

Marine Fisheries Information Service

**Technical and
Extension Series**



Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute

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Pond -Apple : a less reported mangrove associated fruit tree from Central Kerala

Small trees of pond apple (*Annona glabra*), a tropical fruit tree from the family Annonaceae were spotted growing in salty swamps along with reeds, *Acrostichum aureum* (fern), *Acanthus ilicifolius* and *Excoecaria agallocha* in marshy areas around Kumarakam Lake, Kerala.

Pond-apple tree is native to the West Indies and Florida. This plant is reported from Andaman islands as a repellent to the African snail (*Achatina falica*) and from Australia as a troublesome invasive species. The trees grow in swamps and creeks and is tolerant to salt water and cannot grow in dry soil. The

trees grow to a height of around 3-6 m. The leaves are alternate, ovate to oblong with acute tip and prominent midrib, dorsal side is dark green and pale on ventral side, 8-15 cm long and 4-6 cm broad. The fruit is oblong to spherical and apple- sized or larger varying from 5-10 cm long and 5-7 cm in diameter. The fruit falls (March-April) when it is green or ripening yellow. Dispersion is through water. The pulp is sweet scented with agreeable flavour and edible although the taste is not preferable to custard apple. The fruit can be eaten raw or can be made into jellies and wine.

The saplings of pond-apple can be used as stock for grafting with other *Annona* species for raising salt resistant cultivars. Repellent for the pest African snail can be extracted from

this plant. Pond-apple tree can be enlisted among the mangrove vegetation of Kerala.

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