

Njansang

Ricinodendron Heudelottii



The Njansang fruit grows on a big tree that can grow up to 40 meters in height and 1.20 meters in diameter. Its bark is light gray. Its germination is slow and the rate is relatively low (40%). The growth of the young plant is very rapid when exposed to sun light. The first fruition may occur 4 years after planting.

Weight of the fruit

The fruit weighs about 20g. The kernel from its shell, which is the edible part, weighs about 2g.

Drying

Njansang seeds can be dried with sunlight or smoked. It is advised to dry them with sunlight to give them a good color, especially if they are intended for sale. Consumers prefer Njansang with light yellow color. During drying, it is important to avoid that it rains on the seeds, because they become kaki or black in color.

Principal production area

The Lékié division in the Center province of Cameroon is the principal production area for Njansang. Smaller quantities are produced in other provinces: South, Littoral South-west and.

Local name

It has different names according to regions.

Table 1. Different names for Njansang

Tribes	Local name
Ewondo	Essessang
Bangangté	Njansan
Boulou	Essang
Maka	Iboume isol
Douala	Nyangsang
Bibaya pygmies	Gobo

Harvesting

Is often done from July through October. Generally, women and children gather fallen fruits around trees and transport them to the village. When the collected fruits are still green, they are left for about two weeks to rot.

Processing

The collected fruits are boiled in water with 'soft fire' for about five hours at least, so that the shell breaks opens to facilitate the extraction of seeds.

The fruits are broken with a sharp tool. When the kernels are extracted from the shell, they are all white. The shell contains one or three kernels; these are used as an ingredient in cooking



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Storage and Preservation

As soon as the kernels are dry, they are stored in bags to protect them from moisture. They are regularly dried in the sun until the day they are sold. Some farmers store the product in a basket hanging over the fireplace in the kitchen. Generally, Njansang can be stored for up to two years.

Medicinal value

The Njansang tree is also valued for its bark, which is used to treat cough, gonorrhoea, leprosy, elephantiasis, dysentery, diarrhoea, hernia and syphilis. The bark is also used to cure yellow fever, anaemia, malaria, skin diseases, stomach, tooth and head aches, intestinal worms and is also used as an aphrodisiac.

Nutritional value for 100g (of the powder)

Calories	(kcal)	561
Proteins	(g)	22
Lipids	(g)	46
Glucides	(g)	25
Calcium	(mg)	647
Iron	(mg)	0

Marketing

Njansang is used in many households in Cameroon because of its smell and the fact that it is used to thicken soup. It can be found in almost all markets in the country.

It is sold in heaps or in glasses. The price varies according to the markets and the season. In retail markets in Douala and Yaounde, the price of Njansang is high between June and March.

Cooking, recipe, complements and substitutes

Consumers consider Njansang a multi-purpose ingredient, because it is used in the cooking of almost all dishes. It is consumed as a condiment either for its taste, for its odor, or for the way it makes the sauce thick.

Before cooking, it is grinded either simply with a stone or in a grinding machine with other condiments, or "fried" in oil before it is grinded, or roasted like peanuts.

It is then poured into the soup at the same time with other condiments. Soup made with Njansang goes with any complement. Condiments that are cooked with Njansang in a soup generally are ginger, garlic, onion, white pepper, celery, parsley and basil. There is no substitute for its taste.