

Syzygium samarangense (Champa)

Classification

Kingdom: Plantae

Clade: Tracheophytes

Clade: Angiosperms

Clade: Eudicots

Clade: Rosids

Order: Myrtales

Family: Myrtaceae

Genus: *Syzygium*

Species: *samarangense*



PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Height: It has an average elevation of 1006m (3,301 ft). Tree is 5-15 m tall.

Trunk: It has a short trunk of 25-30 cm thick with an open and wide spreading crown. Bark is flaking, pink-grey.

Leaf: Leaves are elliptic-oblong, rounded or slightly cordate at base 10-25 cm long and 5-12 cm wide opposite, nearly sessile, yellowish to dark bluish-green; giving aromatic scent when crushed.

DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

Native to an area that includes the Greater Sunda Islands, Malay Peninsula, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, but introduced in prehistoric times to a wider area and now widely cultivated in the tropics.

CULTIVATION AND USES

In the Indian Ocean Islands cuisine, the fruit is frequently used in salads, as well as in lightly sautéed dishes. It is mainly eaten as a fruit and also used to make pickles (chambakka achar).

In the Philippines, its local name is 'macopa' or 'makopa' (its ancient name before colonialism, is dambo). Because of their similarity in appearance, it is often confused with tambis (*Syzygium aqueum*), although the latter is more commonly cultivated.

INTERESTING FACTS

In Southeast Asia, the black ones are nicknamed "Black Pearl" or "Black Diamond", while the very pale greenish-white ones, called "Pearl", are among the highest-priced ones in fruit markets. The fruit is often served uncut, but with the core removed, to preserve the unique bell-shaped presentation.