

Manilkara zapota



Common Names

Hindi: Chiku

Marathi: Chikku

Tamil: (Sappotta

Telugu: Sapota

Kannada: Sapota

Malayalam: Sapotta

Bengali: Sabeda

Gujarati: Chiku

Characteristic Features

Tree: An evergreen tree that can grow up to 3040 meters tall.

Leaves: Simple, alternate, elliptic to oblong lanceolate, dark green, glossy.

Flowers: Small, bellshaped, bisexual, white to creamcolored, with a mild fragrance.

Fruit: Round or oval berry, 4 cm in diameter, brown and roughskinned when ripe.

Kingdom: Plantae

Clade: Angiosperms

Order: Ericales

Family: Sapotaceae

Genus: Manilkara

Species: M. zapota

The flesh is sweet, grainy in texture, and ranges from yellowish to brown. Each fruit typically contains 16 black, glossy seeds.

Latex: The tree exudes a milky latex called "chicle," historically used in chewing gum production.

Culinary Uses

1. **Fresh Consumption:** The sweet and juicy flesh of the fruit is often eaten fresh.
2. **Beverages:** Sapodilla can be used to make milkshakes, smoothies, and juices.
3. **Desserts:** The fruit is used in various desserts like ice creams, puddings, and fruit salads.
4. **Jams and Jellies:** Sapodilla can be made into jams and jellies.
5. **Baking:** Used in baking recipes like cakes, pies, and pastries.

Traditional Medicine

1. **Digestive Aid:** The fruit is believed to aid in digestion due to its high dietary fiber content.

2. **Antiinflammatory:** The latex and other parts of the tree are used in traditional medicine to treat inflammation and other ailments.

3. **Cold and Cough:** It is used in folk medicine to relieve symptoms of colds and coughs.

Industrial Uses

1. **Chicle Production:** The latex, known as chicle, was used in making chewing gum.

2. **Wood:** The wood of the Manilkara zapota tree is hard and durable, used in construction, furniture, and boat building.

Nutritional and Health Benefits

1. **Antioxidant Properties:** Rich in antioxidants, which help in fighting free radicals and reducing oxidative stress.

2. **Energy Boost:** High in natural sugars, providing a quick energy boost.

3. **Bone Health:** Contains essential minerals like calcium, phosphorus, and iron, which contribute to bone health.

4. **Skin Health:** Vitamin C in sapodilla helps in maintaining healthy skin by promoting collagen production.