



Mango

(*Mangifera indica*)

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agriculture

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Background

Origin

Mango is native to southern Asia, especially Myanmar and eastern India.

Climatic and soil requirements

Mango trees require tropical and warm, subtropical areas with temperatures ranging from 20 to 30 °C. Mangoes will grow in almost any well-drained soil, whether sandy, loam or clay. However, heavy, wet soils should be avoided.

Uses

Having a high stearic acid content, the seed fat is useful for soap-making. The seed residue after fat extraction is usable for cattle feed and soil enrichment. Dried mango flowers, containing 15 % tannin, serve as astringents in cases of diarrhoea, chronic dysentery, catarrh, problems of the bladder and chronic urethritis resulting from gonorrhea. Ripe mangoes may be frozen whole or peeled, sliced and packed in sugar (1 part sugar to 10 parts mango by weight) and quick-frozen in moisture-proof containers.

Cultural practices

Planting

After proper soil preparation the holes for planting should be large enough for the bag containing the tree to fit inside. Cut the bags open before planting to ensure that the trees have well-developed root systems and the roots are undamaged.

Fertilisation

Fertiliser application should be based on soil analysis. Generally, mango trees require regular applications of nitrogen fertiliser to promote healthy growth flushes and flower production. Organic fertilisers perform best, because the trees are subject to fertiliser burn. Sandy soils require larger fertiliser applications than loam or clay.

Irrigation

Irrigation should start with the onset of warmer weather and should continue every 1 to 2 weeks, more often in light soils, until the fruit is harvested. Irrigation may be discontinued when rains is sufficient to maintain soil moisture.

Weed control

Weeds are usually controlled between rows in an orchard by means of mechanical mowing with a rotary cutter (slasher driven by a tractor). As an alternative chemical mowing, where herbicides are used, can be applied at low concentrations. The idea is not to kill off all the weeds but to slow down growth. Chemical control is normally followed by mechanical mowing. The advantage of this method is that mechanical mowing is limited, resulting in less traffic in the orchard.

Pest and disease control

Malathion is the conventional spray used for insect pests; sulphur is effective on mites. Sodium bicarbonate and fungicide sprays are also effective. Anthracnose can be controlled by means of bimonthly applications of copper spray or captan as a growth flush begins, up to the opening of the flowers. Resume spraying when the fruit begins to form.

