

DRAGONFRUIT

Hawaiian Name: *Pāniniokapunahou*
(white fleshed dragonfruit)

Common Name(s): Pitaya, pitahaya,
night-blooming cereus, strawberry pear

Scientific Name: *Hylocereus undatus* (white flesh)
and *H. costaricensis* (reddish flesh)

Origin: Central and South America

Plant Part Eaten: Fruit



Nutrition Info...

- A great source of fiber, which keeps our digestive system healthy.
- Edible seeds contain healthy polyunsaturated fats.
- A good source of vitamin C, which can lower your risk for disease.



Locally Grown...

- Hawai'i's most famous dragonfruit plant is on the leeward wall of Punahou School, but it doesn't yield much fruit.
- It is a great crop for Hawai'i as it is naturally hurricane resistant.
- Because it is a succulent, dragonfruit requires less water than most fruits and vegetables.
- It is fast growing, has a high yield, and continues to fruit for up to 25 years.
- While it is fun and exciting to grow dragonfruit at home, it is very difficult to grow commercially.



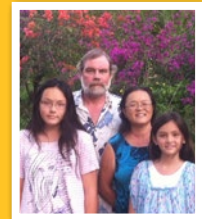
Meet a Farmer...

Farm: Maui Dragon Fruit Farm

Farmers: Crystal & Lawrence Schmitt

Location: West Maui

Website: mauidragonfruit.com



mauidragonfruit.com

Maui Dragon Fruit Farm is a certified organic farm located in West Maui near Lahaina. They grow dragon fruit, banana, papaya, pineapple, avocado, and a variety of sugarcane, tropical flowers, baby greens and many value-added agricultural products.

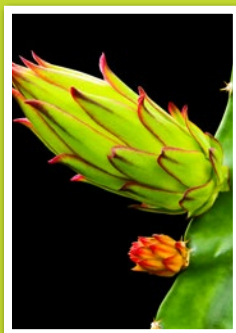
Maui Dragon Fruit Farm's goal is to encourage people to live in harmony with the land while striving for economical prosperity.

Where else it's grown in the world...

Vietnam, Thailand, and South China.

In the Garden...

- Cut a 6-8 inch mature section from a friends' plant. Let it sit in a cool dark area for 5-7 days.
- Plant the vine in a large-sized pot or in the ground. Make sure the vine is planted into the soil about 1 to 2 inches deep.
- Water one to two times a week, letting the soil dry between waterings.



- Pitaya is a climbing plant and while it can grow on the ground, it can benefit from a strong support (fencing, concrete blocks, metal poles).
- Fruit will usually grow in the second year after planting.
- Allow the cactus to get lots of sunlight and grow multiple plants to encourage cross pollination for more fruit.

Let's Get Cooking... Dragon Fruit Sorbet

Ingredients

- 2 dragonfruits
- 3/4 cup cold water
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 tablespoon honey or simple syrup

Recipe adapted from Rachel Rappaport, coconutandlime.com.

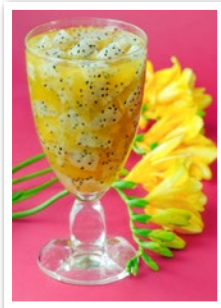
Directions

1. Cut the dragon fruit in half and scoop out the flesh.
2. Reserve the halves for serving, if desired. Freeze the halves until you are ready to fill them (to help them maintain their shape).
3. Meanwhile, place all ingredients in a blender and pulse until smooth.
4. Pour into an ice cream maker and churn until frozen.
5. Spoon into halves and serve. If you are not ready to eat, spoon the sorbet into the halves, wrap each half tightly in plastic wrap then freeze until serving.



If you do not have an ice cream maker, try freezing chunks of fruit, then blending with lime juice, honey, and a small amount of water in your blender or food processor. Freeze again if needed.

Reminder: Please compost your food waste.



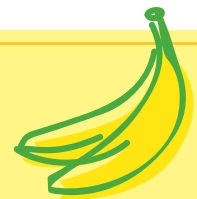
What can you make with a dragon fruit?

While eating it fresh is best, sorbet, smoothies, and popsicles are good too. While it has a nice balanced flavor, its cost usually prohibits its use in marinades or canning. Mixologists are starting to use it in different drinks too. It is an excellent addition to avocado and shrimp salad!



Did you know?

1. Flowers open at night and begin to wilt at daybreak.
2. Legend has it that pitayas were brought into existence when fire-breathing dragons spewed dragon fruit during battle. Soldiers would gather the fruit and gift it to the Emperor.
3. Flower buds are also edible.
4. It can be used as cosmetic and health material.
5. Dragon fruit absorbs CO₂ at night, and releases oxygen.
6. Some cultures use it to treat colon cancer and diabetes. Others say it helps to rid the body of toxic substances such as heavy metals, reduce cholesterol and high blood pressure.
7. In Taiwan, diabetics use the fruit as a substitute for rice.



Fresh Choice Hawaiian Harvest celebrates the diverse, nutritious, and delicious bounty grown in Hawai'i, encouraging children and their families to eat more locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. The Fresh Choice Hawaiian Harvest Toolkit includes educational resource sheets, family take-home letters, produce preparation sheets, and a poster showcasing Hawai'i-grown crops. For downloads and more information, visit www.kokuahawaiifoundation.org/HawaiianHarvest.

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