

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDEN

Canistel (*Pouteria campechiana*)

By Noris Ledesma
Curator of Tropical Fruit

The canistel is a member of the Sapotaceae (mamey sapote family). Native to Central America, it is highly adaptable to Florida where it is grown in some home gardens. Canistel or “Egg Fruit” has similar characteristics to cooked pumpkin. It is delicious when mixed with milk products and won’t sour the milk like many other fruit do. The yellow flesh is relatively firm and mealy with a few fibers. The fruit mature from November through March. Canistel can be eaten fresh, in milkshakes, or used in pies, puddings and bread. The fruit is picked when mature (yellow-color) and can be stored at room temperature for 3 to 10 days. If you wish to store the flesh you can freeze it for up to 6 months. Before freezing, mix the flesh with sugar.



Cream of Canistel soup (Serves 6)

- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup canistel, peeled and mashed
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 1 teaspoon butter
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper
- ¼ cup onion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 envelope instant chicken soup
- Salt to taste
- fresh chives, chopped fine for garnish

Sauté butter, onion and garlic in a saucepan for 2 minutes. Add chicken stock and remaining ingredients and stir constantly for 15 minutes. Serve with a dollop of whipped cream and sprinkling of chives.

Canistel Pie (Serves 6)

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup ripe canistel, peeled and mashed
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 unbaked deep-dish pie shell

Mix eggs and milk together and gradually add remaining ingredients. Pour into unbaked pie shell and bake at 450°F for 15 minutes. Lower temperature to 350°F and bake for 10 minutes more. Let cool before serving.

Canistel Vegetable Rice (Serves 6)

- 1 cup uncooked rice
- 1 cup canistel, mashed
- ¼ cup red peppers, chopped
- ¼ cup orange peppers, chopped
- ¼ green bell peppers, chopped
- ½ cup carrot, chopped
- ½ cup onion, chopped
- ½ cup chick peas/garbanzo beans
- Salt to taste
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder

Sauté onion, garlic and carrots in a skillet, add peppers and chick peas. Then, in a separate pot, toast the rice over medium heat with 2 tbsp of olive oil for 10 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the canistel and 3 cups of water with salt and oil to taste. Lower the temperature and cover, cook for 15 minutes and serve warm.