. The flesh is aromatic, sweet and very moist, and few people don't like eating this fruit out-of-hand. It also can be frozen for prolonged periods and preserved without any loss of quality.

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