

Artocarpus heterophyllus (*A. integrifolius*)

Moraceae

Asia

English: Jackfruit

Ecology: Probably originates in the forests of the Western Ghats in India. Today it is widespread in other parts of the tropics and most popular in Sri Lanka, 0–1,200 m. It requires well-drained, deep and highly fertile soils. It can tolerate drought or waterlogged soils but will not fruit under these poorer conditions. In Chipata some trees have been planted by people of Asian origin.

Uses: Firewood, timber (furniture, carts, doors), **food** (fruit, seed), fodder (leaves), **shade**, gum.

Description: A medium-sized evergreen tree with thick branches, to 25 m. The **bole is short**, up to 1 m in diameter in old specimens with **branching beginning less than 2 m from the ground**. **BARK:** rough bark on the bole, grey but smooth on the branches. **LEAVES:** glossy, **oval to 15 cm long and 10 cm wide**. **FLOWERS:** separate male and female, all very small, grow on the trunk or large branches where the fruit—the largest known—develops. **FRUIT:** massive and irregular “cauliflowery”, **yellow-green compound fruit with a spiky thick skin, reaching a record 20 kg in weight and 1 m in length**. The flesh is sweet and edible but an acquired taste. Seeds, 2–5 cm, are edible when roasted.

Propagation: Seedlings, bud grafting, air layering; vegetative propagation to select desirable characteristics. Direct sowing on site preferable due to early growth of the taproot.

Seed: Seeds are hand picked from the fruit flesh after drying. No. of seeds per kg: 45–90.

treatment: no pre-sowing treatment needed.

storage: the seed is viable for only 1 month as it is very oily.

Management: For good fruit yields, space trees 10–12 m apart. Most cultivars fruit in about 8 years. Cut back fruiting twigs after harvesting.

Remarks: Unripe fruit can be used as a vegetable. This tree should be planted for its fruit and the good shade it provides. Ideal for homestead planting. Mostly appreciated by people of Asian origin.

