

Sherbet Berry - Check it out!!

Looking for something unusual, exotic, tasty and good for you?? Try the Sherbet Berry tree!

Also known as Phalsa (*Grewsia asiatica*), the Sherbet Berry fruit is popular in India for making refreshing fruit or soft drinks enjoyed during the hot summer months.



Photo Courtesy of Deeba Rajpal, The Passionate About Baking

The blueberry sized fruit has a pleasant tangy sweet sherbet like flavor and is good for your digestion. Deeba Rajpal has a wonderful Indian food blog "The Passionate About Baking" that has some mouth watering recipes for using this fruit:

<http://www.passionateaboutbaking.com/2009/04/berry-delicious-indian-cooler-phalse-ka-sherbet.html>

Sherbet Berry trees grow from 12-15ft tall as a small tree or large, shaggy shrub. The blooms are a lovely bright orange-yellow and the fruit turns a purplish red, crimson or cherry red when ripe. It actually needs hot temperatures for the fruit to ripen - boy, do we have that in Florida! - and plenty of sunshine.

The Sherbet Berry fruits are also nutritious. For a 100 gram serving, Sherbet Berry equate to these recommended daily requirements for an adult:

Vitamin A	10%	(16ug)
Calcium	10%	(136mg)
Potassium	8%	(372mg)
Iron	6%	(1.08mg)
Niacin (B3)	6%	(.825mg)
Vitamin C	5%	(4.385mg)
Phosphorus	3%	(24mg)

Besides the fruit, Sherbet Berry bark and leaves also have medicinal properties. An infusion of the bark is used to reduce fevers and relieve minor pain and inflammation of mucous membrane. The leaves can be applied to skin eruptions and are known to act as an antibiotic.

While tender to freezes, the Sherbet Berry has been grown successfully in Georgia in cold protected structures at the Fort Valley Agricultural Research Station. Here's more information on the Georgia study as well as great photos of the fruit they grew:

<http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/proceedings1999/v4-348.html>

The Sherbet Berry will lose its leaves from a light frost and is deciduous even in mild winter climates (Zone 9) for 4-6 weeks. It prefers a change of season and doesn't fruit well in areas without a distinct summer and winter.

The Sherbet Berry tree isn't fussy about soil types but it doesn't like compacted or poor soils. If your soil is pure sand, plant it with manure and if you have too much clay, add some sand. Give it a good 10-10-10 fertilizer and watch it grow!

Sherbet Berry is a vigorous, fast grower. While the trees are drought tolerant, you'll need to give it consistent water for good fruit quality. The length of time from flowering to fruit ripening is only 45-55 days. Flowers only develop on the new shoots of the current growing season. The Sherbet Berry typically starts fruiting as a 2-3 year old.

So whether eaten fresh or as a drink, give the Sherbet Berry a try. Hey, even Mikey would like it!