



PAWPAW

(*Carica papaya*)

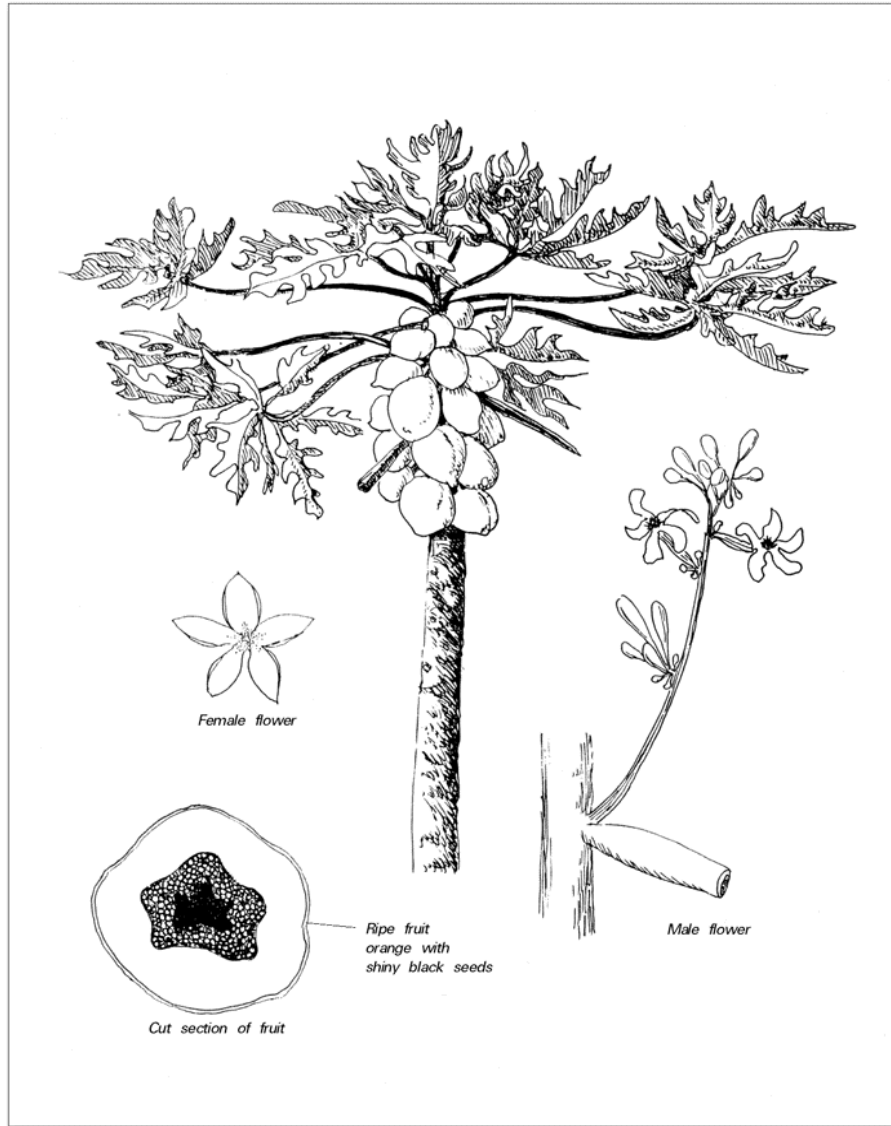
Carica papaya is a native of the West Indies and tropical America. Jamaica's cultivated pawpaw varieties grow quickly, usually without branching, to a height of 7-10 m. The tree develops a crown of large deeply indented leaves measuring up to 60 cm long. The stem of the tree is hollow.

A tree bears either male or female yellowish flowers. The fruit of course develops on the trees which bear female flowers. Pawpaws are rounded or elongate in shape. The unripe fruit is green and turns yellow when ripe. The flesh of the ripe fruit is orange-yellow in colour. The pea-sized black seeds of the pawpaw have a pulpy coat.

The ripe fruit is eaten raw at breakfast time or as a dessert and is rich in vitamins A and C. Immature fruit can be used to make jams, chutney and other condiments. Unripe pawpaws are a source of papain, an enzyme used as an aid to digestion and as a meat tenderizer. In Jamaica, pieces of green pawpaw are cooked with meat or uncooked meat is wrapped in pawpaw leaves to tenderize it.

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Family: Caricaceae	Species: <i>Carica papaya</i>	Author: Linnaeus
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Height: 10m	Habitat: Sea level-800m	Persistence: Evergreen
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