



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

Journal of the Department of Agriculture, Western Australia, Series 4

Volume 24
Number 4 1983

Article 5

1-1-1983

Feijoa

Department of Agriculture, Western Australia

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Recommended Citation

Department of Agriculture, Western Australia (1983) "Feijoa," *Journal of the Department of Agriculture, Western Australia, Series 4*: Vol. 24 : No. 4 , Article 5.

Available at: https://researchlibrary.agric.wa.gov.au/journal_agriculture4/vol24/iss4/5

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FEIJOA

Until recently, feijoas were seldom seen in Western Australian shops. Today this fruit, which has some of the characteristics of the guava, is imported from New Zealand. However, feijoa trees have been grown in Perth home gardens for many years for their attractive foliage and flowers.

These ornamentals are mostly from unselected seedlings, carrying small fruit which usually is not very palatable and mostly infested with Mediterranean fruit fly.

Commercial potential

New Zealand horticulturists have improved the feijoa to make it a viable horticultural crop. They have developed varieties which produce large, flavoursome fruit which transport well.

At this stage, the market for feijoas is limited as Western Australians have not developed a liking for the fruit's unusual flavour. However, many people who try feijoas seem to acquire a taste for them. Possibly, as more fruit becomes available, a better market could develop.

Growth details

The feijoa (*Feijoa sellowiana*) is an attractive, evergreen shrub or small tree. Some types can grow to about four metres tall. The leaves are grey-green, and the dark red flowers add to its ornamental value.

It originates in the southern areas of Brazil and Argentina—the cooler areas of South America. Established plants will tolerate temperatures as low as -8°C , so that it should be tolerant of conditions in any part of the South-West of Western Australia.

The fruit of commercial varieties is ovoid, up to 75 millimetres long and about half as wide. It ripens without a colour change in late summer.

The foliage is dense and wind-tolerant, characteristics which could make the feijoa useful in windbreaks around orchards and market gardens.

WHITE SAPOTE

The fruits of the white sapote tree have always been an important part of the diet of the people of Mexico, where sapotes originated in the highlands. They have only recently come under notice in California, New Zealand and other countries.

Only a small number of trees are in production in Australia, but the soft sweet fruit should become popular here.

Commercial potential

The white sapote could find a place in Western Australian suburban gardens during the next decade. Too little information is available to forecast any commercial potential.

Growth details

The white sapote (*Casimiroa edulis*) is an evergreen tree up to 18 metres tall, though grafted trees are shorter and more spreading.

The flowers are produced in clusters at the point where mature leaves meet the stem. They are pale green to cream. The fruit is green to yellow when ripe and weighs from 100 to 600 grams.

White sapotes are relatively drought resistant, but fruit best when irrigated in dry periods.

They can withstand temperatures as low as 4°C .