



## Miracle Fruit- The fruit that tricks your tongue

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Miracle fruit also known as miracle berry/magic berry, botanically classified as *Synsepalum dulcificum* and member of sapotaceous family, is a small tropical evergreen shrub native to Ghana. Its small red berries are prized for the effect they have on other foods. The fruit contains miraculin, a unique glycoprotein which blocks sour and bitter taste receptors on the tongue. Eat a miracle fruit and everything you eat for a while afterwards will be sweet.

**Common names:** Miracle berry, miraculous berry, sweet berry, magic berry, flavour berry.

**Fruit:** Small bright red, ellipsoid berry approx. 2-3cm long and contain a single large seed. Bright red fruits hang in small clusters at the tip of branches.

**Flowers-** Inconspicuous ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch) white flowers are produced in flushes through many months of the year.

**Growth habit:** Miracle fruit is an evergreen bush or tree growing to 18ft in its native habitat but rarely to 5ft otherwise.

**Foliage:** The plant has deep green, elongated leaves which grow in spire-like habit. Both regular and large leaf and a hairy leaf form are known.

**Flavour-**Faint cherry like.

**Taste-**Mildly sweet but virtually tasteless.

**Flowering:** Starts flowering exactly 2 years after seed germination on previous year branches-end of dry season and beginning of rainy season.

Pollination to fruit maturation-90days.

**Fruiting:** Fruiting starts from 3-4 years old, borne in clusters, ripens 2 months after setting. Fruiting peaks from march to may end.

**CULTURE** (Growing tips)



**Soils:** Well drained Acid soils must with pH 4.5-5.8. Intolerant to alkaline conditions and water logging. It prefers partial shade and high humidity, thrives full sun but not frost.

**Potting mix:** One of the most important cultural aspects is the soil mix. It needs an acid soil mixture +half sphagnum peat moss and half perlite.

**Propagation:** Usually either by seeds or rooted stem cuttings and through marcotting.

**Irrigation:** Be sure that the soil is well drained as the plants do not like to sit in wet soils.

**Fertilization:** Sensitive to high amounts of fertilizers and can easily get burned showing browning on edges of leaves. Moderate amounts of fertilizers can be used once a month. Use dilute solution (1/4 to 1/8 of label requirement) and only fertilize the plant when soil is already moist. Never fertilize miracle berry when the soil is dry.

**Pollination:** It is a self-pollinated crop. Hand pollination is recommended to ensure good crop of berries. Do this when the small inconspicuous flowers are open and preferably during sunny part of the day.

**Pruning:** In general, there is no need to prune the miracle fruit plant.

Pre mature fruit drop is common due to lack of iron, nitrogen and high ph.