Did You Know?

Tamarind, *TAMARINDUS INDICA*

- Tamarind is a leguminous hardwood tropical fruit tree most known for the pulp produced in bean-like pods.
- While native to tropical Africa, it also grown in India, Mexico, and other tropical regions around the world.
- The fruit are 4-6" long brown pods that contain a sweet and sour tasting pulp. As the pods mature, the shell of the pods become brittle and the pulp dense, sticky and sweeter.
- Tamarind extract is a noted ingredient in the Lea & Perkins Worcestershire sauce and is popular in steak sauces as well.
- Other culinary uses for tamarind include chutneys, curries, stir-fries, sour soups, lentil, rice and noodle dishes in Indian, Thai and Asian cooking. It is used in a variety of meat, poultry, seafood and vegetable dishes in the West. It is also used in Mexico and the Caribbean cuisine, including fruit drinks.
- Tamarind is sold in a variety of forms. Extracts, "sweet tamarind" for eating directly and "sour tamarind" which does have some sweet qualities too, is primarily used in savory cooking. Find it sold as a dense block, paste or powder.
- Tartaric acid is responsible for the sour taste in the pulp, it is also used to produce the baking ingredient cream of tartar. Tartaric acid also contains antioxidants.
- Acidic tamarind pulp is used to polish brass in some Asian countries.
- There is a long history of medicinal use of tamarind, including as a laxative, digestive aid, fevers, and sore throats as well as rheumatism and sunstroke.
- The fruit and leaves of the tamarind tree are a favorite food of ring-tailed lemur in Madagascar.

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