

West Indies, Tropical America

*Eng:* Soursop

*Tg:* Anona

*Tr:* Anona

**Ecology:** An exotic fruit tree planted throughout the warm tropical lowlands. In Eritrea, it is mainly cultivated on irrigated farms, e.g. in Ghinda, Sabur, Medhanit and Filfil, 800-1,600 m. One of several Annona, this species has the largest fruit, 1-4 kg in weight, but normally much less. In drought conditions, the tree may lose its leaves.

**Uses:** **Food (fruit), drink**, medicine, ornamental, insecticide, fish poison.

**Description:** A slender evergreen tree 5-7 m in height, usually less, with a bole which may be 30 cm in diameter, the **branches very low** and wide, giving an open shady crown. **BARK:** Grey with a pattern of shallow grooves. **LEAVES:** Alternate, **dark green, shiny** and leathery 8-15 cm long, **oval with a sharp tip**, dull or yellowish below where there are **small pits in vein axils**. Crushed leaves have a strong, unpleasant smell. **FLOWERS:** **Solitary and large**, 2-5 cm across, often opposite leaves and hanging down, **3 outer fleshy petals**, curved, almost triangular, **3 inner yellow-green petals, thinner** and rounded, edges overlapping. **FRUIT:** Kidney- or **heart-shaped to 25 cm long**, the leathery dark green skin covered with **soft curved spines**. Inside **woolly white fibrous pulp** covers many large brown-black seeds. The fleshy receptacle and fruit walls are edible and have a distinctive acid-sweet taste. (Single fruits grow together making one "compound" fruit, but the outline of individual fruits can be seen on the skin, each with its own spine. As pollination is often incomplete the fruit may have a distorted shape.)

**Propagation:** Seedlings.

**Seed:**

**treatment:** Not necessary.

**storage:** Can be stored for several months at room temperature in air-tight containers.

**Management:** Regular weeding, pruning above 1 m to encourage branching.

**Remarks:** This a desirable tree in home gardens as the delicious fruit can earn good cash and be used for juice, sherbet and ice cream. However, one tree rarely produces more than a dozen fruit, which take 3 months to ripen, and are often attacked by birds such as mousebirds. All parts have insecticidal properties and can be used to kill fish—a fruit can be used as bait. A powder or oil from the seeds has been used to kill lice and bedbugs. Contact with the eyes causes great irritation.

