

**A DESCRIPTION OF
THE MANGOSTAN
AND THE BREAD-FRUIT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649308019

A Description of the Mangostan and the Bread-fruit by John Ellis

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JOHN ELLIS

**A DESCRIPTION OF
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AND THE BREAD-FRUIT**

A
DESCRIPTION

OF

THE MANGOSTAN

AND

THE BREAD-FRUIT:

The first, esteemed one of the most delicious; the other, the most
useful of all the Fruits in the EAST INDIES.

By JOHN ELLIS, Esq., 1710-1786

Fellow of the ROYAL SOCIETIES of LONDON and UPSAL; Agent for DOMINICA.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

DIRECTIONS to VOYAGERS, for bringing over these and other Vegetable
Productions, which would be extremely beneficial to the Inhabitants of
our West India Islands.

WITH FIGURES.

LONDON,

Printed for the AUTHOR:

And sold by EDWARD and CHARLES DILLY.

MDCCLXXV.

~~BOLTON~~

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL OF SANDWICH,

First Lord of the Admiralty of GREAT BRITAIN.

THE zeal, my Lord, with which you have seconded his Majesty's intentions, to promote the honour and the happiness of his subjects, in the late important enterprizes for discovery, claims from me as an individual, and from the public in general, the most grateful acknowledgements.

In hopes that posterity may have additional causes of gratitude to your Lordship, I presume to bespeak your attention to the following pages; being firmly persuaded, that the moment an object which seems conducive to the benefit of any part of the British empire is proposed to your Lordship's consideration, and

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which falls within the limits of your high department,
no endeavours on your side will be wanting, to obtain
the possession of it.

Such instances of public spirit, such attention to
the glory of your Sovereign, to the honour of the
British name, to science and humanity, demand this
grateful tribute, my Lord, from

Your Lordship's

obedient, humble servant,

GRAY'S INN, JAN. 17,
1775.

JOHN ELLIS.

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DESCRIPTION

OF THE

MANGOSTAN AND BREAD FRUIT.

THE design of the following sheets, is to incite the attention of the public, to some circumstances in which they are deeply interested.—There are two trees, natives of the East Indies, which, could they be introduced into our West India islands, would be signally useful to their inhabitants.

One of them, the Mangostan, has been long known, and has been mentioned by various writers, as producing the most pleasant fruit of any yet known. The tree itself likewise is extremely elegant.

With us, in these temperate regions, it could only be preserved in stoves, as an object of curiosity. But nothing could be more grateful, more useful to the sick, than this delicious fruit, was it practicable to make it a denison of those islands. It

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would

would probably grow there with as much freedom and luxury as in its native abodes.

We shall extract some accounts from the best of those writers who have expressly mentioned this tree and its fruits; and give such a description as may enable almost any one to know it wherever it may occur.

This tree has been very accurately described by Dr. Garcin, in the thirty-fifth volume of the Philosophical Transactions. I would with pleasure in this place insert the whole of that account which he there gives of it; but as I intend to present my reader with its characters as described by Dr. Linnæus, to adopt such a plan would lay me under the disagreeable necessity of repetition; a circumstance, which, at present, it is my study to avoid.

Let it be sufficient to mention, "that this tree (according to Dr. Garcin) grows to about seventeen or eighteen feet high, "with a straight taper stem like a fir," having a regular tuft in form of an oblong cone, composed of many branches and twigs, spreading out equally on all sides, without leaving any hollow.

Its leaves, he observes, are oblong, pointed at both ends, entire, smooth, of a shining green on the upper side, and of an olive on the back.

Its flower is composed of four petals, almost round, or a little pointed: their colour resembles that of a rose, only deeper and less lively. The calyx of this flower is of one piece, expanded, and cut into four lobes. The two upper lobes are something larger than the lower ones, they are greenish on the outside, and of a fine deep red within; the red of the upper ones is more lively than that of the lower ones. This calyx incloses all the parts of the flower; it is supported by a pedicle, which is green, and constantly comes out of the end of a twig above the last pair of leaves.

The fruit of this tree (it is likewise observed by Dr. Garcin) is round, of the size of a small orange, from an inch and an half to two inches diameter. The body of this fruit is a capsule of one cavity, composed of a thick rind a little like that of a pomegranate, but softer, thicker, and fuller of juice. Its thickness is commonly of a quarter of an inch. Its outer colour is of a dark brown purple, mixed with a little grey and dark green. The inside of the peel is of a rose colour, and its juice is purple. Last of all, this skin is of a styptic or astringent taste, like that of a pomegranate, nor does it stick to the fruit it contains. The inside of this fruit is a furrowed globe, divided into segments much like those of an orange, but unequal in size; which do not adhere to each other. The number of these segments is always equal to that of the rays of the top which covers the fruit. The fewer there are of these segments, the bigger they are. There are often in the same fruit, segments as big again as any of those that are on the side of them. These segments are white, a little transparent, fleshy, membranous, full of juice like cherries or raspberries; of a taste of strawberries and grapes together. Each of the segments incloses a seed of the figure and size of an almond stripped of its shell, having a protuberance on one of its sides.

These seeds are covered with two small skins, the outermost of which serves for a basis to the filaments and membranes of which the pulp is composed.

The substance of these seeds comes very near to that of chestnuts, as to their consistency, colour, and astringent quality.

This tree, continues the doctor, which produces the most delicious fruit of all the Indies, and that yields to none of the best in Europe, originally grows in the Molucca islands, where it is called Mangostan, but has been transplanted from thence to the island of Java and Malaca, at which last place it thrives very well.