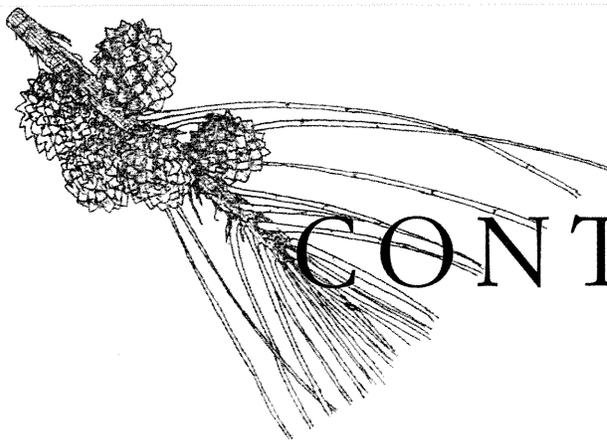


Tropical Tree SEED MANUAL

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Forest Service



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Mammea americana L.

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CLUSIACEAE (MANGOSTEEN FAMILY)

Mammea emarginata Moc. & Sesse ex DC

Abrico do para, abricotier d'Amérique, abricotier des Antilles, mamey, mammee apple, mammy fruit, Saint Domingo apricot (California Rare Fruit Growers 1995, Guzmán 1980)

Mammea americana is native to the West Indies, but is widely cultivated in the tropics in Central America and the Caribbean islands (National Germplasm Repository 1995). It is found in tropical and subtropical life zones in dry and wet forests (Lamberts and Crane 1990).

Mammea americana is a slow-growing tree that reaches from 6 to 20 m in height (Schubert 1985) and 50 cm d.b.h. The crown has a pyramidal shape. This tree has coriaceous, gland dotted, bright, and dark green leaves. Although *M. americana* grows in poor soil (Schubert 1985), it grows best on a rich, well-drained, sandy loam (California Rare Fruit Growers 1995). It requires 109 to 203 mm of rain per year and its optimum temperatures are 19 to 27 °C. It grows at elevations from 70 to 1500 m.

The fleshy fruit pulp of *M. americana* is eaten fresh or used to prepare refreshments, jellies, preserves, or sherbets. The flowers are used in preparing the liqueur Eau de Créole in Santo Domingo. An aqueous solution with the crushed seeds help to kill common fly larva and to control mites and fleas on domestic animals as well as lice in humans (Aguilar Márquez and others 1996, González Ayala 1994, Guzmán 1980). A mash of the cut seeds is used to treat wounds. The wood has a specific weight of 0.878, and it can be used to make furniture (Guzmán 1980). *Mammea americana* is an attractive tree planted for shade or as an ornamental in urban areas (Schubert 1985). *Mammea americana* is a fruit tree with a lot of potential

for exportation. Studies on post-harvest storage are necessary to increase the number of commercial plantations.

The flowers are white with four fleshy petals, many stamens, and a single ovary. The fragrant flowers attract honeybees and hummingbirds. The trees may fruit at 6 to 7 years (California Rare Fruit Growers 1995). In Puerto Rico, *M. americana* flowers May through October and fruits are observed most of the year. The fruits are round with orange-yellow pulp. Mature fruits are brown, 7 to 15 cm in diameter, with 2 to 3 seeds that are 2.5 to 4 cm long and 2 to 2.5 cm in diameter.

Seeds are collected by hand from the indehiscent fruit, cleaned of the fleshy pulp, sun-dried for 1 to 2 days, and kept at 5 °C in dry conditions or planted immediately. Seeds average 10 to 20 per kg.

Mammea americana is propagated primarily by seed or by air-layering (California Rare Fruit Growers 1995). One seed is planted in a 15 by 15 cm polyethylene bag containing loamy soil and placed in a sunny location. To avoid fungal growth, half the seed is buried in the soil while the other half is left uncovered. Seeds germinate 1 to 2 months after planting. Seedlings grow quickly and 1-year-old seedlings reach 50 cm in height (California Rare Fruit Growers 1995). One- to 2-year-old seedlings can be outplanted at the beginning of the rainy season in May or June. Manual weeding is recommended during the first year to prevent competition for nutrients and light. Chemical pesticides are not recommended (Navarrete-Tindall 1998).