

EXOTIC DRAGON FRUIT OR KAMALAM FROM MAHARASHTRA EXPORTED TO DUBAI

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

In a major boost to export of exotic fruit, a consignment of fibre and mineral rich 'Dragon Fruit', also referred as *Kamalam*, has been exported to Dubai. A consignment of Dragon Fruit for exports was sourced from the farmers of Tadasar village, Sangli district, Maharashtra and it was processed and packed at APEDA recognized exporter – M/s Kay Bee.

Scientifically referred to as *Hylocereus undatus*, the dragon fruit is grown in countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, the USA and Vietnam.

Dragon fruit production commenced in India in early 1990s and was grown as home gardens. Dragon Fruit has become increasingly popular in recent years in the country as it has been taken up for cultivation by farmers across various states.

At present, dragon fruit is grown mostly in Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The cultivation requires less water and can be grown in various kinds of soils. There are three main varieties of dragon fruit: white flesh with pink skin, red flesh with pink skin, and white flesh with yellow skin.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in 'Mann Ki Baat' programme in July 2020 on All India Radio had mentioned about the dragon fruit farming in the arid Kutch region of Gujarat. He had congratulated the farmers of Kutch for the cultivation of fruit for ensuring India's self-sufficiency in the production.

The fruit contains fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. It can help in repairing the cell damage caused by oxidative stress and reduce inflammation, and also improving the digestive system. Since the fruit has spikes and petals resembling lotus, it is also referred as 'Kamalam'.

APEDA promotes exports of agricultural & processed food products by providing assistance to the exporters under various components such as Infrastructure Development, Quality Development and Market Development. Apart from this the Department of Commerce also supports exports through various schemes like Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme, Market Access Initiative etc.



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