

Tropical America

Trade names: Giant granadilla.

Common names: **English:** Giant granadilla **Luganda:** Wujju, kitunda.

Ecology: A native of tropical South America and one of the most striking Passiflora species, it has been in cultivation since the eighteenth century and is now grown throughout the tropics—often naturalized. It is grown extensively in Venezuela. The giant granadilla grows best in a hot moist climate and does not do well at higher altitudes.

Uses: Food (fruit, root), drink (fruit), flavouring for ice cream, etc., jams.

Description: A strong perennial climber from a fleshy root tuber reaching about 15 m. The plant gets its specific name from the **stout 4-sided stems which are sharply winged**. **LEAVES: simple and heart-shaped**, dark green and shiny, 9-20 cm long, tip pointed, margin entire and base rounded to a stalk 2-5 cm. A **pair of leafy stipules 2-5 cm** are prominent beside the stalk. The simple tendrils 10-20 cm. **FLOWERS: very handsome and colourful, rather flat 10-15 cm across** hang down **singly** on stalks to 3 cm; 3 ovate pointed green bracts form a saucer around the flower as well as the 5 sepals, tubular at the base but with spreading lobes. Many petals, long and oval to 4 cm are bright red inside. The typical complex flower centre is surrounded by **radiating wavy white filaments heavily banded in purple-blue and red-pink**. **FRUIT: very large oblong berry reaching 20-30 cm, pale yellow-green** when ripe, like a melon. It can weigh several kilograms. The thick outer skin contains a **watery red-purple juice**, an acid sweet pulp in which lie the very many **dark brown seeds, 1 cm, with white jelly-like covering** (aril).

Propagation: Seedlings (sow seeds in pots), cuttings and layering.

Seed: The seeds are obtained from the fruit and gradually dried,

treatment: not necessary,

storage: sow as soon as collected.

Management: Fast growing. Plants should be trained on overhead trellises which permit the fruit to hang down.

Remarks: This fruit is not widely grown by farmers but occasional fruits are seen on market stalls. Flesh and pulp may be eaten raw or with other fruit. The unripe green fruit can be boiled and eaten as a vegetable. Although the root is poisonous, in Jamaica it has been used as a substitute for yams.

