

Annona muricata

Botanical name: *Annona muricata*

Common name: Prickly custard apple, soursop

Morphological characters:

Soursop trees are bushy and low, only about 7.5-9 m tall. Young branchlets are rusty-hairy. The smooth, glossy, dark green leaves are oblong to elliptical and pointed at both ends, 6.25-20 x 2.5-6.25 cm wide. The underside of the leaves is somewhat lighter than the top. Solitary flowers emerge anywhere on the trunk, branches or twigs. They are 4-5 cm long, and cone shaped, the 3 fleshy outer petals are yellow-green, the 3 inner petals are pale-yellow.



It is more or less oval or heart-shaped, though it tends to be lopsided or curved. The fruit is fairly variable in size, ranging from 10-30 cm long and up to 15 cm in width. They can weigh as much as 6.8 kg. The fruit is covered with a leathery-appearing, inedible, bitter skin which is covered with many flexible spikes. The skin is dark-green in the immature fruit, becoming slightly yellowish-green before the mature fruit is soft to the touch. The inside of the skin is cream-colored and granular. The white flesh, which is the edible part of the flesh is fibrous and juicy, and separates easily from the rind. The pulp smells a little like a pineapple, but the sweet, acrid flavor is unique and somewhat indescribable. The fruit is segmented, with some segments containing a single oval, smooth, hard, black seed, 1.25-2 cm long. A large fruit may contain from a few dozen to 200 or more seeds.

Growing season and type:

1. Soursop is a shrub or small tree 3-10 meters in height.
2. It is adapted to warm, humid tropical climate, and can tolerate both drought conditions and partial shade.
3. This fruit crop grows in any kind of soil but prefers loose, fairly rich, deep loam and well drained soil with pH ranging from 6.1 to 6.5.
4. It thrives well from sea level up to 300 meters above sea level although it is known to grow up to 1000 m.



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1. Flower of *Annona muricata*

2. Leaves of *Annona muricata*

3. Fruit of *Annona muricata*