

Mangifera indica

Anacardiaceae

Northern India, Myanmar

Am: *Mango*

Eng: *Mango*

Mgr: *Manga*

Or: *Mango*

Tg: *Mangus*

Ecology

One of the most important fruit trees from Asia and introduced to many tropical and sub-tropical areas on all continents. It was brought very early to Africa, about 1,000 years ago. It does not tolerate flooding and prefers sandy-loamy soil which is well drained, but it can do quite well in dry areas. A dry period of several months encourages flowering and fruit setting. Roots penetrate deeply so rocky subsoil should be avoided. The extensive shallow roots collect water and nutrients in upper soil levels. Does well in a hot humid climate, usually below 1,500 m. Growth and reproduction is adversely affected above 1,800 m. In Ethiopia it is widely cultivated in warmer areas of Dry, Moist and Wet Kolla agroclimatic zones, 500—1,800 m.

Uses

Firewood, food (fruit), fodder (leaves for goats, fruits for pigs), bee forage, shade, ornamental, soil conservation, windbreak, gum.

Description

A densely leafy evergreen tree with a trunk soon branching to a rounded crown, usually 10–15 m. BARK: Dark brown, cracking with age. LEAVES: Dark green, crowded at the ends of branches, to 30 cm long,

smelling of turpentine when crushed. Young leaves soft, copper-coloured and hanging limply. FLOWERS: Numerous and small in pink-brown pyramidal heads. Pollination by flies and other insects. FRUIT: Fleshy, 8–15 cm, the skin green-red-yellow, the flattened “stone” is fibrous and woody around the large seed.



Propagation

Seedlings, direct sowing at site, grafting. Grafted material is strongly recommended for good-quality fruit.

Seed

Germination rate 60–90 %. About 50 seed per kg.

Treatment: Not necessary, but nicking the hard seed coat helps germination.

Storage: For best results, fresh seed should be used.

Management

Lopping, grafting. For quicker growth and early production of fruits, grafted material should be used. Some cultivars bear fruit in their third year, but most only from their fifth year onwards. Full yields can be expected in the 12th-15th year. A plantation of mango may produce 10-25 tons of fruit per hectare annually.

Remarks

Good varieties have fruits with a good flavour and little fibre. Relatively few flowers are pollinated but even so up to 1,000 fruit develop on a mature tree. Each one has a large seed surrounded by golden juicy flesh, rich in vitamins A and C.



Photo: Patrick Maundu



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