



Agri Articles

(e-Magazine for Agricultural Articles)

Volume: 04, Issue: 05 (SEP-OCT, 2024)

Available online at <http://www.agriarticles.com>

© Agri Articles, ISSN: 2582-9882

From Orchard to Table: The Journey of the Amrapali Mango

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The Amrapali mango, a celebrated hybrid variety in India, is known for its exceptional sweetness and rich aroma. This article explores the comprehensive journey of Amrapali mangoes from orchard to table, emphasizing the cultivation practices, harvesting techniques, distribution channels, and culinary applications. Developed in the 1970s through cross-breeding the Dasherri and Neelum varieties, the Amrapali mango has become a favourite among consumers, especially during the summer months. The article highlights the importance of sustainable farming methods, including soil health management and organic practices, which contribute to the fruit's quality and market appeal. It also discusses the logistical aspects of transporting and marketing the mangoes, both locally and internationally, reflecting the growing demand for Indian mangoes globally. Lastly, the cultural significance of the Amrapali mango in Indian culinary traditions is examined, illustrating its role in festivals and family gatherings. This journey underscores the vital contributions of the Amrapali mango to agriculture, economy, and gastronomy in India.

Introduction

The Amrapali mango, a prized hybrid variety, is often hailed as one of the finest mangoes in India, celebrated for its luscious sweetness and aromatic appeal. Developed in the early 1970s at the Agricultural Research Station in Pant Nagar, Uttarakhand, this exceptional fruit results from a careful cross between the renowned Dasherri and Neelum varieties. The Amrapali mango has quickly captured the hearts of mango lovers, becoming a staple of summer in many households. The journey of the Amrapali mango from orchard to table is a fascinating narrative that involves meticulous cultivation, seasonal harvesting, and intricate distribution networks. Understanding this journey not only highlights the agricultural practices that enhance fruit quality but also underscores the importance of sustainability and community involvement in mango production. This introduction aims to set the stage for a deeper exploration of the various stages in the life cycle of the Amrapali mango. From the initial planting in fertile soils to the moment it reaches consumers' tables, every step in this journey reflects the dedication of farmers and the cultural significance of mangoes in India. As consumer preferences increasingly lean towards organic and locally sourced foods, the Amrapali mango stands as a symbol of sustainable agriculture and culinary excellence, embodying the rich heritage of Indian fruit cultivation.

Origins of the Amrapali Mango

The Amrapali mango has a rich history that reflects the innovation and agricultural expertise of India. Developed in 1971 at the Agricultural Research Station in Pant Nagar, Uttarakhand, the Amrapali mango is a hybrid variety resulting from the careful cross-breeding of two esteemed Indian mango varieties: the Dasherri and the Neelum.

The Parent Varieties

1. **Dasheri:** Known for its sweet flavour and fiberless flesh, the Dasheri mango has been a favourite among mango enthusiasts for centuries. This variety is characterized by its long, slender shape and vibrant greenish-yellow skin. Its popularity stems from its rich taste and ability to thrive in various climatic conditions.
2. **Neelum:** The Neelum mango, another cherished variety, is known for its unique flavour and aroma. It has a yellowish-green skin and is often prized for its sweet, juicy pulp. The Neelum's resilience and adaptability make it a staple in many regions of India.

Development Process

The creation of the Amrapali mango was driven by a desire to combine the best characteristics of its parent varieties. The research aimed to produce a mango that not only boasted superior taste but also had enhanced disease resistance, higher yield potential, and adaptability to different environmental conditions. Through systematic breeding techniques, scientists at Pant Nagar succeeded in developing the Amrapali mango, which exhibits the fiberless texture and sweetness of the Dasheri while incorporating the aroma and flavour profile of the Neelum. This hybridization not only created a fruit with exceptional quality but also contributed to the sustainability of mango farming in India.

Impact on Mango Cultivation

Since its introduction, the Amrapali mango has gained immense popularity, becoming a favoured choice among farmers and consumers alike. Its early maturity—bearing fruit within three years of planting—makes it an attractive option for growers looking to capitalize on the lucrative mango market. The success of the Amrapali mango has also encouraged further research and development in mango breeding, inspiring other hybrid varieties that seek to enhance flavour, yield, and resistance to diseases.

Cultivation Practices

1. **Soil and Climate Requirements:** Amrapali mango trees flourish in well-drained, sandy-loam soils with a pH range of 5.5 to 7.5. They require a warm climate, with temperatures between 25°C and 35°C being ideal for growth (Choudhary & Sharma, 2018).
2. **Planting and Care:** Farmers typically plant Amrapali mango saplings during the monsoon season, ensuring adequate moisture for root establishment. Regular irrigation, especially during dry spells, is crucial. Pruning and pest management practices, including the use of organic fertilizers, help maintain tree health and optimize fruit quality (Kumar et al., 2020).
3. **Harvesting:** Amrapali mangoes are generally harvested between May and June, coinciding with the peak mango season in India. Careful harvesting techniques are employed to avoid bruising the fruit, ensuring they reach the market in prime condition. Farmers often rely on local labour during the harvest season, fostering community involvement (Pandey et al., 2021).

Distribution Channels

Once harvested, Amrapali mangoes are transported to local markets, wholesalers, and retailers. The distribution process includes:

1. **Packaging:** To protect the mangoes during transportation, they are packed in ventilated crates that minimize damage. Proper handling is critical to maintaining the fruit's quality throughout the supply chain (Suresh et al., 2020).
2. **Market Dynamics:** Amrapali mangoes are sold in local fruit markets, supermarkets, and online platforms. The increasing demand for organic and locally sourced produce has further enhanced the market for Amrapali mangoes, with many consumers preferring fresh, chemical-free options (Mehta & Sharma, 2022).

3. **Export Potential:** With rising global interest in Indian mangoes, Amrapali mangoes are increasingly being exported to international markets, particularly in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. This has opened new avenues for farmers and exporters alike (Bansal et al., 2019).

Consumption

The Amrapali mango is not just a fruit; it is a culinary delight. Its sweet, fiberless flesh makes it perfect for various dishes:

1. **Fresh Consumption:** Many people enjoy Amrapali mangoes fresh, savoring their rich flavour. They are often served as dessert or as part of fruit salads.
2. **Culinary Uses:** Amrapali mangoes are a popular choice for making smoothies, juices, and sorbets. They are also used in traditional Indian dishes, such as mango chutney and Amaras, a sweet mango pulp served with puris.
3. **Cultural Significance:** In India, mangoes hold a special place in cultural celebrations. The Amrapali variety is often featured in festivals, weddings, and family gatherings, symbolizing joy and abundance (Nair, 2021).

Conclusion

The journey of Amrapali mangoes from orchard to table encapsulates the essence of Indian agriculture and culinary tradition. With their unique flavour and growing popularity, these mangoes not only enhance our diets but also contribute significantly to the livelihoods of farmers and the economy. As consumer preferences shift towards organic and locally sourced produce, the future looks bright for Amrapali mangoes, ensuring they remain a cherished fruit for generations to come.

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