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Sapodilla



Manilkara zapota, commonly known as sapodilla, sapota, chikoo, naseberry, or nispero is a long-lived, evergreen tree native to southern Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. An example natural occurrence is in coastal Yucatán in the Petenes mangroves ecoregion, where it is a subdominant plant species.

Scientific name: Manilkara zapota

Family: Sapotaceae

Sapodilla can grow to more than 30 m (98 ft) tall with an average trunk diameter of 1.5 m (4.9 ft). The average height of cultivated specimens, however, is usually between 9 and 15 m (30 and 49 ft) with a trunk diameter not exceeding 50 cm (20 in). It is wind-resistant and the bark is rich in a white, gummy latex called chicle. The ornamental leaves are medium green and glossy. They are alternate, elliptic to ovate, 7–15 cm (2.8–5.9 in) long, with an entire margin. The white flowers are inconspicuous and bell-like, with a six-lobed corolla. An unripe fruit has a firm outer skin and when picked, releases white chicle from its stem. A fully ripened fruit has saggy skin and does not release chicle when picked.

The fruit is a large berry, 4–8 cm (1.6–3.1 in) in diameter. Inside, its flesh ranges from a pale yellow to an earthy brown color with a grainy texture akin to that of a well-ripened pear. Each fruit contains one to six seeds. The seeds are hard, glossy, and black, resembling beans, with a hook at one end that can catch in the throat if swallowed.

The fruit has an exceptionally sweet, malty flavor. The unripe fruit is hard to the touch and contains high amounts of **saponin**, which has **astringent** properties similar to **tannin**, drying out the mouth.

The trees can survive only in warm, typically tropical environments, dying easily if the temperature drops below freezing. From germination, the sapodilla tree will usually take anywhere from five to eight years to bear fruit. The sapodilla trees yield **fruit** twice a year, though flowering may continue year round.

Compounds extracted from the leaves showed **anti-diabetic**, **antioxidant** and **hypocholesterolemic** (**cholesterol**-lowering) effects in rats.

The plant contains several phytochemical constituents like saponin, myricetin-3-O- α -L-rhamnoside, ascorbic acid, β -carotene, which have medicinal benefits. Moreover; various parts of the plant are used as home remedies to cure health problems. Sapodilla is a tropical fruit

