

FIRST FRUITING OF MYCANISTEL

(By Marjorie Spear)

This is a truly lovely backyard tree with bright green glossy leaves. Mine is a seedling planted ten years ago, only watered when young and nourished only with a little compost and mulch, no disease or bugs eating the leaves or fruit. This year I may top prune it a little for easy picking. That is not really necessary because the fruit when ripe falls off. That is no use for sale as the fruit breaks away from the stem when falling. It is O.K. for home eating.

Last year (to be honest) was first fruiting but it only had about a dozen fruit. This year it bore dozens. Fruit started maturing in July and is still maturing September 1st. The optimum time to pick is when the fruit is yellow orange with no wrinkles. The fruit will then twist off the branch very easily. If picked immature a white sap is evident round the stem end. When picked at full maturity the fruit needs to be kept a few days (In Peru the fruit is stored in straw).

The texture of the fruit is a little dry. A little butter or lime juice improves the flavour for some. It is also served with icecreams or mayonaisse. Excellent used in cake making, pancakes and jams.

Botanically the Canistel is *Lucuma Nervosa* and is sometimes called an egg fruit. There is considerable variation in names for this excellent tree. It is even called Mamey Sapota. But Canistel seems the most used name.

The fruits vary in shape as seeds have come from many parts of South America - globose to egg shape are the variations.

The taste is sweet and mealy with a slightly musky aroma. Harvesting before completely ripe i.e. when i.e. when the fruit twists off easily, reduces the dryness of the flesh. If the fruit falls off ripe it is drier in texture.

The seeds are dark brown usually 2-3 seeds per fruit. The fruit varies from 2-4 inches long.

My advice is if your Canistel is not thriving, bright and shiny, get another seedling. My previous one was a dead loss.