

Comparative Seed Manual: CARICACEAE

Christine Pang, Darla Chenin, and Amber M. VanDerwarker

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This seed manual consists of photos and relevant information on plant species housed in the Integrative Subsistence Laboratory at the Anthropology Department, University of California, Santa Barbara. The impetus for the creation of this manual was to enable UCSB graduate students to have access to comparative materials when making in-field identifications. Most of the plant species included in the manual come from New World locales with an emphasis on Eastern North America, California, Mexico, Central America, and the South American Andes.

Published references consulted¹:

- 1998. Moerman, Daniel E. *Native American ethnobotany*. Vol. 879. Portland, OR: Timber press.
- 2009. Moerman, Daniel E. *Native American medicinal plants: an ethnobotanical dictionary*. OR: Timber Press.
- 2010. Moerman, Daniel E. *Native American food plants: an ethnobotanical dictionary*. OR: Timber Press.

Species included herein:

Carica papaya

¹ **Disclaimer:** Information on relevant edible and medicinal uses comes from a variety of sources, both published and internet-based; this manual does **NOT** recommend using any plants as food or medicine without first consulting a medical professional.



2 mm

Family: Caricaceae

Common Names: Papaya, Papaw, Pawpaw

Habitat and Growth Habit: Papaya is often distributed in tropical regions of Central and South America as well as Africa. The plant is often growing in well drained sandy soil.

Human Uses: Papaya is used as food, in folk medicine, for meat tenderization, and the bark can be used to make ropes. In folk medicine, the juice has been used as a relief for warts, cancer, tumors, and skin issues. The green fruit is also said to increase uterine contractions. The root has been used for treatment of yaws and piles. Even more interesting, the leaf has been smoked for asthma relief. In addition, the flowers have been used to treat jaundice. Furthermore, papaya is a common breakfast food but can also be baked in deserts, mixed in salads, and the unripe fruit can be cooked like a squash. Lastly, it is important to note that the unripe papaya fruit contains the enzyme papain, which is very similar in structure and function to pepsin (found in the human body responsible for protein digestion). In recent cases, people use the enzyme derived from papaya to treat indigestion and for the production of meat tenderizers.

Sources Consulted:

<https://www.britannica.com/plant/papaya>, accessed May 10, 2019.

<http://eol.org/pages/585682/overview>, accessed May 10, 2019.

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=d374>, accessed May 10, 2019.

https://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/duke_energy/Carica_papaya.html, accessed May 10, 2019.