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Book review

Tropical fruit

Edited by Desmond Tate, Archipelago Press, Singapore, 2000, 96 pp. ISBN 981-3018-76-3; US\$ 20.00

This monograph is an introduction to the variety of tropical fruits. It is meant, mainly, for the interested layperson, but may well serve those scientists that cannot immediately remember what the difference is between sea apple, sugar apple and custard apple, or the difference between a duku and a langsat.

The book covers a wide range of species, all described in about one page of colour drawings and one page of text. The drawings have high quality, the colours being true to nature. They show the fruit as attached to a branch, thus also illustrate the leaves, and usually show a fruit when cut in half. In some species the flower and the habitus of the plant are also drawn. A total of 41 fruits are treated, including several commodities not common to people from outside the tropics, for example bael, bignay, chempedak, bilimbi,

casimiroa, mabolo, and snakefruit. The full Latin binomial is given for each species, in addition to its country or region of origin, and its present distribution. In addition, the diameter and weight of each fruit, its seasonal availability, and its culinary and medical uses are mentioned. It also gives the height of the plant and the way it is propagated. The text mentions details about origin, taste, and the use both of the fruit and other parts of the plant.

The presentation is very attractive. This colourful hardbound book (21 × 23 cm) is hard to leave on the shop shelf. At 20 U.S. dollars (official price; less in a number of tropical countries) it is not expensive.

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