

# The East London Garden Society

## Plant Facts

### Mangosteens



Mangosteens (*Garcinia mangostana*) are common in the rainforest areas of Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. Each round, glossy, purple fruit is capped with a light green calyx which holds it in place on the stem. The outer rind of the fruit is thick and rubbery, and the inside is sweet, delicious, snow white segments similar in design to that of an orange. Each segment contains one to four bitter tasting seeds. Similar species, which are orange and yellow in colour, grow in Southeast Asia, Africa, and South America.

European explorers found the fragile mangosteen plant to be difficult to transport and whilst determined traders were able to bring them to England in 1789, they were not successfully cultivated for another fifty years. Early descriptions of this exotic fruit's flavour described them as floral, sweet tart, something peculiar and indescribable, like that of the finest nectarine, but with a dash of strawberry and pineapple added.

Low in calories and high in fibre, mangosteens have lots of essential nutrients but no saturated fats or cholesterol. The potassium content helps control heart rate and regulates blood pressure which in turn aids stroke and coronary heart disease prevention. Healthy amounts of manganese and magnesium are also present and new research suggests that xanthones, a powerful antioxidant found almost exclusively in mangosteen, have properties that fight pain,

allergies, infections, skin disorders, and fatigue while supporting intestinal health.

Mangosteen's vitamin C content is another advantage and provides the body with a water-soluble antioxidant whilst staving off infections and scavenging harmful, pro-inflammatory free radicals. B-complex vitamins such as thiamine, niacin, and folate help the body metabolize carbohydrates, protein, and fats. Studies have also shown that mangosteens have the potential to slow the growth of cancer cells and may be chemo preventive.

A botanist/historian offered a \$100 reward to anyone who could substantiate the rumour that prior to their successful shipment from Trinidad in 1891 Queen Victoria had offered £100 pounds to anyone who would bring her a mangosteen.

If you've never tried this delectable fruit, try mangosteen segments in your next garden salad. You might discover a new favourite fruit.